



the
**BEST
MAN**

MICHELLE LEE

The Best Man

Michelle Lee

ebook Edition

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Table of Contents

[Dedication](#)

[Acknowledgments](#)

[Prologue](#)

[Chapter 1](#)

[Chapter 2](#)

[Chapter 3](#)

[Chapter 4](#)

[Chapter 5](#)

[Chapter 6](#)

[Chapter 7](#)

[Chapter 8](#)

[Chapter 9](#)

[Chapter 10](#)

[Chapter 11](#)

[Chapter 12](#)

[Chapter 13](#)

[Chapter 14](#)

[Chapter 15](#)

[Chapter 16](#)

[Chapter 17](#)

[About the Author](#)

For my husband. You love me and all my
crazy. And let's just say there's a lot of
crazy to love. *(you can say that again)*

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Hugs and Love, Michelle

PROLOGUE

Hi, my name is Kassidy Marshall, and I am crazy. That's what I would be standing up saying if there was such a thing as Crazy Anonymous. I was never like this before, not until *he* came into my life. Before him, I was a head strong, confident, career-focused, and slightly obsessed with shoes and shopping woman who didn't need a man and quite frankly, didn't want a man in my life. My life was perfect. I had amazing friends that I could depend on and who got me, I

was great at my job and loved it; I had everything I needed or didn't need.

Speak for yourself.

See? That right there is the reason I'm crazy. Since I ran into "the asshole" my inner self has become quite vocal. I mean, I always had a tendency to talk to myself, work things out in my head, and weigh the pros and cons of every situation. It's an innate factor being a lawyer and coming from a long line of family members in law enforcement.

Or being a control freak.

I am not a control freak. I feel my

inner self give me that questioning look like “you’ve got to be kidding me”, and she’s right. *Okay, maybe a little. I just like things in...order.*

And I do like and need things in order. I can’t help it. I even have panic attacks if I attempt to leave my office after a hellacious day and papers are all over the place. Or a drawer is open. Or a file is not in the cabinet. Things have their place and every place has a thing. I can’t help it. I’m just wired that way. Although my inner self at times thinks otherwise.

I think you're anal and controlling.

I just like things a certain way.

Yeah, the crazy way.

I wasn't always this intense I guess would be the right word or crazy for that matter. I have my quirks but since he came into my life crazy is all I seem to be. I'm totally out of control which practically causes me to break out in hives. I was just fine before...before everything.

Oh, please, you were anything but fine. You had work and work and work

*and the occasional outing with friends
and endless dates with BoB.*

Exactly, fine, which I see nothing wrong with it. Although yes, BoB has gotten more use than necessary. But I just don't have the time or need to date. Guys in general aren't...well they aren't...let's just say they aren't worth it.

*You're delusional, crazy and anal
actually.*

Oh. My. God. Enough already!

See, again, this is why I'm crazy. This is why I question my insanity every minute of the day. This is why I find *him*

completely and utterly annoying. I never had knock down drag out fights with my inner self prior to him bumping into my life.

Oh, please, I've always been here you just chose to ignore me and once he walked into our lives, and thank God he did, I had to speak up otherwise...

Zip it.

See, arguments.

Anyway, my life was just fine and going the way I wanted it to, until my best friend asked me to be her maid of honor, all until she insisted along with

her and the groom, the best man and maid of honor dance a special dance, all until Ryan Davis came charging into my life and turning it completely upside down. It all started at lunch one day...

CHAPTER 1

“I swear to God, I’m going to throw my phone at her when I get there and then take scissors to her closet,” I yell at no one in particular. My phone has been beeping non-stop for the past hour thanks to Chloe. I am running late as usual—occupational hazard when it comes to my social life. What social life? *You’ve got that right.* Great, now my inner ramblings have an opinion. I haven’t really had a social life since I started working at the firm and the senior

partners have taken a notice to me. Who am I fooling, even in college I didn't have much of social life; I was nose deep in my school work—focused on my ultimate goal—becoming an attorney at a prestigious law firm. So, opting not to have a social life seemed to be an easy decision; although there are times I miss the idea of going out and just relaxing one way or another. *You and me both.* But honestly, I have no regrets. I love my job. I love my friends—they get me. I wouldn't change a thing. *Oh, I would. We need to get out more and maybe*

find us a man. I really need to buy a muzzle for my inner-self. *Just try it, Missy.* See, muzzle, definitely need one.

Anyway, I am on my way to have brunch with Chloe and her fiancé, Jason. Chloe is my oldest and dearest friend. We are more like sisters actually, having grown up together since we were practically out of diapers. Our friendship is easy going and Chloe understands I am a workaholic because she is somewhat of a workaholic herself. Chloe works as a personal shopper for some of Beverly Hills' richest, and she

is really amazing at it. It is great having a friend who shops for a living, not because my fashion sense is lacking, I know how to put together a hot ass outfit perfectly. I just don't have the time to run around to find that perfect outfit and then all the essential accessories to finish the look. I let Chloe play dress up with me, especially when I am the same size as some of her clients and she wants to see how an outfit looks all together. I am just grateful she is willing to do some shopping for me or decides what she thinks would be for a client is better

for me; saves me the hassle. So, having a friend that loves to shop and dresses people for a living—not a bad thing.

I don't know how Chloe does it, really; juggling work and a social life. She's either wrapped up in clothes and her clients—some of them are beyond demanding—or Jason. Chloe and Jason have been dating for a few years when he finally decided to pop the question. Honestly, I didn't think he was going to wait so long to ask her. As reserved as Jason is, he isn't when he's around Chloe. He's absolutely mad about her

and vice versa, and it is obvious when they are together. They are really sweet—not that nauseating sugary sweet that makes you want to vomit—just nicely sweet—purely in love sweet. *If you would date we could be in just sweet love too.* I've learned just ignoring my inner self is best practice, although at times it's extremely hard.

Anyway, I am meeting them for brunch to go over wedding plans, and of course I am running late. I hate being late, but I was wrapped up in putting the finishing touches on my closing

arguments, and I lost all track of time—another occupational hazard. I have a promising career as an up and coming lawyer at Sanders, Levi and Remington. No one is surprised that I went to law school; after all, my dad, is a retired FBI agent.

Apparently, law enforcement is something that runs in my blood—my grandfather was a police officer and so are my dad's two brothers and both of their sons. I love being a lawyer and I am good at it. Granted, I have only practiced law a few years, but I am

headstrong and somewhat of a natural. My dad always said I could argue and win till the cows came home. The senior partners are beginning to take notice. I know I won't make partner anytime soon, but I am thrilled they are recognizing my accomplishments and me. I am sure to win my latest case; one Mr. Sanders had given me, personally. An honor I take extremely seriously.

Finally, I arrive at the restaurant, and I immediately spot Chloe and Jason. They aren't hard to miss. She is quite stunning with flaming red hair and bright

green eyes, and a personality that lights up and fills whatever room she is in. Jason is very good looking; straight out of an Abercrombie and Fitch ad. He has wavy blond hair and deep, expressive blue eyes, the kind you can get lost in, and Chloe always does. He is snuggling her neck, and she is giggling. They really are sweet, and seeing them so happy brings an instant smile to my face. As I stare at them a few seconds longer, Chloe finally looks up momentarily and notices me. She waves me over, her smile wide, her eyes bright. I make my

way to their table and join them in the middle of their conversation. We say our hellos and I take my seat. The conversation flows as if I have been there all along.

"Davis is coming in a week," Jason continues from where it seems he left off before I arrived.

"Good, I won't have anyone in the wedding party wearing off the rack." Chloe wouldn't have it any other way. *God forbid someone wear off the rack; oh the horror.*

If Chloe has her way, she will

dress not only the wedding party, but all the guests, too. My best friend has designed her dress and mine. She has aspirations of being a designer, but since it's such a hard business to crack she's happy—for the mean time—to be a personal shopper. She has actually designed a few dresses for a couple of her clients—I feel like a proud momma with her success.

As Chloe's best girlfriend, I have the distinction and privilege of being her maid of honor. An honor I cherish and take very seriously. When she asked me

after crying the words out, I couldn't say anything but yes. She had questioned did I ever have a doubt, and honestly I didn't. We have a long standing pact from when we were eight. We made a promise that we were going to be each other's maids of honor when the time came. Even back then, Chloe had her wedding practically planned out to the very last detail. Although, I highly doubt Keanu Reeves will be officiating, and she's not marrying Johnny Depp.

So, Davis is coming, I am finally going to meet the best man. I've heard

enough about him. Jason and the best man, like Chloe and me, are best friends. They've known each other since elementary or middle school. He lives back East in Chicago, I think. Jason calls him Davis, although that isn't his first name. Jason and his friends have a weird habit of calling each other by their last name. For the longest time, I thought Jason's name was Anderson. Chloe had finally explained it was some dumb guy thing—what did I know about guy things? *Nothing really, since you haven't been out with one in...forever.*

One of these days I am going to strangle my inner voice. The bitch can be so damn annoying and at times, she makes me think I am totally losing my mind; especially when I answer back.

Brunch is very informative. And as always, Chloe is in complete control. I am told of the shoes, earrings, bracelet, and necklace I will be accessorized with, as well as when my mani, pedi and hair appointments are. These are things I expected. What I didn't expect is Chloe has arranged for Davis and me to be a part of their first dance. Chloe has seen

this show on YouTube or something where engaged couples work with a dance instructor to perform their first dance in a unique way. She tells me of one episode where the couple dances to the '80s band Poison, air guitars and all. Chloe is going to torture me. I will do anything for her but dancing, unfortunately I really don't have a choice. I am no dancer and she knows it, but won't take no for an answer. Chloe always gets her way, so there really is no use arguing; even though that's what I do for a living. I pray I never have to go

up against Chloe in a court of law; that's one case I will most definitely lose.

"When is this dance class?" I ask hoping against all hope that it isn't anytime soon.

"Next Saturday around eleven. Davis gets in late Thursday night," Chloe informs me.

"I might have plans."

"You can cancel them. You're not getting out of this one that easily, Kassidy Lillian Marshall. This is my special day, and this is what I want."

Ooooo, she just full-named you.

You are in trouble.

Hush you.

Yep, the nuthouse is definitely in my immediate future.

"And Chloe always gets what she wants," I reply on autopilot; it's a response I've memorized.

"It's just easier if you remember that first rather than argue with me." She smiles brightly knowing she will always win. Then this seriousness washes away her smile and she reaches across the table and grabs my hand.

"You know I love you and I don't

want you to do anything just because I want it. You know that right? I...I just want things to be perfect and if you are totally uncomfortable with this, my day won't be perfect and I won't push. I just need and want my best friend there by my side."

That cry lump finds its way to my throat and I force it back down in order to answer her, "I love you too. And no, this isn't that uncomfortable for me and I want your day to be whatever you want it to be. So I'm in—all in. I'll be there at eleven with bells on."

The smile that she gives me is enough to make me forget about dancing and embarrassing myself. There isn't a thing in the world I wouldn't do for Chloe and I know it is the same for her when it comes to me. We have our moment and then Chloe is right back to herself and continues with going over more details of the wedding. Jason's hand finds hers and he just smiles at her. Chloe and Jason are definitely one of the lucky ones. I sit and listen and absorb all I can as we continue to have brunch knowing a little embarrassment never

killed anybody.

CHAPTER 2

Finally it is Friday night, and I am going out with my girls for the first time in a long time. *Praise, Jesus!* I can't believe I actually have the time to. *You and me both.* Besides Chloe, Macy is my other close girlfriend. The three of us just clicked when Macy started attending Jackson Middle School in the middle of sixth grade. From that point on we were known as the "Three Amigas". It's always been the three of us—a little family. If I didn't have them, I'd

probably be one of those crazy ladies with twenty cats and living all alone with no contact with the outside world. *Sad but true.* They just get me. They've always been there for me, and I can't imagine my life without them.

The two of them want to go dancing at some club. *Great.* They love to dance, me not so much. It's not that I don't really like dancing per say, it's just that I don't like the way I look as I dance. I have caught my reflection one time too many and I look like a cross between Elaine from *Seinfeld* and someone

having a seizure. So, I rather just save myself the embarrassment before it happens and my friends' as well.

Although, they'll tell me I'm being ridiculous, but I think that's just the Cosmos talking when they say that. As much as I wanted to, I couldn't deny them; especially when they tagged teamed me on the phone earlier this week.

“Come on Kas, you know you'll have a good time. We won't make you dance too much, pinky swear. Two or three songs maximum.” Macy is first to

attack. She is always the set-up.

Then the closer, Chloe, takes her shot. “You know those Jimmy Choo’s you’ve been eyeing for a while?”

“Yeeessss?” I can’t help but be on guard because Chloe immediately went with the big guns, knowing how much I covet those shoes.

“If you go, they’re yours.” I can hear the satisfaction in her voice.

After a few pleases from them and a few more grunts from me I caved. The high pitch squealing that ensued probably attracted every pooch in the

neighborhood. Yes, I am a pistol in the courtroom, but when it comes to my two best friends, I am usually rendered speechless with no defense or rebuttal. They always win; which is extremely irritating.

I am getting ready; putting the finishing touches on my hair, trying to do something different with it. That never works. My hair is either in a structured ponytail or down cascading over my shoulders. I decide to put it somewhat up tonight with some tendrils hanging around my face. The red highlights really

make my dark blue eyes pop. I have some make-up on as well. I really don't wear too much that often. When I do it's usually just a little mascara, a nude eye shadow, blush and pink lip gloss—very natural. Chloe being my very own fashion consultant had purchased for me a make-up kit that contains everything I could need and then some. So, tonight I decide to put it to good use and use all of its contents: varying shades of eye shadow, blush, eye liner, everything. Chloe will be proud and amazed that I have actually taken the time to be a little

more adventurous in my make-up choices. I mean, I've even got that smoky eye thing going and it looks really incredible. My eyes look so much more expressive, I just might have to use this kit a little more often than not. As I'm finishing getting ready, my phone alerts me that I have a new text. Shocker. I'm surprised she lasted this long. *You and me both.*

You better be getting ready!

Gosh she's so pushy. My fingers quickly reply.

Yes I'm getting ready.

U better b using that make-up I bought u.

Yes, mom, I'm using the make-up.

What r u going 2 wear? cause I know the perfect thing.

I was going to wear that blue wrap dress you bought me.

Good, that was going to be my suggestion. Finish up ;) c u in 15.

For someone so small, Chloe can be very annoying. It must be that fiery red hair. But still I love her like she was my sister, Macy, too. Fifteen minutes later I hear a honk outside my apartment

building. As I look out the window, I can see Chloe pointing to her watch.

"I'm coming," I mouth to her; again with the being pushy. I grab my keys and head out the door. Usually we take a cab together, but not tonight. Macy is on the prowl, and Chloe is expecting a call later to meet up with Jason. So I follow them in my Convertible Mini Cooper. It's a good thing too, I don't want to drink too much and knowing I'm driving myself will deter indulging too much. Plus, I have work to do in the morning.

Shocker.

We arrive at the club. Chloe and Macy frequent this place regularly by themselves since I'm really not one for dancing.

Or for going out.

Thanks for the reminder.

Just keeping it real.

But these are my girls, and I would do anything for them, even if it meant embarrassing or injuring myself—two things I know they would never let happen. As we approach, the bouncer at the door just winks at Chloe, says

"Ladies," and opens the door. There are a few hisses from the long line that has formed. My girls are regulars, VIPs almost, so it is no surprise to me that we are so quickly allowed in. Although the way the bouncer eyes Macy something tells me they know each other intimately, and he would allow her in the club anytime she wanted, VIP or not.

The music is energetic, while the lights flicker and bounce around the dance floor. It's actually pretty cool, I have to admit. We approach the bar, and Macy immediately catches the attention

of the bartender. She catches the attention of every male within a five mile radius it seems. That's just Macy, she's absolutely beautiful, like Victoria Secrets' model beautiful.

"Two Cosmos and an extra dirty martini," she requests with a lick of her lips.

Macy knows how to get what she wants and always gets it quickly; no one ever hesitates when a request comes from her. Upon getting our drinks, Macy pays the bartender not only with cash but also with a wink and sexy grin. She

really knows how to play to her audience. She catches me shaking my head and mouths “What?” full well knowing what she’s done and does. She flashes me her mega-watt smile before bringing her drink to her mouth. Chloe seems obliviously to it all or maybe she’s so used to it, it’s become second nature. The two of them polish off their Cosmos and start to head towards the dance floor. I continue to sip my delicious martini hoping they forget that I promised I would dance. *Fat chance.*

"You coming," asks Chloe.

"I will; let me finish my drink and I will come and find you guys in a bit," I reply trying to get off dancing.

"You better get your ass on that dance floor in five or I'm coming and dragging you out there, got it?" Chloe goes all militant on me.

"Yes, Ma'am," I say with a salute; again with the pushy.

As I stand at the bar swaying to the music, enjoying what is a very delicious extra dirty martini, I can't help but overhear the conversation that is going on next to me—we are packed like sardines

at the bar.

"No, I'm not from around here...just visiting," he answers.

"Oh, too bad. I hope you can make it a long visit," she purrs.

"It could be," he replies.

"You have great hair," she purrs again as she reaches out and runs her fingers through his hair.

"You should see it after..."

"Oh please," I say as I turn to walk away from a conversation that is leading to something I don't really want to hear. As I walk away, I can swear I hear him

say "What?". Seriously, was that conversation happening? Was that girl being that needy? And was he actually using that line on her about his hair? Obviously, she has no brain or is a little too intoxicated to know any better. Sure, he is good looking from what I saw, actually, extremely good looking. And I really can't blame her for wanting to touch his hair; in all honesty I probably would have, too. But really, "You should see it after..." please, I can only imagine how he was going to finish that line.

I make my way to wait in line for

the bathroom before going to find Macy and Chloe on the dance floor. *What is it with there always being a line for the ladies' room and not the men's? It's really irritating.* As I stand there waiting, I still can't stop thinking about the line that he was trying to use on that girl. I did hear her giggle before I walked away, but I really hope she didn't fall for it. He did have really nice hair, the kind of hair you could really grab a hold of when he's between your legs bringing you to the brink of ecstasy with his talented tongue. Your fingers

weave into his luxurious locks and hold on for dear life...Is it hot in here? Why am I going there? *Oh, maybe because we only have intimacy with BoB for the last...I don't know...Forever!* I roll my eyes at my inner self. *You know it's true.* It's sad because it is true. My thoughts continue to wander, images of *him* flash in my head making me feel a little hotter and there's definitely a growing ache between my legs. *We so need to get some. Hush.*

"Hey it's your turn, you goin'?" the girl behind me in line asks pulling me

back to reality. *What the hell was that?*
I shake the image of "sexy hair guy" and
make my way into the crowded
bathroom.

Finally, I am making my way for the
dance floor when this random guy just
plows into me and keeps walking with
no "excuse me" or nothing. "What the
hell?" I yell. Turning around I notice it is
sexy hair guy—fucking figures. I quickly
turn around shaking the images that are
suddenly bombarding me at the moment.
Images of him and I hot and sweaty and
naked. Very, very naked. His tongue

licks across my stomach...Oh, my God I need another drink.

No, you need to get some.

No I need to forget about “sexy hair guy” because if he used that line on her, he’s probably used that line on a bazillion other girls and probably has a permanent spot in line at the free clinic.

Fine. Keep being like this.

Eventually our vagina will dry and shrivel up and fall out. So it won’t matter if we get some now, will it?

I ignore my inner self’s rambling. I

don't need people looking at me like I'm completely nuts.

Truth hurts? And if you don't do something soon, that will be our future. Oh, and add the cats too.

Still ignoring.

You can try.

As I attempt to ignore my inner self, I spot Macy bumping and grinding on some rather large, athletically built guy. Think the Rock. Leave it to Macy to find him. Macy is nothing like Chloe. Where Chloe is all stunning and petite, Macy is ethereally beautiful—it's like she's a

combination of all the best parts of Hollywood's finest. She can have any guy she wants, and she usually does.

Macy is never without a man, and tonight is no exception. As for me, that is a different story, but I don't mind. If that were to change, it would be okay, but I am not actively seeking my next conquest—that I will leave to Macy. I am really busy at the law firm, and a "relationship" just wouldn't fit right now. I am not actively seeking it; if it happens it happens. Besides I always have BoB waiting for me at home. Me and BoB go

way back and he never disappoints.

Yippee.

By the way things are unfolding on the dance floor this guy is already putty in her hands. He really didn't stand a chance. Most guys are drawn to her like a moth to a flame, and like the moth, they usually get burned. That is just Macy, and I love her in spite of it and her ways. So I guess I am calling my best friend a slut, but she will be the first to admit it. Actually, on several occasions she has referred to herself as such.

I make my way through the

crowded dance floor to where Macy and her random guy are dancing, glancing around trying to find Chloe. The three of us always stay together when we go out, but she is nowhere to be found. Macy notices me looking around.

"She got a call from Jason and left, all smiles," Macy says with a wicked wink and goes back to grinding on her random guy. I just nod and smile and go about dancing on my own. I am not the most elegant or graceful dancer in the world; actually, I have two left feet. But on a crowded dance floor in a poorly lit

club, I don't mind and no one really cares. Occasionally, Macy will look at me and giggle because I look more like a new born calf trying its legs out for the first time than a dancer. As I am attempting to move to the pulsating rhythm, someone bumps into me. No big deal; it is a very crowded dance floor. But then another bump and this one hurts just a little. And then another bump and I roll my eyes and think if this asshole does it again, that's it! Than a fourth bump, and this one nearly knocks me over.

"What the hell?" I spew, turning around to see the asshole that keeps bumping into me. As I turn, I see the "sexy hair guy" right behind me. *You've got to be fucking kidding me?*

"Well?" I scream as I began to see red.

"Well what?" he easily says with this smirk on his perfect face. And damn is it perfect. Perfectly kissable. Perfectly lickable. Perfectly perfect.

I shake my head from the sexy hair guy induced haze. "What do you mean what? You just nearly knocked me over

after bumping into me for the fourth time!"

"Hey, you're the rude girl that bumped into me by the bathrooms without saying excuse me, so I guess we're even," he says, still with that damn grin on his face, running his hand through his oh so touchable hair.

Stop it Cassidy.

"Are you kidding me? You're the one who keeps bumping into me. Maybe you need to lay off the Heineken. It's fucking with your perception of reality and equilibrium, asshole!"

"At least this 'asshole' knows how to have a good time. Maybe you should have a few drinks so you can get an idea what that's like," he replies back to me with that damn smirk on this face.

"You are such a dick!"

"Are you sure you know what a dick looks like? Because the way you're overreacting to this leads me to believe you haven't seen a dick in quite some time," he matter-of-factly says, still with that damn smirk.

All I can respond with is "Ugh!" and I storm off the dance floor.

Did that just really happen? Are you fucking kidding me? How the hell did "sexy hair guy" know I wasn't getting some? Do I have a huge neon sign above my head signaling "single girl not getting laid; currently dating BoB"? Unbelievable. I need a drink, and not because he said I did. My inner self just smiles, with her arms folded, shaking her head.

I make my way back to the bar still confused by what just happened between "sexy hair guy" and me. He seriously thinks I am the one to apologize. Is he

fucking kidding me? I order my extra dirty martini and begin to calm down; I think it's a combination of the vodka and the distance I've put between myself and him. All I can think about, and this is really starting to bother me, was that smirk on that perfect face and the way he ran his hand through his hair. He really was god-like. Perfectly chiseled features, strong jaw and as I yelled—screamed—whatever at him, I noticed he had the most unbelievably piercing green eyes. They were the kind of eyes that could see deep into your soul.

Get a hold of yourself, Kassidy.

I continue to calm down and again sip on the most delicious extra dirty martini (I must remember to have this bartender make my drinks all the time), when Macy comes bounding up behind me.

"I'm taking off with Chad."

So muscles has a name she actually remembers.

"Really, Macy? Be careful with this one; it looks like he could break you. And I'm impressed you actually know and remember his name."

"Silly Kas, you don't understand, I think this one could be *the one*. There's something different about him. He's like my hunky muscle man the way he was dancing with me."

"You go have fun, I'll be fine. Be safe."

"You know I will, and I will call you with details tomorrow."

"I look forward to it." Cue eye roll.

"You gonna go soon?" she asks as Chad pulls her away with his massive hands.

"Just gonna finish up my martini

and then it's home."

"Love ya and mean it."

"Right back at ya, Macy."

And with that she disappears. It is really something for Macy to say this could be the one. She doesn't ever say that about any of the guys she's been with. Maybe this will be the one to tame her wild ways. Miracles do happen. Hunky man, she kills me.

I finish the last few drops of my martini and walk out into the crisp cool night; knowing the two martinis I did have, haven't affected my ability to

drive. Plus I've got a bottle of water waiting in my car. The air is invigorating compared to the alcohol-stifling atmosphere of the club. I give the valet my ticket and wait. I notice a couple against the lamppost getting into it. He's practically eating her face. I quickly turn my head to avoid the show and thankfully the valet pulls up with my car. As I climb into my car, I feel relief to know that my girls are happy, and I realize I actually had a good time, with one exception..."sexy hair guy." Thank God, I will never have to see him again.

After all, he did tell that girl he was just visiting. *Oh I'm sure we'll be seeing him again...in our dreams.*

You are so delusional if you think we are going to dream about him.

Just wait and see. Wait and see.

I pull away from the curb, and I am blocked from moving any further down the street by some car in the way. There is a guy leaning into the driver's side just carrying on a conversation and standing there like he owns the street. As I look on, I notice he has a really great ass, the kind of ass you just want to sink your

teeth into. *Oh my God if we don't get something more than plastic, rubber and battery operated stimulation I am going to die.* Just as I begin to chide my inner self, the wind blows his shirt up a little, and I catch a glimpse of what could only be described as the most perfectly sculpted abs, I have ever seen. *Come back to Earth, Kassidy.* I honk the horn, and the guy raises a long slender finger out of the car signaling to give him a minute.

That is a nice finger.

Keep it together Kassidy. Just

ignore her.

*Just imagine what that finger
could do?*

I mean...Shut up!

A couple of minutes later my patience has grown thin, so I honk again, pushing down hard and long, and he ignores me. Seriously, what is with assholes this evening? Another car then pulls out, and I am able to drive around asshole and the stupid Camaro he is leaning into. As I make my way around the Camaro, I put down the window and yell "asshole" and instinctively shoot

them a different version of a finger than he's showed me earlier. I look in my review mirror as I pull away shooting daggers at his magnificent ass since his torso is still leaning into the damn Camaro. The guy finally stands up, and that's when I see it's "sexy hair guy" *Are you fucking kidding me?* I am finally glad to be heading home knowing that I will never run into that asshole again.

CHAPTER 3

Instinctively, I twist my fingers into his luxurious, silky hair and pull him closer to me. My breathing accelerating, my heart pounding.

"Oh God."

"Kassidy, baby," he breathes into my ear.

His lips caress my ear lobe, and then he gently tugs on it with his teeth. His tongue flickers down my neck to my collarbone. I can feel him in every pore of my skin.

"Please," I moan. I am so not above begging right now.

He reaches one hand and grasps my hair by the nape of my neck. The other hand, with fingers tantalizing, goes down toward my side to my hip. I gasp as he tugs at my panties, naturally finding his way to my sex. I can feel his breath warm on my neck as he groans my name, "Kassidy."

His fingers caress my clit and then make their way inside, moving ever so slowly, releasing every ounce of pent up sexual desire I have for him.

"Oh God, don't stop," I beg.

He quickens his stroking while his teeth pull at my nipple, elongating and making it harder still. I beg again like a whore in a cheap brothel, "Please I need all of you. I need to feel you in me. I can't take it anymore." His fingers pull out of me and my body protests at the loss of fullness and contact. He reaches between us and I feel his tip at my aching, needy entrance. He enters so slowly it hurts. My body is on fire and needs him like yesterday. He fully enters me and I am consumed by him. My walls

clench around him pulling him in deeper—needing him deeper. He fills me completely and begins to torturously move inside me. He breathes against my neck, bringing an onslaught of goose bumps to my skin. My body needs him, wants him, craves him. My fingers trail the contours of his muscular back, while I wrap my legs around him still needing him deeper—closer.

His lips find my ear and the warmth tickles as he moans, “Kassidy. . .”

I wake up gripping my sheets, gasping for air, with my hair clinging to

the sweat on my neck. What the hell was that? Why in the world am I dreaming of *him*? He was an asshole, a hot as fuck asshole but still, why. Ugh! *Oh, maybe because we are so hard up and even if we weren't, we would still dream of him; because let's face it...that man had it all—everything we look for in a man and then some.*

Still feeling the effects of my dream, I look over to my nightstand table drawer contemplating what I should do next. I never had a sex dream that felt so real, and honestly, what else was there

to do. So I open the drawer and smile at my neon pink friend—BoB. A girl's gotta do what a girl's gotta do. Good thing I just bought batteries. *Good thing.* I really need to look into exorcising my inner self or going into therapy. *Ha, good luck with that.*

It is Sunday morning, and I am at the table drinking my coffee and reading the paper. After going to the club Friday night and working all day yesterday this is just what I need—some relaxing time, alone. I'm trying to put off having to get

ready for that torture, I mean dance class
Chloe has me going to today. My cell
phone vibrates alerting I have a new
text.

**U better be showing up 2day
Marshall.**

**Don't worry Chloe I'll b there.
You better b or I'll kick ur ass.**
As small as Chloe is she probably
could. She is freakishly strong.

**I know Chloe I'll b there, don't
worry.**

**You better b on time, 2.
I will 12, right?**

**No Dumbass!! 11. You better b
fucking w me?**

It was so easy to get Chloe all riled
up.

Sorry Chloe. I know 11.

See u then Kas. Luv u.

Luv u 2. Later.

Dance lessons are the last thing I
want to do. I have visions of myself
falling down right on my ass in front of
the entire reception. The worst of it is,
as I stand up my dress rips, exposing my
ass to the entire world and then someone
yells, "New moon rising!" Absolutely

humiliating, and with my luck and lack of coordination, it could and probably will happen. Again, Chloe is trying to either kill me or embarrass the shit out of me so much that I end up becoming one of those people too afraid to leave their house. I am only doing this because I love Chloe like family. She is a sister to me, and I will do anything for her. And obviously humiliating myself included.

I shake off the feeling of impending doom and go to take a long hot or maybe cold shower. Even with my recent time

with BoB, I am still feeling the effects of that fucking dream. Asshole! Stupid sexy hair guy and his sexy hair, god-like looks and talented looking fingers. Gah, now I'm getting worked up again. Just stop it! *Resistance is futile.*

I arrive at the dance studio, dreading going in. I take a deep breath, open the door, and enter; my nerves in overdrive. I see Chloe and Jason gracefully floating around the dance floor. Wow, they look like Cinderella and Prince fucking Charming. I never

believed in fairy tales or happily ever after, but seeing them in this moment, I do. As Jason twirls Chloe, she spots me and gives a quick smile.

"Kassidy, you made it and on time," she chimes as she flutters over to me and hugs me as if I have been lost and suddenly found. With that she whispers in my ear, "You're lucky and thank you."

"Anything for you, Chloe." I smile back at her.

"I know." She skips away, dragging me by the hand to the dance instructor.

"Ricardo, this is my maid of honor.

This is my Kassidy."

"Ahh, the one I really need to work with and protect my toes from." He giggles.

Great.

"Okay, okay we need to continue. Miss Chloe, where is the best man?" Ricardo asks, eyes fluttering as if he was calling dibs.

And with that, I hear behind me, in voice of velvet, "Don't worry I'm here. I wouldn't think of disappointing Chloe."

"Oh, Davis, you made it."

I watch Chloe gracefully glide over

and give a big huge hug to Davis. As he spins her around, I have an overwhelming sense a familiarity. I search my brain for why he looks familiar. Then it dawns on me and I realize why he looks so familiar. It's *him*, it's sexy hair guy. It's the asshole. I choke on my own breath, coughing and gagging.

"Kassidy, are you okay?" Jason questions, patting me on the back.

And with that Davis looks over and gives me that fucking smirk, as he seems to immediately recognize me as well.

"Yes, I'm fine, just breathed in the wrong way," I cough out.

"You sure?"

"Yes, I'm fine."

Chloe bounces back over to Jason and me with Davis in tow.

Of all the assholes to run into, why do I have to keep running into this one? Is this some kind of cosmic joke I am unaware of? Fate is paying me back for something I obviously did, but have no clue what. I just can't figure out what, and I really need to so I don't do it again.

"Kassidy, this is Davis. Davis this is Kassidy," Chloe happily says with a hint of matchmaker in her tone.

Hell no!

Hell yes!

"Hi, it's Ryan actually, but everyone calls me Davis," he explains reaching out his hand.

"Hi," I reply hesitantly, stretching out my hand as well.

At that moment, as he grasps my hand in his, I feel an electric jolt that shocks me to the core, and my insides tingle (especially where BoB has just

been).

Whoa, what the hell just happened?

I can feel the heat radiate between us, and I am sure my cheeks are flush in the process. I quickly pull my hand back and look up at him. There are those emerald green piercing eyes. They look as though they are twinkling, very mischievously I might add.

Shit, he is even hotter than I remember.

When I finally peel my eyes away from his, I realize I am biting my lower

lip. Then I see that fucking smirk. He knows what he's doing and what it's doing to me.

Asshole!

"Okay, okay, boys and girls. Miss Chloe has requested that you dance a traditional waltz as one of your dances," explains Ricardo.

One of our dances? Meaning there's more? Chloe is trying to kill me for sure.

"So, Miss Chloe and Mr. Jason, please over there. And Miss Kassidy and Mr. Davis, over here," Ricardo

demands.

Just fan-fucking-tastic.

Chloe and Jason begin dancing and immediately look like Fred and Ginger.

There is no hope for me, although the prospect of dancing with sexy hair guy and "accidentally" stepping on his toes elevates my mood. *This could be fun.*

After all, payback is a bitch, and right now that bitch's name is Kassidy Marshall. I inwardly smile to myself.

"Miss Kassidy, this would be a lot easier if you got closer to Mr. Davis," insists Ricardo.

I reluctantly get closer to Davis.

"Okay, Mr. Davis, hold Miss Kassidy's right hand and place your left around her waist. Now Miss Kassidy, put your other hand on Mr. Davis' shoulder. Perfect. Now just follow my count doing this," And with that Ricardo is dancing with an invisible partner and looking rather graceful.

"Got it?" he questions.

"Yes," Davis and I say simultaneously.

"Okay, friends, here we go." And Ricardo begins counting, "1-2-3, 1-2-3,

1-2-3."

Davis of course, is good at dancing.

Fucking figures.

A phone rings in the distance, and I hear Ricardo say, "Keep going, I'll only be a moment." Ricardo sashays across the room still counting, "1-2-3, 1-2-3, 1-2-3." Then he is gone. That's when Davis starts, much to my annoyance, as we continue dancing.

"So," he begins, "we need to stop *bumping* into each other like this," with that smirk on his perfect face.

He did not just say that?

Oh but he did. I'm liking him more and more.

Shut up before I trample you into oblivion.

I would like to see you try.

Ugh!

Then he cocks his head to one side, the light twinkles in his green eyes, and he grabs his bottom lip with his teeth.

Oh, my! I can feel the heat radiate down my spine, through my hips, down my thighs and finally exploding in a full-on raging volcano between my legs. I want to push him to the ground and do

very, very dirty and naughty things with him, starting with that mouth. And when I'm done I want to start all over again.

"Hell cat?"

Did he just call me hell cat? What was that for?

And with that I am broken from my "moment" and realize it is sexy hair guy in front of me, still with that smirk on his face. If I can shoot laser beams from my eyes, or have molten lava come out of my hands I would turn him into a puddle of goo in an instant. However, those aren't possibilities, so I do the only thing

I can think of; I stomp as hard as I can on this toes.

"Owww! What the hell?" he exclaims through gritted teeth.

"Sorry. I'm sure Chloe must have told you I have two left feet. My bad," I retort with as much sarcasm as I can.

"She might have mentioned it. Anyway, obviously you are still worked up over the other night. For whatever reason, I can't figure out. But we're here now, so let's just start fresh, all right? And maybe in the process save my toes some unneeded torture."

Even though I get a small sense he's trying to be sincere I can only focus on certain words that seem to lack that sincerity. I am seething with anger.

"Worked up? Gee, let me see. I was having a great time with my friends when this asshole plowed into me as I left the bathroom and didn't even bother to say 'my bad', 'sorry', or even 'excuse me'. Then, while I was again having a good time, this asshole again, bumps into me. Not once, not twice, not three, but four times. And on that fourth time, he nearly knocks me down. And if that

wasn't enough, as I am ready to go home, this asshole blocks my way, tells me to wait a minute and keeps blocking my way longer than any reasonable person would wait. So let me see, do I have a reason to be a little pissed off at the asshole? Why, yes, I think I do. And then this said asshole just happens to be my best friend's fiancé's best friend, whom I have to dance with after figuring out that he's an asshole. Maybe Jason and Chloe think your great, but I think you're an..."

"Let me guess, an asshole?"

"No, not an asshole—a fucking

asshole."

"You have a lot of pent up rage, maybe you need to...."

"Let me guess—get laid? As if that is any of your business."

"You're right, you're right. All right, I'm sorry for not apologizing the other night. I was acting like an *asshole* and I apologize. Can't we just start over for Chloe?"

Like Chloe, he is guilting me, as if he knows it will work. But I don't want to ruin this for Chloe, as much as it pains me I need to do this for my best friend,

my sister.

"Fine, but I'm warning you, my opinion of you hasn't and won't change. Once an asshole, always an asshole."

"We'll see about that."

You keep waiting buddy. When hell freezes over, then maybe, but more than likely not. I mean, first impressions are usually correct right? Even if he did have those green eyes, chiseled jaw, nice ass, perfect abs... Get a grip Kassidy, remember asshole, and we don't like assholes. Right, sorry, asshole.

You are so delusional.

Zip it.

My inner self shakes her head and chuckles. Gah, I want to so strangle my inner self.

Apparently Chloe and Jason are in their own little world because they don't respond or even glance our way the whole time during my conversation with asshole. *He has a name you know? Davis? Shush you.* I'm glad she doesn't notice, because I don't want to ruin this for Chloe. I will put aside my feelings for asshole—I mean Davis, for her.

Besides he won't be sticking around.

Ricardo finally comes back in and spends the rest of the session with Davis and me. He sporadically tells Davis how wonderful he is dancing and with a partner like that, I should have no problem. Wonderful. Finally, it is over.

"So, Miss Chloe, we will meet again next week?" Ricardo asks.

"Yes, but unfortunately, Davis won't be able to join us; he flies back to Chicago tomorrow."

Yes!

"That's fine. I will help Miss

Kassidy in his absence."

"Oh, but he'll be back in two weeks if that helps?"

"Oh wonderful. I will see you three next week, and Mr. Davis, I will see you in two."

The four of us just look at each other as Ricardo floats out of the studio.

"You guys wanna get something to eat?" asks Chloe.

"Sorry, Chloe, I have my closing argument to tighten up. It's not quite perfect yet, and I don't want to disappoint Mr. Remington," I happily

reply.

"I'm sure it's just fine," I give her my "don't you dare start look". "Okay, fine, I understand. But next time we're going out afterwards—no if, ands, or buts."

"Yes, ma'am."

Davis and Jason are already heading out the exit. I think they want to put enough distance between themselves and Ricardo. Can't really blame them. Davis then turns towards us and says with a wink, "Nice meeting you, Kassidy."

I just stare and then Chloe jabs me in my ribs.

"Ow," I whisper, "same here."

Then Jason and he are out the door.

"Kassidy, what do you think about Davis?" Chloe asks again in that matchmaker tone again.

"Um, I don't."

"Oh, come on, Kassidy. I saw you looking at him when he first got here."

"Um, no, you didn't."

"Okay, Miss Marshall, have it your way. But I will tell you most girls find Davis quite dreamy."

Dreamy, Ha.

Oh he is dreamy. Again, you are delusional to think otherwise. And you're delusional to think you aren't totally attracted to him. Beyond attracted actually.

I'm rolling my eyes at you and giving you the stink eye as well.

Oooooo, I'm sooooo scared.

There is no way on this earth Chloe has any idea that last night I had a very real, sexy dream of Ryan Davis. Right? Kill me now. This is so not what I need.

CHAPTER 4

It has been a few days since the first night I dreamt of Ryan Davis, the asshole, sexy hair guy. Even though I like the feeling the dream brought with it, I hate the fact that it was about him. He is such an asshole, and I hate myself for thinking otherwise while I was unconscious. When I'm not subjecting myself to visions of Davis, I am busy with work and of course, with the planning of Chloe and Jason's wedding. Not that I am doing much planning. I am

basically like the guy you see out shopping with his girlfriend or wife holding the purse. I am definitely the purse holder. Chloe has a clear vision of how she wants things to be and that's how it is going to be. I have to ask her if the maid of honor does anything special, and she simply tells me to say how wonderful her ideas are and plan the bachelorette party. *Bachelorette party? I totally forgot about that. I know how. Probably because we'll never have one.* This can be fun and something I can definitely do; I will enlist Macy's help,

of course.

It is only a few days from our third dance lesson/rehearsal, and I am dreading it. Not only because I am uncoordinated and really bad at it, but because it means that the *asshole* will be there and I will have to put on my "everything is peachy" face even though he annoys the piss out of me. *He does have a name you know? I know, but he doesn't deserve me to call him by it. Yet. Shush you.* I know we said "a fresh start" for Chloe, but come on, this is pure torture. I love Chloe dearly and

want to make her day as special and wonderful as it can be, but having to dance with sexy hair guy is asking a lot. Although Chloe has other ideas, and she made them very clear during lunch the other day...

"So, Kassidy how's the case going?" inquires Chloe.

"Closing arguments are finishing up today and then the jury will deliberate."

"I still can't believe you're a lawyer. Yeah, your dad is a retired FBI agent and practically every man in your family is a cop, but who would have

thought uncoordinated, shy Kassidy would be this confident and aggressive attorney. I sure didn't, and I'm proud of ya, Kas." Macy smiles beaming with pride.

"Um, gee, thanks, Macy." I really don't like getting compliments.

"So anyway, the wedding is getting closer," Chloe sings clapping her hands, "and we have only a few loose ends to tie up, right? Like my bachelorette party?"

"Don't worry, that's all set. We will need you next Saturday," Macy says

glancing in my direction.

"Really? Where? What time? What should I wear? Why didn't you guys tell me sooner," Chloe demands, shaking her slender finger at Macy and me.

"Um, because we just finalized the plans last night, that's why, little Miss-in-Control," balks Macy.

"Okay, sorry. But where are we going?"

"We have the special VIP room reserved at our favorite club," I tell her as we watch her eyes grow wider with excitement.

"We're going to After Dark? Oh, you guys. It's perfect. I'm so excited. This is going to be the best. Now that that is taken care of, what about you guys and dates to my wedding?" It feels as though she just dropped a bomb on me. A date? I hadn't thought...

Shit! Think of something Marshall or she'll set you up. Fuck! She might set you up with sexy hair guy aka the asshole, aka Davis. But he probably has a date--why wouldn't he? Probably with Miss "I love your hair" from the club. Stupid bitch, stupid sexy hair.

What the hell, Cassidy, he is an asshole, remember? Right. Asshole.

"Well, Chad's coming with me," Macy tells us.

Wow, she is serious about this one.

"And you, Kas?"

Shit, there it is. Think, think, think, damn it!

"Oh, um, I asked Jackson from the firm to go," I quickly reply before I realize what in the hell I am saying.

Why did I just say that? Shit!

"Really, who's Jackson? You've

never mentioned him before," Chloe asks.

"Um, Jackson is Jackson Remington. He's one of the partner's sons. He's interning at the firm. I'm sure I've mentioned him before," I quickly explain, full well knowing I haven't ever mentioned him.

"No, no you haven't." Chloe smirks.

"Well, I asked him a couple of weeks ago. So he's my date."

"Oh, well, all right," Chloe says, disappointed.

"Oh, well, what?

"Oh nothing," she baits me.

"What is it Chloe?" There's a little anger in my tone.

"Well, I just thought since you were going to be there and Davis was going to be there, that you two could be there together."

"Um, no."

"Why not Kassidy? I saw the way you looked at him and the way he looked at you. I have a sense for these kinds of things."

No shit. What does she mean the way I looked at him?

"What do you mean the way I looked at him?"

"I mean, Miss Marshall, you were sort of swooning."

"Maybe you mistook my swooning for an upset stomach and my need to vomit."

"What?"

"Chloe the guy is obnoxious, rude and an asshole."

*Did I just say that out loud? I did.
Damn it!*

"Maybe you got off on the wrong foot. No pun intended. But he really is

great, Kassidy. Jason wouldn't be best friends with an asshole."

"Well, as far as I'm concerned, he's an asshole until he proves otherwise."

"What ever happened to not an asshole before proven guilty?" jokes Macy.

"Ha-ha, very funny."

"I thought it was," Macy giggles.

"Me, too," Chloe joins in.

And with that I give them both a look letting them know that the subject was closed. They take my cue and Chloe moves on.

Finally.

"Okay, so my bachelorette party is next Saturday, Macy is bringing Chad to the wedding and Kassidy you're bring this 'Jackson' as your date?" Chloe "finger-quotes" Jackson.

"No-finger quoting necessary. I have a date with Jackson for your wedding. Now, can we drop it?"

"Okay, okay fine, you're bringing Jackson."

Chloe goes on for about ten more minutes, although it seems like forever, about what specialty drink she wants at

her bachelorette party. I am going let Macy take care of that one, since she has a way with the bartenders at After Dark anyway.

As I walk back to the courthouse, I realize I am going to have to ask Jackson to be my date. Something I really don't want to do. Jackson has sort of a crush on me, and I am afraid asking him will only give him the wrong idea. I am really going to need to think about how I am going to approach him with the matter. God, I hope he doesn't have plans, because I really, truly don't want

Chloe to set me up with Davis, even though he is breathtakingly good looking, with his chiseled jaw, piercing green eyes and hair that I could really grab a hold on to when we.....

Kassidy, get a grip! Remember, asshole, asshole, asshole. He was a dick to you at the club and somewhat at the dance studio. Don't forget that.

Ryan “sexy hair guy and asshole”
Davis is going to be the death of me.

Fuck. Fuckety. Fuck. Fuck. How in the hell am I going ask Jackson without

it sounding like a "date" date? Shit, you're going muck this one up, Marshall.

Yep, you sure are. And when did we become a trucker, hmmm? I think Davis is bringing out your wild and inhibited side, and quite frankly, I like it. It's very refreshing from the uptight lawyer persona you have. Oh, and you could save yourself some agony if you just took Chloe's advice and mine of course, and go to the wedding with Davis. You know you want to.

Are you done?

For now.

Great. I need to think and I can't with your monologues bombarding my brain.

Sorry, carry on.

Thanks.

The sudden realization of what I had said at lunch the other day isn't sitting all too well with me. I had blurted out the first name I could think of... Jackson Remington. What was I thinking? Oh, I know, Chloe was about to set me up with, I can't even say his name, as my date for her wedding and

there is no way in hell that I am going to have *him*, the fucking asshole, as my date.

You know you can't or won't say his name because then you will have to acknowledge that he makes you all swoony.

Whatever.

Oh, you know it's true.

Again, whatever.

Yes, I know I will have to dance with him for Chloe, but that is all I am willing to do for her as far as he is concerned. The way I look at him. What

the hell is she talking about? Okay, he is unbelievably gorgeous, god-like even. But still, he has proven he is the typical immature, after only one thing guy, and I'm not into that. *You're not into being touched, being kissed, maybe stopping our dry spell? And you think you need to be in the crazy house because of me? Honey, denying what that man is, is admittance enough. Oh, shut the fuck up!* Just because I have had a very erotic dream about him, and more than once I might add, doesn't mean that I am into him. *Ha!* I'm sure lots of girls that meet

him have those dreams, who wouldn't? I mean really, he is beyond beautiful. Those green eyes, those plump kissable lips, that tousled hair that looks like he didn't do anything to it but did, and those fingers—Gah, those fingers. I can only imagine what those fingers can do.

Ohhhh, but no, you don't have a thing for him, sorry my bad.

I suddenly feel a warm sensation grow in the pit of stomach, well up and consume all of me as memories of my "dream" flash in my mind.

Snap out of it, Kassidy.

I hear voices outside my office and recognize one of them as Jackson's.

Shit, okay, here we go.

"Hey, Jackson, can you come in here a minute?" I ask, trying to sound nonchalant.

"Sure, what's up, Kassidy?" he asks, cocking an eyebrow, I usually don't call him into my office.

He is sort of cute, but in that "I have a cute brother my friends will want to date" sort of way.

"Um yeah, I wanted to ask you something." The words come out

hesitantly.

"Okay."

"Um, well, my friend Chloe is getting married soon, and I was wondering, as my friend, cause we're friends, right?"

"We're friends, Kassidy, sure," he says with a hint of disappointment.

"Well I don't have anyone to go with, so I was wondering if you wanted to go. It will have an open bar."

"Go with you to Chloe's wedding?"

"As friends, of course."

"Of course. Um, sure, why not."

"Really, thanks, Jackson. You don't know how much I appreciate this."

God, you have no idea how much.

"Do I have to rent a tux?"

"Unfortunately yes, it's black tie only."

"When is it?"

"It's in two months, on the fifteenth."

"Let me check my calendar." He pretends to thumb through a book. "Well, it happens that I am free, so sure, I'll go." His smile overtakes his entire face.

"Thanks again, Jackson."

And with that my phone rings. He gestures he'll get more details later. I nod and answer the phone with the greatest feeling of relief, as if I just dodged a bullet.

His hand slides down my back while his other hand cradles my neck. "God, you smell so good," he whispers as he draws in a deep breath. I moan like a porn star. His hand slowly cups my ass, and he gives a gentle squeeze. His lips move from mine, trace my jaw before reaching my neck where he gently

bites and licks. I gasp at the sensation as it causes goose bumps to cover my entire body. I can feel the wetness build between my legs as I want him in me.

"I could just devour you," he groans in my ear. I arch my back, and his tongue flickers down my neck, past my collarbone, before settling on my pert nipple. The ache between my legs grows, and feels like I will explode at any moment. He looks up at me through his long lashes. "I'm gonna take you places tonight, Miss Marshall, you have only imagined." His mouth leaves my

nipple, making its way down to my navel. I moan, wiggle and arch my back again in anticipation for where he is going to take me and for what he is going to do to me. "You may want to grab on to something, angel." And with that, his lips, tongue and mouth find my sweet spot between my thighs. I give out a whimper....

Buzz buzz buzz buzz buzz!

I shoot up in bed, glistening with sweat, hearing "I Wanna Sex You Up" after the buzzing stops on my alarm clock.

Just perfect. Color Me Bad and the nineties. Great, another damn dream about him. What the hell? Why do I keep dreaming about this asshole?

Oh, I don't know, maybe because he is insanely hot and you DO have a little thing for him.

Do I? There's no way—he's not...I mean there's no way...I don't...he's not...what... what I usually go for?

Oh, you don't like extremely good looking guys who make you feel warm and tingly inside? But I think you do. You definitely do.

"No, no, no!" I scream, shaking the idea from my inner self. Now my neighbors are going to think I'm being attacked or I'm absolutely insane.

What is she thinking?

I am thinking the truth, that's what, even if you choose not to.

I wipe the sweat from my forehead and head to the shower to get ready.

It is Sunday, which means dance lessons, which means *him*. *He has a name you know? You could use it?*

I'm ignoring you so there's no use in talking to me today. I'm not going to

acknowledge your crazy existence in my head from this point forward.

Sure, whatever you say, you are in charge after all.

Great, I think shaking my head. I let the warm steamy water cascade over me, trying to wash away the feeling from my dream. When it doesn't work, I take matters in my own hands, trying to finish the dream on my own. If I am going to dance with Davis, I need to get this dream out of me; otherwise, how will I be able to face him? And with that, the dream continues.

I reluctantly enter the dance studio only to find Chloe and Jason gracefully floating around the floor. They are truly beautiful together. I glance down at my watch, noting the time is exactly eleven and fucking sexy hair guy is late again. Asshole.

"Oh, Miss Kassidy, I'm so happy to see you," Ricardo flutters over, kissing me on both cheeks.

"Hi, Ricardo."

"Okay, where is Mr. Davis?"

Ricardo asks, annoyed.

"Oh, he's running a little late. He will be here shortly," Chloe informs not only Ricardo but also me.

Oh, how nice, he called to say he would be late.

Ricardo dances with me while we wait for *him* to show up.

As Ricardo is twirling me around, I see *him* by the door, standing there leaning against the jam with that smirk on his face.

God, he looks amazing. Stop it, you fucking idiot.

"Ahh, Mr. Davis, you're here."

"Sorry, I'm late," he replies.

Sorry my ass--you probably did this on purpose.

Remember the "fresh start"
Marshall.

Okay, okay.

Davis looks at me, puzzled.

"Nothing," I say shaking my head.

"Okay, my friends, Miss Chloe has come up with her special dance performance. The four of you will be dancing *The Thriller*," Ricardo informs, all excited.

"As in Michael Jackson, *Thriller*?"

I ask.

"Yep, the very one." Chloe smirks.

She has watched *Thirteen Going on Thirty* one too many times.

"Okay so here is what we are going to do," Ricardo starts instructing. He turns on the music, and Michael Jackson is echoing throughout the entire studio. He first demonstrates the moves in sections. I think it is more for my uncoordinated benefit. Chloe, Jason and Davis seem to catch on pretty quickly, but of course, not my dumb ass, and I've seen that movie almost as much as

Chloe. So Ricardo takes extra time and care with me before setting me loose on my own. A few times in our zombie march I step on him and smile. A few times it isn't on purpose. He smiles back and then rolls his eyes. That really annoys me, but he looks hot as hell when he does it. At one point my feet get tangled up, and I spin around falling right on Davis.

"Sorry, I'm extremely uncoordinated. I don't know what Chloe was thinking?" I say as I am lying on top of him, when I swear I feel his dick

twitch on my leg. My yoga pants and his gym shorts aren't much of a barrier.

No, I am imaging things, there's nothing twitching. Right?

"No problem," he breathes, licking his lips and ever so slightly thrusts his pelvis against my leg. There's that damn twitch again and it's harder.

Oh my.

"Yea, right," I push myself off of him as my body protests.

God, he is beautiful. I could just throw myself back on top of him and lick and suck and kiss him from fucking

head to fucking toe.

Finally coming around to my way of thinking.

Nope. No way. Get it together, Kassidy. Remember, he's an asshole. A charming, hot as all hell asshole, but still an asshole.

You keep telling yourself that.

I feel myself blush and beads of sweat are beginning to form on the back of my neck. I stumble getting up and thankfully, catch my balance before falling back on him.

Although, that wouldn't be so bad.

No, it certainly would be way more fun than standing upright doing this ridiculous dance.

Suddenly, the visions of my dream come to the forefront of my mind. My entire body breaks out into a mega hot sweat. My stomach flutters, my heart pounds, and the ache between my legs, is making itself known. I need friction. Like some serious friction. Right. Now. I could stumble into him again, land on him, and rub myself against him like a dog in heat.

Before my whorish self or inner

self takes over, I recover from my lust induced hazed. "Um, I gotta go," the words fall quickly out of my mouth.

"Ummmm, okay, is everything all right?" he asks with concern.

Awww, he's concerned.

Stop it!

"Yeah, I just realized...I ummm... I'm meeting Jackson soon, and...and I need to get going."

Where the hell did that come from?

Don't worry, I know what I'm doing, my inner self informs me.

"Who's Jackson?"

"Jackson? Who's Jackson? He's a...a friend, my, umm, date for the wedding. I gotta go. Tell Chloe I'll call her later."

That was very convincing.

Zip.

I quickly grab my stuff and head out the door as relief washes over me. Any more time with him and I probably would have jumped him and rubbed myself all over every inch of his hard, deliciously, muscular body; my loathing of him be damned.

*What the hell is he doing to me?
And why did I say I was meeting
Jackson. Stupid, stupid, stupid. Wait,
why do I care if I mentioned Jackson.*

*Oh, I don't know, maybe because
you DO have a thing for him.*

*Doesn't matter. Move on,
dumbass.*

When I get to my apartment, I immediately turn on the stereo, grab a bottle of water from the fridge and basically chug it. Obviously, dancing with him left me quite thirsty. *Among other things.* Maybe if I chug this entire

bottle I can drown my inner self. *Not a chance.* I continue to drink and as my breathing comes back to normal, I realize my place is a mess.

Shit, I really need to clean.

Since I'm not really meeting Jackson, now is a good as time as any. I haven't had much time lately working not only days, but pulling all-nighters too. I strip off my yoga pants, they are too wet and extremely uncomfortable. As I peel them off, I swear I hear my legs sigh in relief. I throw them in the wash with a load I had started earlier

but had never turned the water on. I have a thing about starting the wash and leaving. I always have visions of the washer going haywire while I am gone and coming home to a house full of soapsuds. And my luck being my luck, it could happen.

Music begins to fill the apartment and apparently it's the '80's hour on my favorite station, when I hear the beginning of one of my favorite songs. I run over to the stereo, cranking it to ten, not caring what the neighbors think, and begin vacuuming. For some unknown

reason cleaning soothes me, and this song puts me back in a good mood.

"Ohhh, ohh, we're halfway there, Ohh, ohh, living on a prayer," I sing at the top of my lungs, dancing with my vacuum cleaner in only my underwear and tank; trying desperately to cool down.

Oh, you're hot for other reasons other than sweat and those stupid yoga pants.

Ignoring you.

You can try.

As I turn around, still singing my

heart out and dancing with the vacuum cleaner I notice a figure out of the corner of my eye. I'm about to scream when I realize it's Davis standing in the doorway, leaning against the frame with a different kind of smirk on his face and his eyes are full of desire?

CHAPTER 5

Oh, my God!! What is he doing here, standing in my apartment? Shit, I'm in my fucking panties. Hope you're enjoying the show asshole, because this is the one and only time you'll see me like this. Mother fucking prick!

"What the hell are you doing here?"

It's all I can get out, as the anger rises from the pit of my stomach burning like acid.

"Ummmmmm." He suddenly looks like the fat kid who got caught stealing

the entire cookie jar. His little smirk disappears, but that look is still in his eyes. Although now it's mixed with fear.

*Um, is all you can say, pervert?
And you should be scared.*

Much to my disappointment I walk over to the stereo and turn it off. I love Bon Jovi and you don't get to hear their old hits on the radio every day. And here I am turning it off because of the asshole standing in my doorway.

"Well? I asked you a question.
What are you doing in my apartment?"

"Um, I knocked and knocked, but I

guess you didn't hear me?" It comes out more like a question.

You knocked, uh huh? I've heard that one before. Well, not exactly that one, but close enough. Why the hell is he looking at me like that? Oh, because you're standing in a tank top and panties, stupid. Go cover up!

"Will you quit gawking and close your eyes or turn around. Or better yet, just leave!" My teeth are clenched so tight it feels as though my jaw will break any second.

As the words come out of my mouth

I realize he looks sort of...crushed?

"Sorry, I'll turn around. I've got something for you from Ricardo," he says his tone apologetic.

Anger is good Kassidy, remember —asshole.

But he looks so sweet and...

Forget sweet and whatever else you're thinking, he's still an asshole! And being here uninvited, gawking at me, just proves it.

But...

But nothing. I'm gonna put some clothes on before he does I don't know

attack me or something like a deranged stalker lunatic.

Would that be so bad?

Hush!

As I shake off the conversation with my inner self. I've come to the realization that I am having these conversations more regularly since I ran into him. Thanks for that, asshole. I turn around and make my way quickly down the hall. I grab the first thing I find, my gray yoga pants and my favorite tattered sweatshirt. I make my way back to him, dressed more decently.

Decently? You're totally covered up.

Zip it.

"So, do you make it a habit of opening other people's doors and coming in without being invited?" I ask, still pissed.

"No, I don't, but like I said, I knocked and knocked and because the music was so *fucking* loud you didn't hear me." Now he sounds pissed.

What right does he have to sound pissed for? He wasn't the one just seen in their panties.

Maybe he sounds that way because he truly is sorry and really did knock, like he said. The music was kind of loud.

Okay, okay, just shut up. God, my inner self is making think I have split personalities.

"Fine, whatever. What do you have for me?" I ask.

"Ricardo gave me a CD of the songs, so you could practice. He also thought it would be a good idea if I helped."

Really? Well, I was pretty awful,

but why would he help me?

Does a "fresh start" ring any bells? Get with it Kassidy.

"How did you know where I lived?"

"Chloe gave me directions."

"Figures," I say with a little smile, which irritates me that I'm smiling at him.

Chloe playing matchmaker again. I could so kill her. Wait until I see her again.

Why so you can properly thank Chloe?

No...just...just...

"She thought I should bring it to you now with the off chance you might be home and not out with Jackson."

"Off chance, huh?"

Who is Chloe kidding? She knew what she was doing when she sent him over here. I am going to have a few choice words with her very soon.

"That's what she said. So are you meeting this Jackson still?"

Damn it. Jackson. Quick think of something fast. "Um, he called on my way home said he was busy. So, um, no,

I'm not meeting up with him. But I am later." *Really smooth Cassidy.*

"Ohh."

"Yeah, we're meeting later for drinks."

That sounds believable, right? He just smirked. Why did he just smirk?

"What?"

"Oh, um, nothing. Anyway, here's your CD. I'll be in town a few days and maybe we could practice?"

His hand grazes mine as he hands me the CD, and I feel a surge of electricity course through my body that

finally comes to full force between my legs. *Holy mother, what is he doing to me?* "A few days, how come?"

"Best man stuff. So practice?"

Okay, don't seem too eager. "Um, sure. I think I'm free Tuesday evening." *Way not sound too eager, dumbass.*

"Tuesday evening works for me."

Yeah, it works for him. Snap out of it Marshall. "All right. I guess call me and we can get together."

And with that my mind begins to wander. I can see us practicing our moves. His hands on my body. Skin to

skin. His warm breath blowing against my heated skin. His tongue licking at the sweat between my... The wetness grows between my legs at the thought.

He brings me back to reality. "I'll need your number, Kassidy," he lightly chuckles.

Shit, keep it cool and together. Don't fall apart now, that's all we need. Focus, you're a freakin' lawyer for heaven's sake.

Right, lawyer. Give him, lawyer-tude.

"Right, give me your cell." I square

my shoulders, lift my chin and reach my hand out with my courtroom demeanor.

He hands over his cell phone and I immediately begin to add my number to his contacts.

Holy Hell! There are a lot of names of girls in here. Kate, Samantha, Laura, Victoria. What the hell, the list goes on and on. Fucking womanizing asshole. Just like...

You don't know that and don't go there.

But...

But nothing just don't.

"You sure do have a lot of girls' numbers in here."

Or did I say that out loud?

"Yeah, mostly friends," he said with a half-smile.

Apparently I said that out loud.

Sure, friends my ass. He has a fucking harem.

"Friends, uh huh, right." I can't help the sarcasm and disgust dripping from my words.

"All right, so I'll give you a call Tuesday afternoon, cool?" He ignores my comment like I never said it.

"Sure."

It's time you left asshole.

"Um, Kassidy, sorry about before."

He again sounds really sorry.

"No problem, but next time, just wait for someone to answer the door."

I can't believe I'm letting him off that easy? You must be rubbing off on me.

Or?

Or nothing, I just want him and his harem phone out of my apartment.

"I *hope* I can do that." He smirks, while emphasizing the word hope.

Why is he stressing the word hope? And why is he looking at me like that? He just needs to leave.

"Bye se... Davis."

Good catch, Kassidy, you wouldn't want to call him sexy hair guy to his face. Asshole, yes. Sexy hair guy, no.

"Bye, Kassidy."

I close the door behind him and lean against it trying to catch my breath. "What the fuck is he doing to me?" I say out loud to no one in particular. That's when I catch a glimpse of myself in the mirror. My face is tinged pink and

slightly flushed. There's a shiny glow to my skin. And then I remember what panties I have on. On the back of my panties—the word “hope” is splashed across my ass. Thank you so much Victoria's Secret for outing that secret. I feel my skin prickle and heat up with complete and utter embarrassment. No wonder he said “hope” like he did. Oh my God, just kill me now.

Oh get over it. I think he liked what he saw.

I stare at my reflection assessing my reaction to him. He is extremely

good looking and charming and sexy as hell. And above all, I do feel different around him. I have never felt such a chemical or *electrical* reaction to anyone before. There is something there, but do I want there to be? I honestly don't know. The last dating experience I had...I don't even want to think about it and rehash all that. *Me either, but remember Davis is not... I know, I know.* He does seem to be trying to not be so asshole-ish; although he did enter my apartment without my welcome, and all those girls' names and numbers. What

the hell is up with that? He said friends, mostly. More like friends with benefits. Shit. And why the hell is with Chloe sending him over here? She knows damn well how I feel, or did feel, or do feel. Ugh, I'm so confused. Anyway, I am definitely going to have a word or two with Miss Chloe.

Monday morning I immediately text Chloe.

Loe, we're having dinner 2nite.

Well, hello, Miss Marshall.

Don't hello me.

Bitchy.

Lucy, you have some explaining to do.

Figured I would. What time and where?

7pm Murphy's.

Should I be scared?

Yes.

I'll wear extra padding.

Ha ha ha.

See ya then, Kassidy.

Oh you will.

Chloe is definitely going to explain to me first, why she sent sexy hai...I

mean Davis to my apartment and secondly, why did she think it was a good idea for him to help me in between dance lessons. Because as great as Ricardo is, I seriously doubt it was his idea. At least I have a few more hours at the office before heading over to Murphy's to cross-examine her. She is going to see firsthand what I am like in a courtroom and it isn't going to be pretty.

Oh, who the fuck are you kidding? And is it so hard to remember his name? Sexy hair guy is a mouthful don't you think? Calling him Davis or

Ryan even would be much easier.

I ignore my inner self.

Chloe will turn this all around and probably eat me alive. She is small and looks timid, but I have a strong feeling if she ever became a lawyer, I will have met my match in the courtroom. I think it has to be because she deals with some bitchy Beverly Hills wives that gives her that edge.

Knock. Knock.

"Come in," I utter without thinking.

"Hey, Kassidy." I look up and see Jackson standing in my doorway.

Shit. "Hey Jackson, what's up?"

"Not much, just wondering if you uh, wanted to uh, go out tonight... for dinner," he asks, rubbing the back of his neck as his head hangs down not meeting my eyes.

Brilliant idea you had asking him to be your date to the wedding, Einstein.

"Uh, tonight, actually I have plans with Chloe."

It is the truth. I couldn't ever lie to Jackson—Davis, on the other hand...
When did I start calling him Davis?

It's about time.

As I continue to mind wrestle with my inner self, Jackson looks puzzled. Probably for good reason. I'm sure I look like I belong in a padded cell as I have a conversation with my inner self.

"Uh, Kassidy, are you all right?"

"Yeah, sure. It's just that..."

"It's just what?"

"Oh, um, never mind."

"You know you can tell me anything. We're friends, right?"

"Yeah, we're friends."

"So....?"

Why the hell not..."Jackson, have you ever thought one thing of someone and then come to find out you might have been wrong about them or almost wrong? I mean, they are at first this really obnoxious, self-centered, playboy asshole. And they think they know everything about you, even your sex life, or lack thereof. But then after seeing them a few times, they come across as something entirely different? Like one time they're Dr. Jekyll and the next they're Mr. Hyde."

Kassidy you're fucking rambling.

And why are you going on about Davis to Jackson?

Because I'm stupid, that's why and a glutton for punishment.

"Uh, I guess so. You're kinda hard to follow, but I think I get it."

"Sorry, I get brain tied sometimes."
Mental ADD is more like it.

"That's okay, let's see. You have a first impression and then you realize you were wrong. Right?"

Well, that was simply put.

"Exactly. I think."

"Sometimes first impressions can

be the wrong one, under weird circumstances. Well, maybe we can go out some other time?" He quickly changes the subject.

Wow. Was Davis like that at the club that night, because that was an example of weird circumstances? Now Kassidy, be gentle about dinner. He's a sweet guy and doesn't deserve any bullshit.

"Jackson, I don't know if that's a good idea. I know I invited you to the wedding, but as friends."

"I know, but friends can go out and

have dinner once in a while, right?" His voice cracks with nervous energy.

I do that with my other friends, why should Jackson be any different? As long as he knows where I stand and that our relationship isn't going to be anything more than friends. Jackson is a great guy, but he really isn't my type. Besides, he seems more like brother material than boyfriend material.

"Sure Jackson, why not."

"Cool, I'll see ya later."

"No prob, take it easy."

Jackson is really sweet and he

seems to get me, even when I do ramble on like a mad woman. And speaking of rambling, what the hell is that all about? "Sexy Hair Guy" or Davis or what-the-fuck-ever I am calling him, is really getting under my skin.

Shit.

I just need to focus on my work and then focus on putting it to Chloe. God, I love being a lawyer.

I arrive at Murphy's early. I want to make sure I am prepared. I actually think about making note cards just in case I

begin rambling. The lawyer in me begs for note cards, but I think that will definitely land me in the mental ward.

Finally, in Chloe fashion, she floats through the restaurant to meet me at our table. She is all smiles. Little does she know she was in for it, big time.

"So Chloe..."

"I know, I know. Yes, I told Davis where you lived and that he should bring you the CD, because I knew you weren't really meeting Jackson. If you were, you would have mentioned it to me before. So, I knew you were avoiding Davis

because believe it or not Miss Marshall, you have some sort of attraction towards him, whether you want it admit or not. It's obvious every time you see him, and I will say it's mutual. Secondly, it wasn't my idea that he help you with the routine, it was actually his. Ricardo was going to suggest me when Davis butted right in and volunteered. So, if you are thinking of grilling me or cross examining me, whatever you want to call it, you're mistaken, because, there you go."

God, she said that all in one breathe. How did she know what I was

going to say? I swear she is a psychic and needs to get her own hotline. And if she just doesn't take the wind out of my sails. I was going have fun and she just took that all away. Wait, what did she mean by mutual?

"You said mutual?"

"Yes, mutual. If you can't *fucking* see the way he looks at you, then you're completely blind. And if you don't see how you look at him, then you're an idiot. Because it's obvious, not only to me, but to Jason too."

Shit. Jason saw it too. Whatever it

was.

"Chloe, I don't know what you're talking about. I look at him like, I look at look at, shit, I don't know...Jason."

"You better not look at Jason that way or I will kick your sweet little ass. And you know I could, too. Kassidy, you have a crush on Davis, it's obvious. And he has one on you. So, why don't the two of you just forget all the bullshit and go out or something. Save us all the grief; because believe me, if you keep denying this there will be grief. And then I will have to step in and you don't want me to

step in."

Hell, no I don't want her to step in. She is a crazy lunatic, me having a crush on Davis. Please. Yes, I may be slightly attracted to him, but any other red-blooded girl would be; shit he is sex on legs. But I don't want to go out with him or let alone date him. I need to buck up and put an end to her "rationalizing."

"Chloe, I don't think you know what you're talking about." She is about to butt in as usual, so I simply stop her before she can. She doesn't look too happy that I put my hand over her lips.

"Hear me out. Sure Davis is attractive, but that's as far as it goes. I would be blind or a shut-in if I didn't think that. But believe me, that's it. He's just not my type, really. Yes, gorgeous is everyone's type, including mine, but for the few times we've met, especially that first time at the club, I truly deep down in my heart of hearts believe he is an arrogant, egotistical asshole. Wait. I know you think the world of him, but I'm not in that world. So please, as my best friend, stop trying to push him on me like you're my dealer. All right?"

There, I said it. God, I really believe what I just said. Good because it's the truth? Hopefully she'll believe it.

"Fine. If that's the way you want it," she says with a pout as if she were a two year old not getting her way.

"Yes, that's the way I want it."

"Okay Kassidy, it's your life and your mistake. I really think that you and Davis could..."

That's when I give my cross-examination evil eye and she shuts the hell right up.

"Evening ladies, I'm your waiter, Jared. Can I get you ladies a drink?"

"Yes!" we say in unison.

Chloe and I say our good-byes and she still looks disappointed. I know she wants to be the ultimate matchmaker, and as attracted as I am to Davis, I'm not going to let that happen. If I do, I'm sure I will be just another name in his long list of contacts and that definitely isn't for me. I am a romantic at heart and truly believe in one man, one woman. Deep down, I want what Chloe and Jason

have, and something in my gut tells me that isn't going to happen with Davis. Well, I could end my dry spell and put away BoB and just fuck him. No, that would be something Macy would do, not me. Not an option.

I finally get home and there is a message on my voice mail.

"Hi Kassidy, it's Davis. I just wanted to make sure we were still practicing tomorrow. Just give me a call and let me know. I *hope* to see you soon. Bye."

Hope? He's killing me. His voice

is even sexier on the voice mail and it sends shivers down my spine. I can feel the fire grow deep within and scorch its way throughout my entire body. I feel like I am going to spontaneously combust. How does he do this with a phone message? Seriously? Must be some sexual voodoo. As the fire intensifies, I feel my entire body aching to be touched.

HolymotherofGod! I seriously need help. I immediately go to the kitchen and opened my junk drawer.

Yes! A fresh pack of batteries.

Ryan "sexy hair guy" Davis is going to single handedly help me to increase Energizer's stock price.

Thank God for BoB.

CHAPTER 6

"Elaine, can you get me Mr. Reynolds's file please?"

"Right away Miss Marshall."

The partners were very impressed with the success of my last case. I had been worried that the jury was going to go the other way. Usually I have a fix on them before they deliberate, but not this last time. Fortunately, they decided in

my client's favor and because of that, the partners handed me a very valuable client, Mr. Reynolds. If I didn't thrive under stress and pressure, I probably would be falling apart at the seams right now, but quite honestly I live for this kind of stuff.

"Here you go Miss Marshall and here are your phone messages."

"Thanks, Elaine."

As far as assistants go, Elaine is pretty good, although at times I swear I catch her glaring at me like I am the boss from hell. Honestly, I think I am a pretty

awesome boss, not too demanding or overbearing. But something about Elaine makes her come across as bitchy. If we were in high school, we probably wouldn't have been friends and I probably would have kicked her ass by now.

Shit, three messages from Macy. Damn it, she's gonna be pissed. I'm just going to text her and avoid a verbal lashing.

Hey Macy, been swamped just got your messages.

You better be fucking swamped.

Shit she is pissed.

Macy doesn't like to be ignored, especially when she thinks whatever is going on with her, the whole world should stop and take notice.

Sorry, partners gave new case.

Really?

Yes, really.

That's awesome Kas, congrats.

Cool, not so pissed anymore, that was quick.

We need to discuss Saturday. Tie up loose ends.

Shit, Saturday Chloe's bachelorette

party.

Sure no prob.

How about 2nite?

Can't.

Why not?

Busy.

With what?

Damn it, she's gonna make me say

it.

Dance practice.

With Chloe?

No.

Jason?

No.

Marshall?

With Davis.

Ohhhh. So it's Davis now?

Can it Blondie.

Testy Testy.

You have no idea.

Okay fine 2mor lunch then?

Sure.

And you better come with details.

Details?

Yes about your "dance practice"

with Davis.

There won't be any details.

Uh Huh.

Gotta go see ya 2mor.

Don't do anything I wouldn't do.

Believe me there isn't a chance.

L8r

God what is with everybody? Why are they all conspiring to hook us up? Just when I thought I had Chloe reigned in, stupid Blondie gets her game face on. Ugh!

The afternoon passes by quickly and when I notice the clock in my office says 5:12, I start to get all flustered and panicky. My time for dance practice with Davis is fast approaching and I'm

not at all prepared for what that entails.

*So you're gonna refer to him as
Davis now?*

Yes, is that a problem?

No it's just about damn time!

Although Ryan would be better.

Don't push it.

Okay, not pushing.

Again my inner self's mental
arguments are perpetually giving me
mental whiplash. Jeez!

I tidy up my office, after all it looks
as if a tornado had hit, with files and
papers strewn all over my desk, floor,

credenza and chairs. It is basically organized chaos, but I can't leave it like this, if anyone were to walk in, the partners probably would rethink their confidence in me. Plus, it keeps my mind busy and it gives me something to do before I have to head home and get ready. *Home to get ready for dance practice.* I am not only a little apprehensive because I will be alone with Davis, but also because I am a klutz and I really don't feel like embarrassing myself, let alone in front of him. Yes, he has already seen me trip and tumble, but

heck, once was enough; I don't need to have a repeat performance. Actually, it seems as if I am always getting a little embarrassed around him. First at the club... Wait does that count? Yeah it does, when he hit the nail on the head about my lack of a sex life, second, the first time at the studio, third, the second time at the studio and fourth the time when he gawked at me vacuuming in my panties. So why should tonight be any different?

If there is a God please let tonight be different. Give me grace and poise.

Who am I kidding? Hell, I'd settle for a right and left foot.

5:40, time to head home for a quick shower and change and then head over to the studio. Ricardo was gracious enough to give us studio time at no extra charge. I think he is kinda crushing on Davis, who couldn't blame him really?

Crushing on Davis? Nope, not me. Chloe and Macy are completely wrong. Right? Right.

Are you sure about that?

Shut up you. I want no comments from the peanut gallery tonight.

I can't make any promises.

God after this wedding I am probably going to be committed.

I think that is probably the fastest shower I ever took. And for some odd reason it seems like it took a lifetime to decide what to wear. It is dance practice with Davis for Pete's sake, not dinner with the Pope. So, finally I decide on my usually attire that seems to work, yoga pants, tank, a hoodie, this time it is a little chilly outside, and Nikes. For the life of me I can't understand why I am

stressing over this so much.

I know why.

Pipe down peanut gallery.

Crazy, crazy, crazy.

I arrive at the dance studio at exactly 7:00 and there is no Davis.

He said Tuesday right?

Yes, he said Tuesday.

Maybe he is running late or maybe he changed his mind. As a wave of panic starts to creep up from my toes, I walk over to the stereo, taking deep relaxing breaths, I pull out the CD Davis had given me, place it in the stereo and hit

play. The sounds of *Thriller* start to echo throughout the quiet studio.

Michael does have a calming effect, which is exactly what I need. His music just has a way of making you forget and just have fun. It's hard not to try to move to its steady rhythm.

Even though the studio has a wall of mirrors to watch my performance in, I decide against it. I know I am going to be humiliated enough, if and when he shows up, so, I don't need to watch the car wreck unfold right before my eyes in the mirror. So, I opt to face the wall of

windows and watch the sunset and the moon creep up into the night sky.

As *Thriller* continues, I proceed to get my "zombie" on. I don't trip, I don't stumble, and I am actually pretty good. As good as I can be. And hey let's face it, no tripping or stumbling is good. I silently pat myself on the back as I continue to let Michael lead the way.

"Cause this is Thriller, Thriller night...." The song is contagious and I am caught up in the moment. Vincent Price gives his last cackle when I turn around to see Davis leaning against the

door jam, smirking and clapping.

I must turn thirteen different shades of pink in that one moment, each more vibrant than the last.

"Very nice." He smirks as he continues to clap approaching me.

"Um, thanks, I didn't think you were coming." I cannot bring myself to meet his gaze.

Thirteen more shades of pink.

"Yeah, sorry I'm late, I tried to call, but my cell went dead."

"Sure, no prob."

"You actually looked pretty good

just now, have you been practicing?"

"A little. No need to tempt clumsy fairies."

Clumsy fairies?

Sorry it's all I got.

As he continues to approach me, he takes off his black hoodie and reveals a tight fitting green tee.

Wow!!

It hugs his sculpted form, accentuating the muscles underneath. And Lord does he ever have muscles. The color of the shirt makes his eyes pop and sparkle the most beautiful shade of

emerald I have never seen. It's like looking at Emerald City in the Wizard of Oz in all is vibrant glory. If Jared's, that jeweler, could put this color in a stone, they would definitely make millions off of it. As he comes closer, I can feel the heat radiate off of him. My body begins to tingle and I swear my panties, which I'm sure I put some on before I left, feel like they were nowhere to be found. Just poof, I'm pantiless.

How the hell did he do that? He hasn't even touched me yet. What happens then? Hell, I'm gonna be a

puddle of orgasmic goo at this rate.

"Okay, so, do you want to practice the waltz or *Thriller*?"

"Um, I think *Thriller* again. It's the performance of the night and I don't want to screw it up for Chloe."

Good call Marshall, no contact.

If he touches you right now you might fucking explode.

I know, right?

Right, now just relax, stay calm and focus. It's no big deal; he's no big deal.

Are you sure about that?

Well...

That's what I thought.

No more peanut gallery.

I shake off my inner conversation,
only to find him smirking at me yet
again, with a raised eyebrow, which
makes me tingly all over again.

He seriously needs to stop that.

*God I wonder if he knows what he's
doing?*

"What?" Is all I can muster.

"Nothing, it's just..."

"Just what?" I pry further.

"You look cute, more like sexy

even, when you're deep in thought. You get this line, right here, between your eyebrows and your nose kinda scrunches up." His slender finger traces the crinkle between my eyebrows.

Wait, he just called me sexy and then he just touched me right between my eyebrows and that small touch sent a shockwave of electricity pulsating throughout every crevice of my body. It feels as if I have just been ignited and the wave of pleasure that that one little touch gives me is not only unexplainable, but the best damn thing I

have ever felt.

Holy

motherfuckercheeseandcrackers. If his one, tiny, little touch can do that, what the hell will a more significant touch do? Holy shit, holy shit!! What the hell am I gonna do? Think Kassidy think. Shit, shit, shit. Okay, bring out the lawyer-tude that's when you're in control and the most comfortable. Will it work?

Hell, it's worth a try.

"Alright, just back up buddy. This is my personal space and this is your

personal space." I motion with my hands my space and his space giving my best courtroom voice.

"Got it?"

"Yes ma'am."

"Okay, so why don't you go turn *Thriller* back on so we can practice."

Good, Kassidy, Good.

But don't sound too bitchy.

Right.

"Sorry, Davis that was kinda rude,"
I apologize as I realize I am biting my lower lip. For some reason I always do that, especially when I am apologizing

or extremely nervous.

"Hey, don't sweat it, you can't help it if I get you all worked up," he teases.

Oh, he just didn't?

Oh, yes he did.

"You get me all worked up? Please," I try to say all casual like but anger seethes underneath.

"Um, yes, you all worked up. You were practically quivering in your panties."

"I was not!" Now the anger is beginning to boil and spill over. "What you mistook as getting 'worked up' was

actually the repulsion to being touched by an asshole like you!"

Now I am officially pissed and only seeing red.

"Repulsive?"

"Yes, repulsive."

"Sweetie, wait let me rephrase that, Bitchy, nothing about me is repulsive. You are just too hard up to know the difference."

"Too hard up, too hard up? I will have you know..."

"Have me know what? That you spend your nights at home, alone,

probably curled up with your 'vibrator'." He air quotes.

That's it, that's mother fucking it!

As I raise my hand to him, doing what I have seen a hundred times in those old black and white movies, he grabs me by the wrist and pulls me into him, tightly. And before I know it, his lips are on mine, kissing me with such intensity that I can hardly breathe. I try to push against him, to pull away, but he holds me so tightly that I can't—he won't budge. I feel as if I am having an out of body experience. Suddenly, my inner

self takes over and my lips are moving in unison with his and then his tongue juts out to find mine. His tongue is warm and full, as it caresses mine. He tastes sweet; he tastes like honey. The fire inside me grows, intensifies. He takes my bottom lip between his teeth and gently tugs. I moan in ecstasy.

This kiss is like no other kiss and the feeling I have from it was like nothing I have ever experienced. It seems like an eternity before I float back into my body and reality sets in, as I am ready to bitch slap my inner self.

The asshole, with his phone harem, is kissing me? I don't fucking think so. This will only lead to...I can't...I won't let him hurt...

I swallow the lump building in my throat and find the strength to pull away from him. When I finally do and look up at him he licks his lips and grins as if to say "I told you so".

That does it. I smile, cock my head, twist my lips into a teasing smile, and slap him.

"I hope you enjoyed it because that will never fucking happen again! I can

guarantee it!" I am still seething not only at him, but also at myself for letting it happen.

I grab my hoodie and bolt for the door leaving *him* in the studio. I run out of the building into the crisp night air catching my breath.

What the fuck? Uuuuggggghhhh!
He is such a fucking asshole! First impression still stands. The things he said. The way he kissed me. The way he kissed me. Shit!!!

You liked it.

I know! But it doesn't matter he

was an asshole, is an asshole and will always be an asshole.

I am totally flipping out and think of the only thing I can do. Like the crazy person I am, I run.

CHAPTER 7

When I finally can't run anymore I realize I have gotten pretty far from the studio.

Shit.

I am trying to catch my breath and trying to understand what the hell just happened. Everything was going pretty well until he made that crack about me being all worked up over him and snuggling my vibrator. When he said that, I was taken back to our first encounter at the club. He was pure

asshole then and he is being pure asshole now. But that kiss. Did he do it because he was stopping me from hitting him, because it was a gut reaction or because he really wanted to?

Does it really matter Kassidy?

Yes it matters!

Why did I let him get to me like that? No guy ever has crawled under my skin and taken up residence like he has. And I just can't understand why. I am fairly intelligent, hell, I am more than fairly intelligent, but why can't I wrap my brain around this? If I had been in the

courtroom I would have squashed the
crap out of him. But unfortunately
everyday life doesn't take place in the
courtroom.

You are totally screwed.

*Thanks for your help. Shut up
peanut gallery.*

My inner self is finally silenced for
once.

I know the way I reacted was
probably an overreaction.

Probably? More like definitely.

What did I say?

Sorry, shutting up.

The run did somewhat clear my head, but I still can't understand what the is going on with me.

What, nothing to say? Well?

Hello? All right forget what I said, I need help.

You need more help than I can provide. My inner self is becoming very insulting.

I know, but your point being?

My, your, our point being is you are a complete and utter dumbass.

Thanks.

You're welcome.

That wasn't meant...

I know, now you shut up.

Okay, okay.

You are so clueless and blind. Did you feel the electric jolt course through our body when he gave us the slightest touch?

Well, y—

Let me finish!

Fine.

That isn't the first time we felt it either. And that kiss.

Holymotherfuckingshitballs that kiss!!

We've been kissed before, but first

never like that, and second we have never ever, and I doubt we ever will again, have had that intense of a reaction to a kiss. If you didn't notice the extreme chemistry, lust or emotion in that kiss then you are a complete moron and you, because I get it, don't deserve to ever be kissed like that again!

So what do we do?

I haven't thought that far ahead.

Figures, and I still don't see what you're talking or getting at.

Oh for the love of Pete! I give up!

You are utterly hopeless!

*Well, if I'm hopeless, you're
hopeless too because you're me and
I'm you. So...*

*We both simultaneously scream
with complete and utter frustration.*

As I am having my inner
conversation, which I'm sure people
walking by have noticed and are ready
to call the men in the white coats to haul
me off to Bellevue, I find myself in
front of the building where the studio is.

That didn't take long at all.

Of course not, crazy.

Again with the insults.

I don't know what I am thinking or doing but I find myself walking back up to the studio and standing in front of the door. As I go to test the knob to see if it is locked, I notice a piece of paper tucked in between the door and the jam. Something compels me to grab it and see if anything is written on it.

Kassidy,

I'm sorry for my stupid comments. I know we agreed to a fresh start and that was anything but. I hope you can

find it in your heart to forgive me. I would like a second, third chance. I hope you'll give this dipshit that chance to make it up to you. Call me.

Davis

I don't know what to think. Like my inner self's chastising, Davis is having the some effect on me. On one hand, he acts like an asshole, then on the other he writes this note and becomes the complete opposite. What the hell?!

I am going to have lunch with Macy tomorrow and as much as I hate to ask

her, maybe she can shed some light on the situation.

Are you kidding me? I give up!!!

I'm done!

Okay, sure whatever, Drama

Queen!!

Oh you'll see, you'll see.

I won't hold my breath.

I leave the studio, with the note clasped in my hand, and make my way home. I have one of the most restless night's sleep ever. I keep dreaming of running after Davis, but he is always just out of my reach. And every time he turns

around to look at me, he looks so pained it kills me. My heart aches and it feels as though it breaks with each tortured look from those green eyes. I only have one, or actually two people to blame, myself and Davis.

"Elaine, can you get Mr. Reynolds on the phone for me?"

"Yes Miss Marshall."

Thank God I have work, because after last night I most certainly could have checked myself in for a psychiatric evaluation. Work is definitely a

welcomed distraction.

"Miss Marshall, I have Mr. Reynolds' office on the line."

"Put him through."

"Sorry Miss Marshall he's unavailable at the moment. His assistant said to try back later this afternoon."

"Thanks Elaine."

Are you kidding me? Unavailable? We are due in court in three weeks and he has the nerve to be unavailable. Stupid, rich, I can buy my way out of anything, clients. They sure pay the firm well, but they are a damn pain the ass.

As I am shuffling through the stack of countless files on my desk for Mr. Reynolds's case, I am startled by a knock at the door.

Davis?

Wishful thinking. But at least you're starting to think like me. But no it's not him. It's another distraction.

"Kassidy?" he quietly asks.

I don't have to even look up to know who it is. "Uh, hey Jackson."

"Got a minute?"

"Um," I ponder looking at the files scattered on my desk and in my hands,

"yeah sure. What's up?"

"I was wondering if you wanted to get some lunch?" Hope tinges his words.

Great, just what I need now. I have to tell him no, again, because I'm meeting Macy and he'll probably see a pattern and think I am blowing him off. At least that's how I would see it.

You would see it that way because you think too much.

I do not.

Davis?

Oh.

See think too much.

"Sorry Jackson I have plans with Macy. We've got bridesmaid's stuff to discuss. Can I take a rain check?"

That didn't sound too bad; after all it is the truth.

"Oh sure, no problem. And I'll definitely take that rain check."

He doesn't sound too disappointed. Actually he doesn't sound disappointed at all. Strange. Maybe he finally sees us as being nothing more than friends as I've been saying all along. And that is a very good thing.

"Thanks Jackson, you're the best."

"I know. I'll catch you later."

Wow. He even sounds a little cocky. And before I can respond Jackson is gone.

I glance at the clock and notice it is about time to meet Macy for lunch. We are meeting at this café around the corner since I am fully submerged in all things Reynolds and time is precious. Three weeks isn't a lot of time, especially when the client is unavailable. I also don't want to disappoint the partners or give them any reason to lose their faith and confidence

in me by taking a long leisurely lunch. Thankfully Macy is very understanding and accommodating, which is extremely out of character for her. But when it comes to my career, Macy is extremely supportive and I love her for it.

I enter the café knowing she is probably there already. Unlike Davis, Macy is never late, punctuality is her middle name; another reason why I love her. Heck, if I ever became a lesbian I would probably try and make Macy my girlfriend. She waves me over to our table.

"Hey Kas. Okay what the hell is wrong?"

Blunt and cutting straight through the bullshit as usual I see.

"Nothing, just work. Reynolds is a royal P.I.T.A."

"Um, sorry to hear that, but the look on your face tells me there's more than just work. So spill it," she demands.

"I don't know what you're reading on my face but really it's just work."

You damn well know she isn't going to let up and she will beat and I do mean beat it out of you. Did you

forget it's Macy? She's a damn bloodhound, can sniff out anything and a cop, she will interrogate you till you give her what she wants.

I know I said I would talk to her about the Davis episode, but I'm not in the mood to get into it; I need to stay focused on work.

Denial, denial, denial. Avoidance, avoidance, avoidance. It's all I'm saying. OH and let's not forget scared of the truth.

"I call bullshit...wait a second; you had practice with Davis last night. That

explains it. Now you better tell me everything or I'll drag it out of you. You know I have ways of making you talk," she says as if she were a Russian spy from one of those James Bond movies.

And when push comes to shove I know I will give Macy what she wants. Frankly, she scares the bejesus out of me.

"All right, it's *him*," I confess seething with a little anger as I quickly recount the events in my head.

"I knew it. And why are we calling him, *him* again? I thought you moved on

from that?"

"Well you know what they say one step forward two steps back," my voice reeks with sarcasm.

"You are so cynical. Now tell me what happened to get your panties all twisted and bunched up your ass. And you better not leave anything out, I want details. Got it."

"Okay, okay. I got to the studio and of course he was late."

"I totally hate that. Did he at least let you know that he was going to be late?"

"No, but when he did show he apologized for being late and said he tried to call to let me know, but his cell died."

"Well that was decent of him. So far everything sounds fine, no panty twisting yet."

I roll my eyes at her and continue to tell her in detail exactly what transpired over the length of our practice.

"We made small talk, kinda flirted a little I guess you could say. He actually told me I looked cute and a little sexy when I was deep in thought or something

like that. I was a little rude, bossing him around, so I apologized, when he said are you ready for this?" Macy waved her hand as if to say bring it on. "I can't help it if he makes me get all worked up. Can you believe it?"

"Yeah, I can. Kassidy you do get worked up over Davis. Actually anytime Chloe or Jason or myself has brought his name up since you two first met you light up like the Christmas tree at Rockefeller Center or you go all 'I'm going to hate him no matter what'. You react one of two ways—always."

"Do you want to hear the rest? Or are you just going to insult my intelligence? I think I know when a guy gets me worked up. And Davis isn't *that* guy."

"Honey you need a strong dose of reality. But yes, I do want to know what else happened. Continue."

"So of course I got seriously pissed off by that and told him he was basically repulsive. He then made the comment, again like that night in the club, that I was too hard up."

"Kassidy this guy really knows how

to push your buttons. He totally has your number and he's obviously playing with you, but in a fun and sexy way. You my dear are hard up. When was the last time you had sex?"

I look at her, eyes blazing.

"My point exactly. It's been a long ass time. I know you better than you know yourself. You are falling for this guy whether you are ready to admit it or not. And of course because of the other *him*, whom I might add has royally fucked up your perception of men, you won't admit it because you are afraid."

"Afraid?" And why does she have to mention him. I have put that chapter of my life behind me. Buried deep inside where it will never be found. And here she is mentioning it so casually.

"Yes you're afraid. Afraid of what you might or do feel for Davis and vice versa. I haven't met him yet, but from what Chloe tells me you guys are made for each other. I know she likes to play matchmaker, that's her thing, but this is different. She believes even if she didn't know Davis, you two would have found each other eventually. Something about

destiny; which you know I don't believe in, we make our own destiny, but Chloe does and she believes Davis is your destiny."

Wow, everyone is talking about this. What the hell? Davis my destiny, are you kidding me?

"Can we get back to my story, please?" I really don't want to think Davis and move on. As annoying telling Macy about Davis is, it is better than thinking about the other him.

"Yeah, sorry. You were saying?"

"I was saying. He made that

comment about being hard up and then he said I snuggled with my vibrator at night. Can you believe it?"

"Um, wow he totally has your number."

"What?"

"Kas, you totally get way too much use out of that thing," she laughs piercing a carrot.

"Macy," I am blushing.

"Kassidy?"

"Whatever. So when he said that all I saw was red and I went to slap him."

She practically chokes on her

carrot, "You went to slap him? Are you living in a black and white movie or just insane? Wait don't answer that because you're insane!"

"Anyway, as I went to slap him he grabbed my wrist and pulled me into him and..."

"And?"

"And he kissed me." There I said it, got it out. I cringe at the thought of what she is going to say or do.

She practically does a spit take with her diet Coke. "He *kissed* you? Did you kiss him back? What was it like? Oh

my God, Kassidy he kissed you and you didn't die. You're alive, you're alive!"

She is way too excited and slightly mocking about an insignificant kiss.

You've got to be joking? That kiss was anything but insignificant.

"No, I wasn't kissing him back. I was in fact trying to push him off of me, but then..."

"Then what? You kissed him back! I knew it, I fucking knew it."

"Yes, as much as I didn't want to I started kissing him back. Apparently my lips have a mind of their own." Or the

mind of a crazy inner self.

"So what's the problem? You guys just didn't strip right there and fuck like wild rabbits and he hasn't called since? Fucking prick. I hate when guys do that."

"No, that's what you would have done; we're talking about me, right? When I realized what was going on, I finally pulled away from him and that's when I slapped him."

"Kas, you didn't?"

"I most certainly did. He had no right."

"He had no right?"

"Yeah, he had not right."

"He had no right to give you what deep down you really wanted? He had no right to prevent you, well almost prevent you from slapping him? Which is assault by the way. He had no right to make you forget what you were arguing about? Shit, Kassidy I think he had every right. Honey you need some serious help. And I'm not trying to be funny; it's just the truth. If I were you, I would have jumped all over that."

"Well thank the Lord you aren't me because, because..." I can't think of

anything, my mind goes totally blank.

"Wow Miss Kassidy Marshall, lawyer extraordinaire rendered speechless."

"Shut up."

"Okay so after you guys kissed and you slapped him, so stupid, what happened?"

"I grabbed my stuff, bolted for the door and went for a run."

"Did he go after you?"

"Not that I know of and I don't really care."

"I just want to shake the shit out of

you until you realize what is really going on. Kassidy you are so frustrating."

Tell me about it.

"I know."

"Seriously, Davis could be the real deal and you are going to blow it. Messing with your destiny." She can't help the giggle that escapes.

"I thought you didn't believe in that mushy gushy mumbo jumbo?"

"I don't, but Chloe can be so convincing at times, ya know?"

"I know. All right can we drop the Davis situation and talk about Chloe's

bachelorette party."

"Fine if that's the way you want it."

"Yes that's the way I want it," I stick my tongue out at her because she really does at times make me feel like a child.

"Okay, so I have found not one but two specialty drinks for the evening and they are absolutely fabulous."

"Really, two, what are they?"

"You are not going to believe this. Since blue, aqua or teal or whatever is Chloe's signature color I have found two drinks that are blue, aqua, whatever. But

that's not the unbelievable part. One is called Blue Passion and the other, are you ready?"

"Will you tell me already."

"The other one is called Jazz. Is that not perfect, I mean it's close enough to when she calls him Jas. Is that hilarious or what? All night long we will be drinking Jazz or Jas as we'll call them," and with that Macy laughs her slutty laugh.

I turn thirteen shades of pink for the third time in two days.

"Chloe is going to die."

"Right I know. Tell me I'm the best."

"Macy Summers you are the best."

"Thank you, thank you."

We continue to talk about the details for Saturday night, everything is set. Macy has basically taken care of everything since I am swamped with work. We get the check, Macy treats me to lunch and we are both on our way back to work.

"I will see you Saturday then."

"I can't wait, Chloe is going to be so surprised."

As I turn to walk down the sidewalk, back to the office Macy calls to me.

"Hey Kas, have an open mind about Davis. He doesn't seem like, like well you know. Just give him a chance. I think he will surprise you and you might surprise yourself. Don't be so pigheaded. And wrangle in your lawyer-tude, it really gets on people's nerves sometimes. Okay?"

"Yes Macy, I'll try but I'm not promising anything."

She blows me a kiss and hails a

cab.

As I walk back to work I wonder if I can look at Davis differently and give him the benefit of the doubt. I guess anything is possible. Destiny? Is Chloe for real? Of course Chloe is for real, when is she not? I don't really have time for this and decide to put this topic out of my mind for the time being because I have other matters at hand, like getting my P.I.T.A. on the phone.

Damn it, it's 8 o'clock. Time flies when you're having fun. And oh boy,

are we having fun. Yippee, more files to go through. My inner self is sharing my enthusiasm for this case.

I have finally, after three more attempts gotten a hold of Reynolds and went over some questions with him, which added more work to my already boggled down stack of files. I didn't realize I was at it for so long that I worked right through dinner. The office is basically empty and dark. Every sane person has gone home except for me and a couple of other people, including the cleaning crew. Something delicious

wafts through the air and I catch the distinct smell of fried rice. My stomach rumbles. The smell intensifies at the opening of my office door.

"Hey Kassidy, hungry?"

"Jackson, hi, I didn't realize you were still here?"

"I wasn't, but noticed you were working late and had skipped dinner, so I figured I would cash in my rain check."

"Rain check, right. What have you got there?"

"Mr. Ling's take out."

My stomach stands up and cheers,

and wants to grab the bag from Jackson's hands. Mr. Ling's take out is for lack of a better word the bomb.

"Mr. Ling's?"

"Yes, are you hungry?" he asks as he waves the take out containers back and forth in front of me.

My stomach is poking me, hard.

"Now that you mention it. Let's cash in your rain check."

"Great."

Jackson clears a space on the floor and sets up our dinner. He has thought of everything, he even has Mr. Ling's secret

sauce for shrimp that is to die for. We are pretty quiet as we sit and eat. And it's more than our mouths are full of food; it's this tension or more appropriately awkwardness floating in the air coating everything. Why do I get the impression that the whole "we are just friends" thing is only being taken seriously on my part?

"So Kassidy any plans this weekend?"

Oh God he breaks the silence and I can't help but think he is going to ask me out.

"Actually this weekend is the bachelorette party."

"Oh, cool." He sounds a little disappointed.

"Yeah, it should be a blast. I can't wait."

"So I rented my tux. And you can let Chloe know it's Armani so it should meet her requirements and approval." He quirks an eye brow with a chopstick pointing at me.

"I'll let Chloe know. Thanks Jackson, for going with me."

"No problem. What are *friends*

for?"

I honestly have no response to the way he accentuates the word friends. I hope he doesn't think that there could be possibly more to our friendship. I think, no, I know I've been pretty clear and blunt about how I feel, but then again that awkwardness is still swirling around the room.

"I just wanted to let you know that my sister has been giving me dance tips so I won't crush your toes."

"Oh good because I really do value my toes. Although I must warn you, you

may want to invest in a pair of steel-toed shoes. Remember not graceful when dancing right here," I joke.

"I'll remember that. Anyway, she has been taking dance lessons since she was like five or something like that, so she knows what she's doing. She even....."

As Jackson continues to go on about dancing and dance lessons I am thrown back to the other night with Davis and begin to look at the situation differently. Maybe Macy was right.

Was right?

Macy is always right.

I know I know. It's just hard to think about a guy in that way again ya know?

I know. We've built up our dick defenses so well that a non-dick can't even break through.

Hahaha.

It's true.

I know.

Are you gonna give Davis that third chance like he asked in his note?

Maybe?

I guess that's better than no; it's a

start.

*It is a start and it's all I can do
right now.*

*I know, don't worry I've got your
back.*

*I know and thanks for putting up
with my, my...*

*With your stubbornness,
obstinacy, inflexibility,
pigheadedness...*

*Okay, okay I get it; I know I can
be stubborn, but I'm working on it
okay.*

Okay.

While I am lost deep somewhere in my mind, having another padded room conversation with my inner self, I forget Jackson is still in the room. I must have briefly closed my eyes or something because I didn't see it happening. Jackson has leaned over our makeshift dinner table and kisses me.

CHAPTER 8

I just sit there, dazed and confused.

It takes a few seconds for my body to catch up with my brain.

What the... Jackson is kissing me.

Do something, stupid!

And in that instant my inner self takes over.

I shove against Jackson as hard as I can, but he just grips my shoulders tighter. I then lace my fingers in his hair, grip the roots, and pull as hard as I can, but the asshole mistakes my intentions

for passion and pushes harder into my lips—his tongue swipes along the seam of my lips trying to seek entrance into my mouth. This kiss isn't at all like the unwanted kiss by Davis. This kiss feels needy and desperate, where Davis's kiss felt warm, tender and soft.

What The Fuck!

Before I know it, his tongue is finally penetrating my mouth.

Son of a bitch!

My inner self does the only thing we can think of.

"Owww!" Jackson is cupping his

mouth and a small amount of blood trickles down his chin.

"Kassidy?" he questions, sounding as if his mouth was full of marbles with a look of terror in his eyes.

When Jackson's tongue violated mine, I did the only thing I could think of. So, I bit down on his tongue as hard as I could. My inner self is clapping; as she gives me a standing ovation.

Serves him fucking right!

I definitely can't disagree with her. Jackson has crossed the line. I didn't want him to kiss me nor did I invite him

to do so. Maybe he saw something that wasn't there, but that still didn't give him the right to violate my mouth and lips. I am fuming and at this point in time it doesn't matter to me if he is a friend or the son of one of the senior partners, Jackson is wrong and he is going to know it.

"What the hell Jackson? Have you lost your mind? What in the hell would make you think you could kiss me?" I am still shaking with rage when I speak. I grab a napkin and rub it over my lips trying desperately to erase his touch.

Let him have it!

"I...I..." He is completely dumbfounded and has a look of complete fear in his eyes. He looks like a cornered little pig and the big bad wolf is about to tear him from limb to limb.

He should be scared.

"I have told you from the very beginning we are just friends. Now I don't think that is even possible anymore. You crossed a line tonight Jackson, a line that was clear as day. You have no idea how pissed off I am right now. I think you better leave before

I say something I will really regret." The words roll off my tongue like venom.

He just looks at me, still cupping his mouth, gets up and runs out of my office with his tail between his legs. With the way I feel at this moment, I know I will say something that I will regret later.

Will you stop handling him with kid gloves, Jackson's a big boy? He obviously knows how to kiss like one.

I know, I know. I will talk more with him later okay?

You better or I will personally kick

your ass for not doing so, but not before I kick his.

I got it, but remember he is the son of a senior partner; I do need to handle the situation delicately.

Delicately schmelicately. Just handle it!

My inner self is on the verge of becoming a story on the ten o'clock news. *News flash woman's inner personality over takes her, and Lorena Bobbitts senior partner's son. More in minutes.* That is all I need. I clean up what is left of our dinner and head home.

A nice long hot bubble bath is what I need. *Calgon take me away.*

After my bath, which was relaxing, but it didn't totally take the edge off, I pour myself a glass of wine as I curl up on the couch for some mind numbing T.V. I click through the channels for what seems like hours when I hear "I got red, I got green, I got yellow... I'm out of purple, but I do have one Gold Circle coin left..." A smile spreads across my face because *Pretty Woman* is one of my all-time favorite movies and Vivian and

Edward always have a way of lifting my bad moods.

Mmmm, Ryan Davis.

What?

I mean Mmmm Edward Lewis.

Uh huh, sure you do.

I shake my head, hopefully giving my inner self blunt head trauma, and I settle into the couch, wrapped in my warm fuzzy blanket, with my glass of wine in hand and the warm fuzzies building inside me and continue to watch *Pretty Woman*.

I wake up the next morning not really feeling like going into the office. So I call Elaine to let her know I will be working from home. I have a slight headache and backache probably from sleeping on the couch and I don't want to have to face Jackson. I am still pretty pissed off and decide, against my inner self's judgment, to put off talking to him just yet. I know I need to be level headed when I do and I am nowhere near being level headed. The T.V. is still on, so I turn to the news, as I head to the kitchen to make myself some coffee and down a

few Tylenol. Why can't my life be like *Pretty Woman* minus the hooker part? Even though Edward Lewis is closed off at first to Vivian, she is able to warm his cold heart and they are going to live happily ever after. I want my happily ever after and I want my Edward Lewis.

Hey dumbass you could have your happily ever after if you weren't so stubborn. You may not get Edward Lewis, but you could have Ryan Davis.

Will you just stop for one day?

No, nope, not happening sister!

Davis left a note asking for a third

chance and he apologized. He didn't have to; he could have continued being an asshole, douche bag, whatever you want to call him. But his note was sincere and I think, no I know you are going to give him that chance if I have anything to do with it.

The note?

Yes, the note. Don't tell me you forgot about it already?

With that I walk over to the bar stool, grab my hoodie and reach into the pocket. I pull out a crumbled up piece of paper. I gently unfold it and smooth it out

as best I can and begin reading it again. My inner self is right. Davis does sound sincere and it seems out of character for him to leave a note and even to apologize. I'm still not sure how I feel about him, but maybe he does deserve another chance.

He certainly does.

If I give him another chance will you get off my back?

Possibly.

Fine, but I'm not making any promises.

As long as you try.

I'll try.

Good, now go take a shower and let's have fun today, we definitely deserve to.

I pour myself my cup of coffee, take a few Tylenol and head to the bathroom. Fun? Alone? Possibly, but I decide to see if Macy wants to play hooky too, we haven't had an all-girls day in a really long time. Instead of calling her, because I really don't want to get the third degree as to why I am not going to work, I decide to text her. *God I love texting, it makes life so much easier.* Although it's

hard to be sarcastic with it, but it's great when you want to avoid talking to someone. And do I ever want to avoid talking to Macy right about now. I know if she hears the tone in my voice she will be clued in that something is off and then I will have to explain why I want to play hooky. I don't want to get into it first thing in the morning. Texting is definitely the answer.

Hey Macy busy?

What up Bitch?

See what I mean.

Nothing much. Want 2 play

hooky?

Hooky? U?

**Yes, hooky w/ me? Not up 2 going
in 2day.**

Y?

**Reynolds's case has me going
nuts. Need a breather.**

**That sounds plausible and was
partially true. He is driving me nuts.**

Well?

All right hooky. Shopping, lunch?

Most definitely.

Meet at ur place in a couple?

See you then.

Later bitch.

God she is so loving.

I have a couple of hours to shower, find something to wear and get my story together about why we are playing hooky. Knowing Macy like I do, I know she won't totally buy the Reynolds excuse. I have to prepare like I would for court. Macy will cross-examine me like she is a pro—she's spent enough time on the witness stand since she's had to testify as part of her job— and I most definitely need a game plan. I turn on the water, and head into my massive closet

to find something to wear. I put down my cell on the island and notice I still have Davis's note. Davis's note. It doesn't seem like his type to write a note. It is actually kinda sweet. Davis sweet? I guess anything's possible. *Shit, Jackson fucking kissed you anything is definitely possible.* I can't do anything about Davis now; after all he is back in Chicago and probably won't be back until Saturday.

You could call him.

No way! Are you insane? Don't answer that.

Chicken shit.

Yes, I'm chicken shit and I can only handle one problem at a time, all right?

What happened to my multitasking wizard?

Work's easy, guys are hard.

But when he gets back into town you better call him or something?

Otherwise...

I know you'll kick my ass.

Exactly.

All right enough. Now would be a little more constructive and help me

find something to wear?

Okay let's see...

"So, are you gonna tell me the real reason why we're playing hooky or am I going to have to beat it out of you?"

Macy is already starting and we haven't even gotten to one shop yet.

"I told you, Reynolds's driving me nuts," I say with authority and certainty.

She'll see right through it.

Thanks for the vote of confidence.

It's Macy.

I know.

"If that's the way you want to play

it, Marshall." She smirks and gives me her bitch brow.

"Macy, I'm not playing."

"Uh, huh."

"Really, I'm not."

"Sure, whatever."

"Really."

"Oh, I believe you." And very subtly she is doing "it", what Macy does best. Make you spill your guts.

"All right fine."

"I knew it, I fucking knew it.

Besides, you should know better than to keep shit from me. I always get the

answers."

"I know."

"So what's up?"

"Well..."

Shit what do I say?

*Just come right out and tell her,
otherwise she will badger and badger
and badger, until we are pounding our
head on the concrete.*

"Yesterday at work, I uh, stayed late working on Reynolds's case..." I am stalling.

"Get on with it Marshall or..." she threatens.

"When Jackson stopped by with take out."

"And?"

"And before I knew what was happening he was kissing me."

"What?" People walking by us stop dead in their tracks.

"What?" she whispers pulling me close to her.

"Jackson kissed me."

"Did you kiss him back?"

"Hell no! I tried to push the fucker off me, but he wouldn't budge." I am getting a little pissed thinking about it.

"What happened?" She sounds a little pissed too. I think she's going to her cop mode.

"I bit his tongue."

"That's my girl! You really bit his tongue?" She hip bumps me as if to give me a high five.

"Yeah, it was all I could think of."

"Did he apologize? Did he cry? Was there blood? Tell me there was blood. Did you get, you know woozy, if there was blood? Tell me there was fucking blood." She sounds like a kid needing to know what happens next in

their favorite story when someone else has already read ahead.

She is really enjoying this.

"There was a little blood and no I didn't get woozy. Thank God."

"Good. Good you didn't get woozy and good you drew blood. That dick deserved it. I hope you verbally abused him afterwards, made him fear for his life. And you better not be taking him to the wedding anymore, because God help me if you if you do. I will not only beat the shit out of him, but beat the loving shit out of you too. And then arrest him

for assault," she easily threatens.

"I told him to get the hell out and that he had no right to kiss me no matter what he thought or saw. He ran out still holding his mouth. I haven't talked to him since. That's why I didn't want to go to work today. I didn't want to face him, yet. I'm still infuriated about it and I don't want to say the wrong thing. I needed a day to cool off, but tomorrow I will handle it. And yes, he's uninvited to the wedding."

"You know, I know I don't him and you've really never mentioned him that

much, but what you have told me about him I got the impression that there's something a little off about him. Lately it seems like he's obsessed with you or something. I thought asking him to be your date for Chloe's wedding was a bad idea. I know you told him it's a friend thing only, it sounds like he wants way more. That's obvious now. Last night he acted like he was entitled. Your actions said no and no means no. I don't know, he's just not right in the head and he's not right for you. Davis on the other hand..."

"Macy, you don't even know Davis."

"No, I don't, but Chloe and Jason have told me about him and so have you. I feel like I already know him. Besides, I see the effect he has on you, whether you do or not, and to be honest I like it."

Here we go.

"Macy, not now. I will deal and feel whatever I want to about Davis, okay? Besides this is girls' day, so no more talking about annoying guys." I quickly change the subject.

"Fine. But, I see we're calling him

Davis now and not just *him* or asshole. I swear, Kas, you talk about him like he's Voldemort—he who shall not be named." She looks at me with an inquisitress stare.

"So?"

"So, something's changed. What gives?" she continues to pry as only Macy can.

Another third degree is on the horizon, just spill it.

"I forgot to tell you about his note," I quickly say as I cringe, waiting for her to strike.

"His note? What fucking note?" She beams with excitement.

"The night he kissed me and I took off. I went back to the studio and there was a note." I shrug hoping to make it seem like a big deal.

Oh it's a big deal.

"What did it say?" She continues to question as people continue to walk around us. Apparently this conversation is going to continue on the middle of the sidewalk.

"He basically apologized and asked for a third chance."

"Well?"

"I *might* give him a third chance."

What do you mean might? You

know we are.

But, Macy doesn't need to know.

Right, then she'll go on and on.

Exactly.

"Marshall?" She is sounding a little annoyed.

"Don't worry Macy, I have a plan."

You have a plan?

No, not really, but it will keep

Macy off our back.

"Good. Ohhhh look at those

Christian Louboutin."

And with that third degree is avoided. God I love Christian Louboutin, they are Macy's weakness. Shit, whom am I kidding; they are my weakness too, as I gaze down at my feet. Yep, my weakness too.

CHAPTER 9

Girls' day is a huge success.

Shopping is like a drug and it always relaxes me. We spent hours looking at tons of shoes, our weakness, and trying on outfits for the bachelorette party. We ironed out a few more details over lunch. Macy made me promise that I will set the record straight with Jackson as soon as possible and that his sorry ass will be nowhere near the wedding or me ever again. I promised, of course. After what has happened, there is no way in

hell that I am going to have Jackson as my date to Chloe and Jason's wedding and our friendship, I feel, is a thing of the past. With love and romance in the air, I'm sure he will get the wrong idea again. That is all I need.

I am basically held up in my office all day. Not that I am avoiding Jackson, okay part of me is, but I am slammed with reviewing more files for Reynolds. Apparently he just “found” them and didn’t know they held important documents. I swear it is almost as if this case is a test. I better pass it and the

senior partners better take notice. It is getting close to lunch and my stomach is rumbling like a jackhammer pummeling concrete to little bits and pieces. I decide lunch, is as good as time as any, to talk to Jackson. We can go somewhere public, so I can't or he can't make a scene, although in that past that doesn't always stop me. I am going to set the record straight. We *are* friends, but now I don't think that was an option anymore. He has crossed a line. If it had been a simple peck on the cheek or lips I probably could have let it slide. But the

kiss had been full on, open mouth and tongue. Even though I tried like hell to stop it, he didn't get the hint. It really makes me wonder what the hell Jackson was thinking and if this is a regular thing for him. No means no, I really hope he understands that concept.

"Elaine, can you get Jackson for me please?"

It is time to face the music.

"Miss Marshall, Jackson isn't in today, he's home sick again."

"Okay, thanks Elaine."

Jackson is home sick. *I wonder if*

he's really sick. And from her comment, it sounds as if Jackson had stayed home yesterday too. Maybe he is avoiding me like I had avoided him yesterday. Or maybe I have done serious damage to his tongue. *I fucking hope so.* Either way, eventually I am going to have to talk him. At least now I have a little more time to get my thoughts together, to make sure my words are to the point and can't be misconstrued as something else. I have a feeling Jackson could probably twist my words to his own benefit and manipulate the situation a little. It is hard to think of

Jackson that way, but after what happened, I feel like I just don't know him anymore.

I grab a quick bite to eat and head back to the office. I decide to leave work a little early. It has been a rough week, even with taking yesterday off. Besides, tomorrow is the bachelorette party and I need to be well rested. Early to bed is going to be the plan; I don't want to give Macy any reason to bust my chops about not being able to keep up at the party. Macy is like the Energizer Bunny. She can go on and on non-stop at

any party. Drink and drink and dance and dance. Usually Macy is the last man standing. It is quite annoying.

I wake up Saturday morning feeling refreshed and relaxed, actually, and for the first time in a while. Today is a good day and tonight is going to be even better. Just me and my girls. Whenever we get together it is always a blast, but tonight will be extra special because we are celebrating Chloe. And she definitely deserves it and more.

Since it had been a rough week I

am treating myself to a mani/pedi, massage and facial. I can't wait to be putty in Katrina's hands and turn into a pile of utterly relaxed goo. Her hands are magical and in my opinion are worth more than anything in the world. Her massages are pure heaven. Macy and Chloe are coming over around six to start to get ready, so I have plenty of time for my day of pampering and much needed relaxation before those two, particularly Macy ruins it. Getting ready to go out with the two of them is anything but relaxing, comical, nerve wracking at

times, but not relaxing. I grab a quick breakfast, shower, get dressed and head out for what is promising to be an incredibly fun day.

Pound. Pound. Pound.

"Let us in bitch! It's time to get this party fucking started!" Macy calls from the other side of my door.

"Hang on, I'm coming," I call back.

Macy pushes her way past me, but not before planting a big one on me and grabbing my ass.

"Love ya, babes."

"Back at ya, Mace."

The girl is a freak, but I love the shit out of her. She makes my life and everyone else's very interesting. No time for boredom when Macy is around.

Chloe floats in the doorway like she is on cloud nine. Of course she is on cloud mother fucking nine. This is the night of her bachelorette party and soon enough she will be marrying the man of the dreams. She is definitely lucky and has every reason in the world to float more than usual.

"Hey Kas," she beams.

"Hey Chloe," I can't help but beam back at her. Her perkiness and happiness is definitely infectious.

"Okay bitches, we have a couple of hours to get ready. Kassidy, do you have something in the freezer for us?" Macy inquires with a wink.

"Why, yes I do," I reply making my way to the freezer to pull out a bottle of Kettle One that has blue razzberry Jolly Rancher candies in it.

It has become our tradition to start off any evening when we are going out with a Jolly Rancher shot. Macy dated a

bartender or two, that's how we were introduced to the sweet elixir. Tonight in honor of Chloe, we are using blue Jolly Ranchers. We have to keep the whole blue theme thing going, blue signature drinks at the club and Chloe will be wearing a bluish sparkly tank as well. Blue is her signature color she claims. The wedding would be different shades of blue, but to me they look pretty much the same. It kinda reminds me of *Steel Magnolias*, "My colors are blush and bashful." "Her colors are pink and pink." Chloe your colors are blue and blue. She

can tell the difference and insists there is a difference, who am I to argue? I wasn't very good at using various colors in my crayon box as a kid; I stuck to the basics—red, yellow, blue, green and orange. Creativity so not my thing. Besides, she is the fashion stylist slash personal shopper, not me. And if it makes Chloe happy to think there is a difference then so be it.

Macy lines up three turquoise shot glasses, again with the blue, and pours us each a shot. We raise our glasses to toast the evening.

"Here's to my bitches, especially Chloe, may tonight be the best damn bachelorette party ever." Macy toasts.

We clink and then throw back our shots.

"Now, that's a way to start off the fucking evening," Macy cheers, "Oh here, Kassidy put this in. Some mood music as we get ready." Macy hands me a CD. I walk to my stereo, put it in and hit play.

"Turn it up!" Macy insists before the music even flows out of the speakers.

"Macy, it hasn't even started yet,"

Chloe chirps.

"Trust me. Marshall turn it up!"

Macy again insists.

Suddenly, the room is filled with the pulsating sounds of Pink and *Let's Get This Party Started*.

"Perfect!" We all agree.

We make our way to my bathroom, Chloe with wardrobe in tow. I have set out all of my makeup, so we are ready to go. We are a whirlwind of makeup and hair artistry, as we get ready. Our skills rival that of any high-end salon's highest paid makeup and hairstylist. Shoot if the

lawyer, personal shopper and cop thing don't work out, we can probably open our own salon and live comfortably for the rest of our lives.

In the couple of hours it takes to get ready and a couple of shots later, we look like we walked off the catwalk of a Victoria's Secret show. Not that we are dressed in lingerie or our bras and panties, but we were looking fierce and hot as hell. Watch out Adriana Lima, your days are numbered.

The limo arrives promptly at eight thirty and we toast with some

champagne. I don't live that far from the club, but we will be drinking, *a lot*, so a limo seemed to be the perfect solution. Besides, Macy does like to arrive in style and what better way than to arrive in a limo.

We are ushered right in by Carlos; apparently Macy *knows* him too, leaving behind the line of annoyed, waiting people. Once inside we make our way upstairs to the VIP lounge. Audrey, Jenny, Corrine and Heidi are waiting to greet us when we arrive. Chloe bounces up and down with excitement, thrilled to

have all her friends around.

"You guys are the best," she sniffs hugging Macy and me.

"No fucking tears bitch, we are here to have F.U.N!" Macy insists her eyes a little glassy.

Macy excuses herself briefly and is back in a matter of seconds with a very bubbly girl with brown hair. She has an aura of positive energy about her. The way she carries herself, makes you want to get to know her and become her friend. I wonder who she is, because I have never seen her before and Macy

has never mentioned her before. That's when I notice the tray in her hand.

"Okay ladies, I would like to introduce to all of you the best bartender slash waitress in town. This is my girl Dodi."

"Ladies," Dodi smiles, "I'm not tending tonight, Ivan will be taking care of that, but I will be taking care of you as your waitress this evening. So, whatever and whenever you need a drink just let me know. Tonight you're in good hands."

"Thanks girl you're the bomb."
Macy hugs Dodi.

"So, do you all want a round of Jases or Blue Passion?" Dodi inquires. I can't help but notice Dodi has changed the name of the drink Jazz to fit Jason.

"Jases," we all reply in unison, while Chloe blushes a little. I think the idea of all of us drinking Jason nicknamed drinks has something to do with it.

"Okay, so before our drinks arrive I want to say something," I begin, "Chloe you are the bestest best friend any girl could ever ask for. We have been through so much together, that I can't

even imagine my life without you. I am so happy, wait that's not the right word, um, I'm so ecstatic that you have found Jason and you two are going to spend the rest of your lives together. It gives the rest of us hope. I want nothing but the best for you today and always. I love you more than you will ever know because not only are you my best friend, but you are my sister." A tear slowly streams down my cheek and Chloe gently brushes it away.

"God, Marshall, you are such a sap and a downer. But that was really sweet

and I feel the same," Macy adds wiping under her eye as well.

Dodi brings over our drinks and we clink and salute to Chloe.

Wow this is really yummy!!

Yeah it is, but remember to pace yourself or we will be in trouble. This drink can be dangerous because it is so yummy.

Yes mom, now leave me the fuck alone.

Jeez, just trying to help.

Well, right now I don't need any help. Relax and have some fucking fun

for a change, All right?

All right, I will.

After we finish our drinks, Sean Paul begins to pulse through the air. The rhythm is contagious; you can't help but move to it.

"All right girls this is our song, let's go," Macy announces leading us back down the stairs to the dance floor.

I am feeling really good, beyond good actually. The mixture of Jolly Rancher shots, the glass of champagne and several glasses of Jas is coursing through my veins making me feel all

tingly and alive. It has been a horrible week and this is just what the doctor ordered, a night out with my girls having the time of our lives. The DJ keeps spinning the best songs and we are all gathered together vibrating in unity to the beat. It doesn't matter that it is getting too hot or that people are bumping us once in a while, or that I have two left feet. I don't care and neither does anyone else for that matter.

You minded when we got bumped by Davis not that long ago, remember?

Not now, please don't kill my

buzz?

Fine, it's just interesting that's all.

*Not now, I'm not in the mood for
this shit tonight.*

Fine, we'll talk later then.

Fine.

I hope my inner self will leave me alone the rest of the evening, she has a bad habit of putting in her two cents when it isn't required and it is beginning to piss me off. But not tonight, I am having way too much fun to let her be a downer. Tonight is all about Chloe and no one else. Nothing is going to ruin it.

We continue to dance with each other and a couple of times a few guys try to intervene, but we have each other's back. Tonight isn't about hooking up with some random guy; it is a silent pact we have all made. It doesn't matter how hot he is or if he has a friend for one of us, this is girls' night, no guys allowed.

I am caught up in the music when I feel eyes burning into me as me and the girls move to the rhythm. It feels odd, almost creepy. I am being paranoid; what guy wouldn't be watching a bunch of hot girls, and we are pretty hot

tonight, bouncing around and practically grinding up on each other. We probably look like every horny guys porn fantasy. Girl on girl action. I shrug it off as such.

I can feel the intense heat of the bodies around me. Their closeness adds to my already burning flesh only causing my skin to glisten even more with perspiration and my mouth is becoming increasingly dry. *It's time for a drink.* I signal to Macy that I need a drink; she nods and just waves me on. *Fine, going it alone.* I push my way through the writhing bodies that crowd the dance

floor, finally spotting the stairs to the VIP lounge. As I make my way up the stairs I again feel those eyes. I gaze upwards, but find no one looking in my general direction. *Humph*. I stumble once as I make my way up. Alcohol combined with my utter lack of coordination doesn't leave me being called Grace. Thank God no one is behind me and I love the person who invented handrails. Finally, I find level ground. Dodi immediately spots me and I signal for another drink, which probably isn't a good idea, but the

rational part of my brain is being smothered by the irrational, fun part at the moment. I have to give it to Macy; the signature drinks she came up with for the night are incredible. Dangerous, but incredible. It feels a little strange to be drinking Jas all night, knowing who it's named after just for Chloe, but it is my favorite, having had three already.

It's four actually.

Who the fuck is keeping count?

Just remember to pace yourself.

I'm fine, I'm having fun, fun I think

I deserve after this week, weeks, month,

so back the fuck off!

Don't say I didn't warn you.

*Quiet peanut gallery, before you
kill my buzz.*

Okay.

Dodi comes over with number four.
I drink it a little too fast, because things
have begun to go out of focus. What the
hell was I thinking.

*Steady Marshall. Remember you
need to pace yourself or we'll find
ourselves passed out in the corner
before the night is over.*

Hush you, I know my limits.

Do you?

Yes I do, now again shut the fuck up!

Silence.

While I sit there arguing with my inner self, Dodi has come back over with another drink.

"Hey Dodi I didn't order another, did I?" God only knows if I did, things are getting really fuzzy.

"No Kassidy, this one is from a secret admirer," she explains setting the drink down.

I look at her a little puzzled.

"Don't worry I was watching Ivan make it and brought it right over. It never left my sight."

I guess she is thinking I was worried that something might have happened to it. Quite frankly, the idea entered my mind, all I need is to be drugged by some perv.

"Thanks Dodi. Do you know who he is?"

"I can't tell you. He seems all right, kinda intense."

"Okay, tell him thanks, I guess."

"Let me know if you need anything

else, K?"

"Thanks Dodi, I will." And with that she walks away.

I get up and grab the drink from the table. I'm not going to turn down the opportunity to suck down another Jas. *Gosh that sounds really gross. Sucking down Jas.* I am suddenly bombarded with images that I don't want or need to see. *Eww Ewww Ewww!* I might need to bleach my brain. Chloe and Jason's sex life is something I don't need to know about. I stand, gripping the railing as I look down at the dance floor spotting my

girls. I grip the railing tighter as I began to sway and things are getting a little dizzy, and I haven't even had a sip yet.

Told you so.

Fine, I'll slow down bitch.

My inner self is getting on my last nerve. But she does have a point, I do need to slow down. I decide the best course of action is to ignore the drink in my hand. It's easy to because the thought of drinking another makes my stomach churn.

"I see you're enjoying your drink," a voice breathes on my neck.

I turn around and steady myself,

"Excuse me?"

"Your drink, I sent it." He smiles.

"Oh, that was you? Um, thanks." I

am beginning to feel a little

uncomfortable. He is standing a little too

close and his hand is reaching for my

hip. Plus his smile is just creepy.

"No problem beautiful, you looked

thirsty. I'm Gary, by the way," he

stresses the word *thirsty* as he licks his

lips.

I think he's thirsty for something

else.

Me too.

"Um, I gotta go. My friends are probably wondering where I am and are looking for me," I lie; although I'm hoping Macy is wondering where I am and why am I taking so long to get back. I could use her muscle about now.

"I don't think so," he replies as he peers over the railing gazing down at my girls on the dance floor living it up.

"I really gotta go," I say with a little more authority as I turn to head to the stairs.

"We're not done getting to know

each other," he insists as he grabs my wrist tightly.

Let go! But the words never come out. I pull as hard as I can to free myself from his grip. As I jerk away, my body twists and I fall into...honey?

The smell of honey envelopes me from the chest my face has buried into. I quickly look up to see who or what the source is, when I am met by a set of deep green eyes. His strong arms pull around me as he leans down to whisper in my ear, "Are you okay?"

We are now.

"Uh huh," is all I can mutter, I am mesmerized and stunned.

I hear and feel a low growl rumble from his chest, "The lady's with me, back the fuck off!"

"Really? She seems to have been *alone* all night. "

The growl grows louder. As I turn around two very big bouncers are right behind Gary ready to escort the scumbag out.

"Are you sure you're okay?"

"Uh huh," again is all I can think to say. Things are getting fuzzier and I

begin to sway. I take a step back and stumble.

Oh Marshall we are in trouble.

Houston we have a problem.

"Whoa, I got ya," he says as his hand grabs my waist, "I think it's time to get you home, you've had enough."

"Wait, Macy, Chloe...."

"They're fine, Anderson...um Jason's with them."

Jason? How, when?

I nod as Davis leads me down the stairs carefully, his strong hands never leaving my waist.

The cool night air meets my glistening, heated skin and sends chills down my spine. Before I can wrap my arms around myself for some warmth, a jacket is being draped over my shoulders. It smells like honey and spice, it smells like Davis.

"Here, this should help. I need to get my car. Stay here, don't move," he says with such concern, "I'll be just a minute."

He goes down the sidewalk, into the night as I rest against a nearby streetlight. The cool steel feels like

heaven against my cheek. Before I know it his arms are back around me, guiding me into his car. He reaches around me to buckle me in once I am nestled in the seat. My inner self instinctively wants to kiss, lick and bite his neck as it brushes past my lips. I resist the urge.

The ride to, I guess my place, is a blur. I am too busy concentrating on not throwing up. I keep my face plastered against the chilled window for some relief. He must have the vent on, because the air from it is such a relief to my drunken state.

Davis helps me, again, out of the car once we pull up in front of the building. The building is spinning, the sidewalk is spinning and I feel as though I am spinning.

Oh God, please don't let me embarrass myself, especially in front of him of all people. I don't need to give him any ammunition.

"Kassidy, you need the code to get in." he states as we stand outside my building.

The code, the code, shit what's the fucking code?

I try to focus on the keypad, but the stupid numbers keep dancing around.

Will you stay the fuck still? My fingers keep hitting the wrong number causing the most annoying buzz to be made. It makes my head ache and it feel like my ears are bleeding.

"Uh, Kassidy if you let me I can put the code in."

"Riiiiiiiiight," I slur as I sway and think really hard what the fucking code is, again.

"Kassidy, the code? Just let me do it."

"I got this. I got this. Just stay out of my way buddy. Oh, um, it's, it's, shit what is the fucking code?" I say a little louder than was probably necessary. I am getting pissed. Pissed at myself for once and not him. And pissed at those fucking numbers for not staying the fuck still.

"Kassidy," he hushes as he gently grabs my shoulders, "it's okay, just relax, it'll come to you. Or again I can do it for you. I think I remember it, okay?"

See he really is sweet.

I see, I see. Now hush so I can

remember the stupid code.

Sorry.

"Oh, oh it's zero eight one three!"

Finally.

"Are you sure? It sounds right, I think."

"Yes, positive." *God I hope it's the right fucking number.*

"Let's give it a try." He is being so patient.

As his slender fingers push the keypad, his other hand is firmly gripping my waist. I think if he was to let go I would probably be eating concrete.

We drank way too much.

Uh huh.

Click. Click.

"It worked. See I knew if you just relaxed," he says with a half-smile.

I smile up at him concentrating on walking without tripping or puking right there in the lobby. We make our way to the elevators. When the door finally opens he ushers me inside, with his arm securely around my waist.

"Do you know what floor we need to get to? I just want to make sure because I remember if you don't."

"The thirteenth?" I say like a question like I don't remember my own floor.

"Yep, you remember." He smiles that crooked sexy smirk and shakes his head. I hate the fact that I am totally embarrassing myself in front of him at the moment. Stupid deliciously tasting cocktails.

The elevator seems smaller than usual, hotter than usual and the ride longer than usual. I have to really focus on staying upright. Thankfully, Davis is nearby, because a couple of times I find

myself using him for support and he doesn't seem to mind. *Of course he doesn't.* And when I do, I can feel his muscular form through his t-shirt and inhale his honey spicy essence even more.

Pure heaven.

I think I like you better when you're drunk you seem to think more clearly when it comes to him.

Shut up you.

It's true you can't deny it.

I plead the fifth.

Finally, we reach my floor. I was

beginning to think we were in Willy Wonka's glass elevator and were traveling to Oompa Loompa Land or some shit.

"Kassidy, what is your apartment number, again?"

"Um, thirteen thirty-two."

I think that's right.

It's right.

Good. What the hell was in that drink? I can barely function.

Oh, probably a whole bottle of alcohol considering you had five.

I was having a good time.

Are we having a good time now?

Uh, no.

That's my point.

Point taken.

Never again?

Never again.

As we walk, well he walks, I stumble and drag along a little, I feel a burning in my stomach. *Oh God no!* And I cup my mouth.

"Kassidy, are you okay?" he asks urgently.

I take a deep breath. "Yeah, I'm fine. Just give me a sec."

I don't remember giving him or him asking for them, but he has my keys and is opening the door. We are met by pure darkness and an eerie quiet. My apartment is a little scary tonight. I usually leave a light on, but obviously after doing a couple of shots with my girls, I totally forgot. We stand in the entryway, while I attempt to find the light switch. Of course in my current state, even though I have used the damn light switch for the past two years, I am unsuccessful

"Here, I got it," he breathes as he

reaches around me; as he brings his face awfully close to mine.

Mmmmm.

"There we go. Let there be light," he jokes.

For some odd reason I just stand there paralyzed, it is as if my feet are encased in concrete. I feel my breathing accelerate as I gaze into his eyes. The room is spinning and I am mesmerized. Until now I really hadn't looked this closely at Davis. Sure, I have noticed previously that he is as hot as fuck, but something is different tonight.

I hear my inner self clapping,
uncontrollably.

I am staring and he just stares back
in complete silence. I am pulled closer
to him, but not by his arms or hands, but
simply by his presence. I feel as though I
am a moth and he is the flame. Two
magnets being pulled to each other.

"Davis," I utter feeling a growing
burn and surge in my stomach. "Oh
God," I cry cupping my mouth as I bolt
down the hall toward the bathroom.

Son of a bitch!

Fanfuckingtastic!

I make it just in time to save myself from embarrassment. I kneel beside my porcelain friend, emptying out the blue contents of the evening, when I feel something cool and soothing on my neck, as my hair is swept up into a ponytail.

"Davis, you don't need to," I plead.

"It's okay. I'm here to help. Just get it all out, you'll feel better."

When I am finally done worshiping the porcelain god, Davis gives me some mouthwash to rinse with. I am quite grateful and relieved to have that god awful taste and feel out of my mouth. I

suddenly find myself horizontal. He, at some point, has picked me up and is carrying me to my bed. As he holds me, he quickly pulls back the covers and gently lays me down.

"Here, take these, they should help, a little."

He gives me a couple of Advil and a glass of water. When I finish, I try to put the glass down on the bedside table but miss. However, I never hear it fall.

"Davis?"

"Uh huh."

"How did you know where I was?"

I ask as he tucks me in.

"My friend called who was there."

"Oh."

I gaze deep into his eyes noticing their unique green color and how they dance and play against the colors in his hair.

"You really are beautiful," I exhale as my hand reaches up to touch his cheek. His stubble tickles my hand as he leans into it.

"You really have had too much to drink," he chuckles, "get some sleep."

He starts to pull away. "Davis,

wait.”

He turns around and smiles, “Do you need something?”

“I...I just want to say you aren’t really an asshole. I mean, I thought at first because...but now...not so much. I mean you still get under my skin probably because I think you’re super-hot and it’s been way to long since I’ve been...” I realize what I’m saying and quickly clamp my hand over my mouth.

“Oh God, I said that out loud, to you,” I mumble behind my hand.

Davis smile takes over and he

shakes his head, “Well, I’m happy your opinion of me has changed. So I get under your skin, huh?” I know he’s teasing.

My hand pulls away, “Yes...yes you do. And it infuriates me to no end. I like to...to have control and with you I don’t seem to.”

“Oh, you have great control Kassidy. You’ve never done anything or said anything until now, that would speak otherwise.”

I nod. “True, on the outside I’m in control, but on the inside, on the inside

I'm a hot mess. And honestly I can't stand feeling that way and I can't stand that it's you that makes me feel that way. Gah, I hope I don't and you don't remember this in the morning. If you do and I don't can you pretend I didn't say a word, that I just passed out when you brought me home." I pull the covers over my head hoping to hide my complete and utter embarrassment. I can't believe what I've just confessed and confessed to him no less. Just kill me now.

I feel a tug on the covers and relinquish control of them. "Kassidy,

you get under my skin too, and I'm not always in control."

He leans in closer, looking at my lips and then straight in my eyes. Just when I think he's going to kiss me his body moves up and he kisses my forehead.

"Get some sleep, Kassidy."

"K." And with that, as the darkness creeps up over me, I think that maybe I am Edward Lewis and Davis is Vivian. Could I be the one with the frozen, broken heart and he is here to melt and mend it? Then the darkness takes me

completely.

CHAPTER 10

I feel stubble graze my bare stomach and it tickles. Wetness leaves a trail where the stubble just was. I feel a tongue. I wet hot tongue circles my belly button before dipping in and teasing me with its skill. I can't help the moan that escapes my mouth. I want to pull my legs together, but there's a body in between them preventing me from doing so. I know I drank a ton last night and I know Davis brought me home, but I could have sworn he left. Right? Or am I wrong?

Did our conversation continue and I admitted more than I already had and he stayed? Did I ask him to stay? Or did he stay on his own? Are Kanye and Kim going to ever get married? Will Jess and Nick on *New Girl* last? Will *Shark Tank* have more products I desperately need to buy? So many questions and I don't have the answer to any of them!

And right now I don't care; that tongue feels incredible and it's making its way down south. My body vibrates in anticipation and not because of BoB—for once. Deft fingers tug and caress my

breast, elongating my already hard peeked nipple. The tongue travels lower and lower and then it's just where I want it, where I need it. The tongue teases my clit and then flattens and licks my entire opening over and over and over again. Seeming to have the ability to multi-task, I feel two fingers enter me, while the other hand still massages and alternates between each breast. Fingers pump in and out of me, while that skillful tongue rubs and licks against my clit before lips engulf it and suck. I buck against the bed as my body begins to tingle and tighten.

He continues his ministrations bringing me closer and closer to the brink. Fingers pump harder, faster. A mouth sucks and nibbles my now extremely sensitive clit.

“Oh my God. I’m close, so close,” I moan like a wanton whore but at the moment I could give two shits. BoB, as good as “he” is, is no match for the head between my legs and the hands and fingers bringing me such extraordinary pleasure. BoB, who? Faster. Harder. Deeper. And then his voice breaks through my erotic storm, “Come.” And

my body explodes, shaking and vibrating like never before. All coherent thought is lost and my body feels as though every bone has been easily removed. My heart races in my chest and I pant like a huge ass hairy dog in 100 degree weather. The tongue slowly licks me through the rest of my amazing orgasm until my body ceases all movement. I feel lips pull into a smile against my sensitive flesh and slowly makes its way out from under the sheet. I am met with brilliant green eyes and a smirk that makes me melt.

“Davis? You stayed?” I can’t help

but question still confused how we got here. I mean I know he took my home, but what occurred in order for him to stay.

“Remember I’m under your skin? And I wanted to see you finally lose control.”

“I would say you got more than under my skin this morning.” I quirk an eyebrow.

“Well, I think I can do better and get deeper under your skin.”

The gauntlet is thrown and I have no problem accepting that challenge. I

smile at him and wink. He smiles back and his head disappears under the sheet and in a heartbeat I feel stubble in my sensitive area again and can't help but moan in sweet anticipation. His talented tongue licks once against my swollen clit and I scream, "Davis, holy shit!"

I bolt upright, my lungs burning, my body tingling and I'm covered in sweat. I hear something vibrating and that's when I notice BoB glistening up at me. Oh. My. God. Now I'm acting out in reality my wet dreams of Davis. Fanfuckintastic. I flop back against the

bed, throwing BoB off to the side and ripping the covers over my face. That dream has ruined BoB for me, damn it.

The sunlight slowly creeps across the floor inching its way toward my bed. I groan at the thought of it meeting my eyes, so I instinctively pull the covers even tighter against my head. My head, oh my fucking head, it is pounding.

Shit, we had way too much to drink last night.

You're telling me.

Never again?

Never again. And if I attempt to,

you better step the fuck in and stop me.

Deal.

I feel as though it might explode—not like I did in the dream—and my skin feels like it is melting off my face. *What the fuck did I drink last night? Oh way tooooooooooo much. Fuck Jas for tasting so good!* I have to laugh on the inside at that last thought, it is fucking hilarious. I figure if I laugh out loud I might literally die right here in my bed. As I lay here, trying to get my head together, and will my body to stop reacting to that damn dream yet again, I remember what I said

to Davis, what I actually confessed. Oh just kill me now. I hope he doesn't remember. Of course he will remember, he wasn't drunk like some people. *Davis had been sweet last night? Yes, I think he was sweet; he took care of us? Maybe he isn't such a dick after all? Maybe, but, last night could have been a once in a lifetime thing ya know? A leopard doesn't just change their spots.*

God you are such a cynic.

Hey, comes with being a kick ass lawyer, you see some fucked up shit.

I know, but Davis isn't one of your

fucking clients. He's Jason's best friend after all and a guy who seems to get us all worked up, in more ways than one.

I'm quite aware of how he gets me all worked up.

If you were to check your panties right now, you would see that I'm right about getting all worked up in more ways than one and a way we really need.

Will you stop, you're making my head hurt even worse.

Fine later then.

Fine. I just stay under the covers,

just being—a few last vibrations wave through my body...damn that dream. Why did I have to dream about him yet again? And why did I have to like it so much? What is it about him that makes my body and my subconscious react the way they do? Gah, if I had the answer to those questions I could probably solve a few more mysteries, like is Bigfoot real? Shit, solving the Bigfoot mystery would probably be easier. I hate how out of control he makes me feel. I need control, I need normalcy and I'm getting anything but with Davis. As frustration overtakes

me I groan which is a big mistake because my head pounds even more. I inhale deeply trying to clear my head and calm the throbbing when I catch the distinct smell of cinnamon and maple syrup? *What the hell? Why am I smelling cinnamon and maple syrup?* I then hear the clanging of a pan? *Holy shitballs, someone is in my apartment!*

I crawl out of bed, actually more like slither and slink my way out of bed, avoiding direct contact with the impending sunlight. Shit, I tiptoe around its cast on the floor as if I am a vampire

and would burst into flames if my baby toe even touched it. I make my way to my closet and found my security system, good ole' Louisville Slugger. My dad had taught me that a baseball bat could do some real damage, if it was used for something other than batting practice. With Louie in hand, I slowly make my way down the hall. Besides the cinnamon and maple syrup, my nose is again bombarded with another pleasing aroma, this time it is bacon. My stomach rumbles in agreement.

What burglar would break in and

cook breakfast?

Do you really think it's a burglar?

I don't know, but no one else has a key to my place. Shit, maybe it's a homeless guy.

Seriously you need a code to get in. What random homeless guy is going to be able to walk into the building?

Okay you're right, but who the hell is here?

Only one way to find out.

Right.

I keep stealthily walking down the hall, with Louie firmly in one hand

raised up high and the other hand holding my aching head. I need some Tylenol or Advil or something stronger. I walk into the living room and notice the TV is on, but the volume is barely audible. I can see a figure standing in the kitchen. I creep through the living room and as I get closer to the kitchen, I hear someone humming. *What song is that?* I strain to listen closer and it is *Too Close*. *I love that song*. My uninvited house guest doesn't even hear me enter the kitchen, so I raise Louie back to swing, when he turns around.

Davis! Oh my fucking head!

"Davis?" I shriek in astonishment, frozen in my tracks, with Louie still perched high above my head, my temples pulsate my head ready to explode.

"Shit Kassidy, you scared me," he replies with one hand palming his heart and the other up as if he is surrendering.

His heart is racing, shit, mine just won the Daytona 500.

"What the fuck are you doing here? Why...." I am thrown for a loop to say the least and can't quite comprehend what he is doing in my kitchen, using my

appliances, cooking my food. I also can't form a coherent thought. I know he brought me home and said get some sleep, but I assumed he left.

"You don't remember? Of course you don't remember, you were pretty messed up last night," he says in defense walking his way closer to me.

I stand frozen, just staring at him. No, I don't totally remember and yes, I was pretty messed up last night, but that still doesn't explain why he is standing in my kitchen. I can feel the anger bubble in the pit of my stomach, slowly inching

its way up ready to spew all over him.

Just calm down and let him explain; remember he was sweet last night.

Sweet last night my ass. God only knows what happened; he's standing in my apartment and I don't recall asking him to stay.

Just take it easy and let him explain, I'm sure he can fill in some holes we have.

Some holes? Shit, I feel like Swiss cheese.

Just give it a rest and please put

down the bat before you hurt somebody.

Fine.

I don't realize I still have a firm grip on Louie and it is still perched above my head. I suddenly see my reflection in the stainless steel refrigerator and in Davis's eyes. Shit, I scare myself. I not only feel like hell, but I look like it too. The lines in my forehead are very pronounced, a result of the rage I am beginning to feel. I feel appalled? Yes, appalled and not at him, but at myself and the image I am

presenting. I slowly pull my arm down and drop the bat to the floor. The sound reverberates and pulsates in my aching head. I automatically draw my hands up and crush them into my temples.

"Here, come sit down and I'll get you some more Advil. Unless you have something stronger," he says as he ushers me to the living room couch. His arm is gently guiding my back and I feel a tingly sensation where his hand touches me. Oh, God, not now. Traitorous body.

"Easy Kassidy, I don't want to have to take a trip to the emergency room this

morning," he somewhat jokes as I wobble and stumble my way down to the comfy and safe seat that is awaiting my sorry ass.

"I'll be fine, just give me a sec," I manage to utter still gripping my skull.

"I'll be right back." And with that he is gone.

I just sit there, holding my head so damn tight that I think I could crush my skull in. I lean my head back and flicker my eyes open, only to find the most gorgeous, emerald, green pools staring back at me.

"Here, ya go. Just what the doctor ordered," he says handing me two Advil and a glass filled with, filled with shit, I have no fucking clue what is in it because it isn't crystal clear like water. Actually, it looks muddy.

"Thanks, and what's this?" I cautiously reach my hand out to take the Advil and the "drink".

"It's a home remedy, for hangovers. Trust me, it works wonders. Just don't think about it and drink up."

"Okay," and I toss the Advil into my mouth and bring the glass to my lips.

"Ohhh, that smells awful." I nearly gag.

"I know, just drink up," he demands, as he tilts the glass closer to my lips.

I pinch my nose, something I used to do when my mom would give me some heinous smelling cough syrup, and begin to drink his concoction. It doesn't taste all that bad, it definitely smells worse.

"There, that wasn't so bad, was it?"

"It smells a lot worse, but still it tastes like...just nasty. Good thing I held

my nose. Anyway, what's in it?"

"Trust me, you're better off not knowing," he chuckles.

I curl my legs under me and grab the blanket from the back of the couch, getting myself ready to cross examine him. I need answers about last night and apparently he has them or at least I think he has them.

"So, about last night..."

"You wanna know what happened?"

"Uh, yeah, things are pretty much a blur. Actually, I can barely remember

anything. All I do remember is being at the club having a fuc.. a great time until this asshole....."

"Yes, the asshole," he says through his stiff jaw and clenched teeth. And I swear I hear a low rumble of a growl come from him.

"How did you know?"

"My friend Adam was there and he saw you guys were partying pretty hard and it was getting late and well After Dark is a great place, until late in the night or early in the morning, depending on how you look at it. Anyway, he called

me looking for Jason. I told him we were together and for him to hang tight and that we would be right there. When we got to the club Jason saw Chloe and Macy on the dance floor, but there was no sign of you. He went after them while I looked around for you. I finally spotted you up in the VIP section with that asshole harassing you." I can feel heat radiate from him and his breath quickens as he speaks. It is almost as if he is getting agitated, as he recalls last night's events.

Wonder why?

Oh, I can think of a reason why.

Shut up you!

"Thank you, by the way."

"No problem. It's weird, but at the moment I felt..." he hesitates.

"You felt what?" I pry.

"I felt...like I had to help you, be there...I couldn't fathom if something... something ever happened to you." Davis's eyes show so much concern in them yet behind them there's this intensity I've never seen in anyone before.

He felt what? Protective of me?

Well that just shocked the shit out of me. And now I feel like crap because I've been everything but super nice to him and here he is worrying about my well-being.

"You were worried about me even though I've been...?"

"It's, it's hard to explain. I saw that you needed help from that mother fucker and thankfully I was there," he says with his jaw clenched tightly.

Not liking seeing him getting worked up over something that was probably nothing with that scumbag I

ask, "So, you just brought me home?"

"Yeah." His smile comes back, his eyes lighten and it makes me feel warm.

He just brought me home and nothing happened other than me spilling my guts to him. Thankfully he hasn't mentioned that. God, if he does I will throw myself off the balcony. *I bet he would stop you since he feels protective of you. I'm sure he would jump you and cover you with his body to prevent you from hurting yourself.* My inner self is so not helping me at the moment as I try to ignore her and the feelings she is

evoking thinking of his body on mine. And of course now my mind is drifting back to that hot and vivid dream I had this morning of Davis doing marvelous things with his tongue and fingers. My body begins to tingle and when my gaze meets his, I swear the temperature rises. Davis gives me this look and I can't help but think that maybe he heard me earlier—just kill me now—or something else happened between us other than talking and I don't remember it.

Before I can stop myself, my mouth speaks without my thinking. "We didn't?"

I question waving my hand back and forth between my girly parts and his manly parts. I mean I remember saying what I said to him, but after that it's pretty much a black hole. I really don't think we did...I mean if we did I'm sure I would remember, especially if my dreams are any indication of how things might be. But, a girl can never be too sure.

His eyes practically bug out of his skull. "Oh, God no, Kassidy, I never would think of taking advantage. You were incapacitated, to say the least. No,

I brought you home, helped you in the bathroom. You got sick. Then I tucked you in; you passed right out. I was gonna leave, but I was afraid you might throw up again, in your sleep or might need something, so I stayed. And just for the record, if we ever...you would certainly remember, there wouldn't be any question about it." His teeth tug at his bottom lip and his eyes scan me from head to toe even though I'm covered up with the blanket I swear he has x-ray vision and can see right through it. My cheeks heat up and my tummy flutters.

All I can do is stare back at him and nod my head. It's like he's got some mind control thing going on. Davis leans forward and I instinctively lean towards him. Just when I think he's going to kiss me, he grabs the glass from my hands and gets up.

My body slumps back and I feel... disappointed.

“Um, I think you might feel better if you get some food in you, so I made you breakfast. I hope you don't mind? I just...felt...” He trails off waiting for me to stand up.

I get up and toss the blanket to the couch. I notice Davis's eyes roam my entire body this time, his stare lingering here and there.

I clear my throat, "The worrying protective thing again?"

He stares a beat or two and then shakes his head, "Exactly."

"Again, thank you and you didn't have to. Last night wasn't my first rodeo." I shrug and pray that I didn't embarrass myself in my sleep. Then it occurs to me, what if I had a dream while he was in the room. Oh. My. God.

Then he heard...when I was...kill me now...just kill me now...

I feel my chest tighten like it always does before I start to hyperventilate and have a full blown panic attack. Yep, I'm definitely going to have a panic attack... the idea of him...and me...and a dream...

Breathe Kas, just breathe.

My hand clutches at my chest; I feel the sweat trickle down between my boobs and also down my back. It's hot in here...too hot...I go to take a deep cleansing breath hoping to calm myself,

but instead of inhaling like a normal person, I end up inhaling and choking on my own breath. Davis is by my side in a heartbeat, his hand lightly pounding on my back, while his other hand grabs mine. It's really getting hot in here. The pounding in my head is forgotten for there is a pounding elsewhere, like right between my legs. I try my damndest to concentrate on regulating my breathing and not his hands on me. My choking starts to subside and now his hand on my back isn't pounding any more, but rubbing soothing circles on it instead.

What in the hell is this annoyingly sweet man doing to me? I need to get away before I relinquish all control over to him. I try to grasp onto the fact that in our previous encounters he's been a total douche, and not the sweet man he was last night and is this morning. Grab onto that Kassidy and all will be right in our world.

You are insane!

My breath stutters one last time. I have tears streaming down my cheeks and I'm sure I'm completely blotchy. Just the look I was going for this

morning in front of him.

Davis continues to be quiet, goes to the sink filling up a glass with water and hands it to me. I can't help but notice how comfortable he is in my kitchen, knowing his way around. And I can't help but notice how I'm kinda starting to like it? Yeah, I like it and I really shouldn't because nothing good can come out of us being...

Davis clears his throat bringing me out of my head. "Better?"

I simply nod my head slowly drinking the water. I figure if my mouth

is preoccupied with drinking I can't say something stupid like I know my inner self would want me too. Something stupid like how I appreciate him being here. Something stupid like how this seems natural him in my kitchen. Something stupid like how much I really like him taking care of me. Totally stupid.

“Thanks,” I finally say finishing the water.

“No problem.”

“Thanks for your help last night and this morning.” I need him to leave

sooner rather than later. I don't like feeling what I'm feeling. Hopefully he'll get the hint.

"I'm just glad I was here to help, I could never forgive myself if something had happened nor would Chloe. She would have probably kicked my ass or worse, cut off my balls or something, if I had left you and something did happen, ya know? So I just stayed. I slept on that oversized stuffed chair with the ottoman in your living room."

Again, all I do is nod. I know all too well what Chloe is capable of and

he is right she would have fucked him up, royally.

"I know Chloe, so no biggie. And again, thank you."

"I really wish you would stop thanking me. There really is no need to. I have a lot to make up for, if I'm to get that third chance."

The third chance? I totally forgot about it and his note.

"About that..." As I speak, he quickly draws a slender finger to my lips to hush me.

Oh my! My lips tingle.

"Look, I don't expect anything. I know, I've been a total dick to you on occasion and I just want a chance to show you that I am really not like that. Besides, now that I'm moving here and I'm sure we will all be seeing each other on a more regular basis, it would just make things a lot easier." That sexy smile is back and his eyes twinkle mischievously.

He's moving here? My inner self is doing back handsprings.

"You're, moving here?"

"Um, yeah. I got a promotion and

I'll be heading up things out here. My stuff is actually on its way as we speak."

Holy shit!

Yes!

"Um, where are you gonna be living?" I ask biting my lower lip.

Please not my building, please not my building.

Oh please our building, please our building.

The battle continues.

"I'm moving into Solair off of Wilshire. My firm bought a few condos in it."

"Oh." Is all I can think of, really what can I say, and Solair that place is luxurious living at its finest; I would kill to live there.

Oh, I don't know, how about glad you're moving here, it will give us a chance to really get to know each other.

Hell no!

Chicken shit.

Bwak. Bwak. Bwak.

"Well, it looks like you're gonna live. I made French toast and bacon. I know something sweet, salty and greasy

always makes me feel better the morning after. It's there if you want it." He's very casual all of the sudden and it's like he can't get out of here soon enough.

That's what you wanted, right?

"You're leaving?" I feel a little disappointed.

"Yeah, I better get going. I need to check on the movers' arrival time and my new place."

"Oh, okay then."

He heads for the door and I quickly follow behind. For some strange reason I don't want him to leave and as he is

going to, I am suddenly drawn to him and want to hold on to him for dear life.

Strange?

Oh my Kassidy will you ever learn?

What?

Never mind.

"Davis," I call to him.

He turns around to meet my gaze and his eyes burn into me and I see that smirk.

"Yeah, Kassidy?"

"I'm sorry too. I know I've been a bitch to you, even though at times it was

justified..."

Way to apologize.

Give me a sec.

"But still you didn't deserve it. That third chance, I think it's possible. After all, now we'll practically be neighbors."

"Good. I had *hoped* I would get that third chance. And Kassidy, that bitchy hell cat in you is sexy." His smirk grows more crooked; more sexy.

Shit, he stressed the word "hoped". Shitballs my hope panties. And what did he mean by sexy? I feel the crimson wave swell up my neck and

crash smack dab on my face, making its home on my cheeks; his smirk turns into a full blown sexy smile.

"Enjoy your breakfast and take it easy today; dance practice is canceled. Apparently, Chloe thought you wouldn't be up for it." And with that he leaves.

I feel the crimson wave ebb back and head to the kitchen to see what he made.

Holytruckerfricklicker! It looks as if Rachael Ray or Guy Fieri has prepared breakfast. Ryan Davis is definitely full of surprises. My stomach

growls as my eyes take everything in. I settle down on the bar stool with a yummy plate of French toast, bacon and fresh strawberries. I am definitely going to have to get with my girls later; especially Chloe, I have some questions about Ryan Davis.

CHAPTER 11

I still can't wrap my brain around the idea that Davis is moving here and will be living not that far away. Hell, we will probably run into each other on the street. And he said we will be hanging out. Of course we will, he's best friends with Jason and I'm best friends with Chloe, so we will definitely be hanging out when we all get together. Plus, my law firm isn't too far from Solair either. Whether I want it or not, it seems as though Ryan Davis is going to be a

fixture in my life.

Maybe a permanent one.

Oh, will you please give it a rest.

No, I won't.

Fine, you want me to say it, you want me to fucking say it? I am attracted to Ryan Davis, Okay? That's as far as it goes.

For now.

Oh, for the love of God. That's it, that's it!

Kas, if you would just open up your eyes you would see that we, you, me, could have real feelings for him.

Okay, fine, maybe a small, tiny, miniscule crush. Happy?

Not really, but it's a start.

I need to google how to silence or better yet kill your inner self. This constant battling is making me feel not like myself. I'm out of control and I don't like or need it. Things all have to have their place and my inner self needs to be put in her place.

You wouldn't?

Try me.

I attempt to relax and try to recuperate from last night's festivities.

Actually, Davis's concoction has really helped. Who knew something so vile smelling that tasted like sweat socks and ass would help—not that I know what ass actually tastes like. I eventually shower and get dressed, opting for comfort over fashion—plain old skinny jeans, an oversized shirt and flats. I make sure to grab my biggest pair of sunglasses I have, sunlight is so not my friend today. For once I hate the California sun and wish I lived somewhere else—somewhere not so sunny, maybe Alaska where it's night

half of the year.

I actually make it to the restaurant on time, even though I feel as though my ass has been dragging all morning. I totally shock the shit out of myself and my girls; who by the way, show no signs of what happened last night. Obviously, they can hold their liquor a lot better. Evil bitches.

"Well, look what the drunken cat dragged in," teases Macy.

"Shut the fuck up bitch. You have no idea." I slump in my chair keeping my sunglasses firmly in place even though

we are indoors. Hey, movie stars do it all the time, I'm just keeping it California real people.

"So Kas, how did you get home last night?" Chloe inquires I'm sure already knowing. She just wants me to say it out loud.

"Yeah, Marshall, how did you get home, cause I know it wasn't the limo, a cab or even Jason," Macy eggs on.

Their eyes are imploring me to respond. Macy wiggles her eyebrows; Chloe has a huge ass grin on her face. I know they both know, but like always

they want to torture me. I swear I think they live to torture me. I know they just love seeing me like this. I'm usually calm, cool and in control—always in control—but this, this Davis situation screams of anything but control, and they are loving every minute of it. I just know they are. It's written all over their faces as a matter of fact, and at this very moment. Time to woman-up, so to speak.

Ha!

"Davis took me," I whisper, as I take a sip of my water acting as casual as possible, like it is no big deal.

"What? We didn't exactly catch that," Macy harasses like only Macy can.

I know if I don't just come right out and say it nice and loud she is going to be relentless as Macy always is. "Fine if you really must know, which I know you do already, and if you really need me to say it, fine...Davis took me home."

"Really?" they question in unison, like they don't already know.

They just want you to admit it and say it all out loud for the record.

Don't remind me.

"Yes, really and you guys aren't

fooling anybody. I know you know Missy because I'm sure Davis told Jason and Jason told you. And I know you know, ballbuster, because Satellite Chloe can't keep her big mouth shut. Anyway, nothing happened, except probably, I embarrassed the shit out of myself, if you must know. And I know you two must know."

"Okay, okay. Jeez Kassidy, don't have a coronary. Just relax. Kas, we're just teasing. Damn," Macy says almost apologetically, but it is Macy and apology isn't in her vocabulary really.

"I'm just sick and tired of everyone pushing him on me and now that's he's moved here; it's only going to get worse."

"He told you?" asks Chloe a little surprised.

"Yeah, this morning."

Oh, shit here we go again.

Dumbass.

"This morning?" You better start talking bitch," they say at the same time again, except Chloe leaves out the word bitch. Were they rehearsing this before I arrived?

"All right I will, but will you please back off and give me some slack when it comes to him?"

"Fine," again in unison, but I so don't believe them. Those two are meddlers, especially Chloe. She won't be happy until everyone she knows is in a relationship and in love like she is. I'm surprised she hasn't started planning mine and Davis's wedding yet. Macy just likes to bust my balls, so to speak.

Don't give her any ideas.

"Well, apparently, I was totally obliterated last night and he helped me

out. I got sick, he took care of me and stayed over because he was afraid something would happen or I would need something in the middle of the night. But I think he stayed mainly because he feared the wrath of Chloe if he didn't."

"Damn right he should fear me," Chloe puffs up.

"Don't we all," Macy says seriously.

Hell, it is the truth; she can be totally scary when she needs to be. Pitbull on steroids.

As we all sit there eating, making idle chit chat, I finally get up the courage to ask Chloe a few questions about Davis. "So, Chloe, um, um..." I am a little apprehensive.

"Let me guess, you want the four one one on Davis."

"Uh, Yeah." That was easier. Thank God Chloe is a mind reader from time to time.

"What do you want to know?" she casually asks continuing to eat her salad.

"I don't know um..." Shit what do I want to know? Do I really want to know

anything?

"Shit Marshall, Chloe, does Davis want to do the nasty with our little sweet virginal Kassidy?"

"Fuck you Macy," I spew at her.

"Well you're too chicken shit to ask."

"That's one thing I don't want to know though."

"Sure it isn't. You know you want to fuck him 'til the mother fucking cows come home. And as far as I know the cows are far, far away from L.A.."

She can be so crude.

"Well, he hasn't come flat out and said it, although he has asked Jason a thing or two about you, but I get an overwhelming sense that he's extremely attracted to you. And don't act like you're not interested the slightest. I know you better than yourself, Kassidy Lillian Marshall." She wields her fork at me like she's ready to spear me to make her point.

Shit, it seems like everyone knows me better than I know myself, apparently. What is up with that?

"Okay so um, is Davis a big time

player? I noticed a lot of girls' numbers in his cell phone?" This is what I want to know. If they and my inner self are right, I'm about to get mixed up with a guy with a harem.

"No Kassidy, he's not a player; at least not now. At one time Davis was more than average male slut. But he's grown up over the past few of years. I think he's remained friends with a few of the girls, but quite honestly, I think it's just a reminder of how he used to be so he doesn't go back down that road; although he won't admit it. Chloe knows

better," she says tapping her temple.

I hate when she talks about herself in the third person. She has a bad habit of doing that and it drives me insane. I mean who talks like that except crazy people.

Hello, pot, have you met kettle?

"Anything else?"

"Um, no, I'll let you know when I think of anything though."

I don't think my head can take it anymore, it still feels the effects of last night and on the verge of exploding if too much information is needed to process.

Besides, I am a little nervous talking about it in front of Macy. Usually it wouldn't matter, but this time it is different somehow.

We finish our meal, pay the bill, and we each head to our respective homes. When I get home, I work a little on Reynolds's case, but I really can't focus. I take a deep breath and put my work away. I have the sudden urge to have a glass of wine and take a nice long hot bath. Just what the doctor ordered. I draw the water, light some candles and grab my iPod and place it in the dock.

I'm not paying attention to what is playing, as I inch my way into the soothing water. Then the words penetrate my fog and I realize "A Matter of Feeling" by Duran Duran is playing. Simon's words take on new meaning, and they express exactly how I am feeling. Love is history to me. I have been fucked with and dumped on in the past; finding love clearly not an option for me now or so I used to think. My defenses have been a habit, but now with Davis in the picture, maybe I am ready for something new. I know my inner self

thinks so, along with my friends. And when I really think about it, my mind and my body are definitely desperate for it, craving it. I need and want to be loved and to love again. I tune out the rest of the song. It is too much too take. Tears began to stream my face. It is a combination of hearing those lyrics, knowing what I want and need and don't have and also the weight and pressure of work falling in on me. I sink deeper into the tub allowing the water to take my body completely. It is a cleansing of sorts and it just feels necessary and

right.

As I lay here in bed waiting for Mr. Sandman to make an appearance, my thoughts turn to Davis. He was great the last night. I have to give him credit where credit is due. And he was especially sweet this morning. Maybe I am wrong about him. I'm not going to let down my dick defenses, I am still a little apprehensive. In time, things might change, but I'm not going to get mine or anyone else's hopes up. It is a lost cause, me and men, something I accepted a long

time ago. As I close my eyes, I see smoldering green staring back at me. My gaze can't look away and I feel warm and safe all over. Then Mr. Sandman finally comes.

I have been buried at work for the past week and a half, two weeks really. Reynolds's case is going longer than expected and I am at my wit's end with it and the man himself. The partners are pleased, so I don't have that to worry about. At least something in my life makes sense. Work has always been that

escape for me, and I've welcomed that escape a lot more lately.

I leave the office late, as usual, and have an overwhelming craving for Chinese food. Mr. Ling's is on my way home, so I figure take out is a very good idea. I can practically taste that shrimp sauce. It has been a long day and I have a chilled bottle of wine waiting at home, and it is calling my name. Besides, my stomach is protesting my lack of lunch earlier. I am starving. Occupational hazard.

I pull up to Mr. Ling's and for a

Tuesday night it is quite busy. Guess everyone has a craving tonight. I make my way inside and get in line, when I realize I need to call Elaine. I pull out my phone while I wait to place my order.

"Elaine, hi, it's Kassidy."

"Yes, Miss Marshall."

"Make sure you FedEx that file tonight. It's really crucial that it goes overnight."

"Already taken care of Miss Marshall."

"Elaine, you're the best."

"Thank you Miss Marshall."

"You know you can call me

Kassidy."

"Yes Miss Marshall. Anything

else?"

"Yes, go get some much needed

rest, you deserve it."

"Thank you Miss Marshall."

"I'll see you bright and early

tomorrow morning."

"Sure, Miss Marshall. Good night."

"Good night Elaine"

There are times when Elaine can be

a real pain in the ass and have attitude,

but today and tonight she was great. As I attempt to put my phone back in my purse, I totally miss and it falls to the floor.

"Shit!"

I bend down to pick it up, but before I can, it is being handed to me.

"Here you go."

"Thanks."

I know that voice and when I look up to see who it is, I am met with emerald, green, twinkling eyes and a crooked smile.

"Davis?"

"You're craving Mr. Ling's too, huh?"

I am dumbfounded. It is as if I have forgotten how to speak. I knew he had moved here and I knew I would probably run into him from time to time, but honestly, I didn't think it would be this soon or here. Shit, he only moved back about two weeks ago.

Say something Marshall.

"Um, uh, yeah. I was working late and didn't feel like cooking or having just a sandwich or something easy like that. So here I am. Mr. Ling's is the

best," I fucking ramble.

Put a lid on it. He didn't ask for a play by play of our dinner plans.

I know, but some reason he's made me suddenly nervous, just by the way he's looking at me.

I get it, but just be cool. We don't need him thinking we're a total nut job. Well, at least not yet.

Okay, okay.

Davis is still looking at me with such intensity, that I am drawn to him and I feel like I might incinerate right there in the middle of Mr. Ling's. I want

to reach out to him. To just touch him. I can feel the air around us ignite with heat and electricity. This is weird to say the least. I actually think I like it. My inner self seems to like it even more.

Hell yeah I do!

"So, what are you getting?" He smirks shaking his head.

When he shakes his head, my senses are assaulted with honey and spice with a hint of citrus, his smell, and it takes me back to when he took me home and tucked me into bed and kissed my forehead, and.... My inner self

giggles and I feel my belly constrict and tighten. What is Ryan Davis doing to me?

"Um, the usual." I squirm.

"And, what's the usual, Miss Marshall?"

"Oh, scallion chicken and an egg roll."

Mr. Ling's scallion chicken is to die for. It is so outrageously delicious; it makes me want to bathe in it. Not that I would really ever do that, it is just that damn incredible.

"I'm getting Moo Shu pork, my

usual."

While he talks, my inner self begins jumping up and down and she is poking me. *Ask him, ask him.* Strange enough, the idea is mine and not hers. Another weird occurrence.

"Hey Davis,"

"Uh huh," he replies as he moves closer to the take out counter.

"If you don't have plans would you want to come back to my apartment and have dinner?" I quickly ask before I lose my nerve or come to my fucking senses. What am I thinking? Why did I just ask

him to have dinner with me? I have totally lost my mind.

Maybe you're working on giving him that third chance.

"Are you asking me on a date Miss Marshall?" he jokes. At least I think he is joking. God I hope he is.

I don't want him to think it's a date, right? It's not a date; just one friend of a friend asking another friend of a friend to share dinner. He's new in town that's why I'm asking, no other reason. It's not a date. Make him know it's not a date.

"Oh, no. I just thought since you just

moved back. Um, forget I asked." I feel my skin heat up with embarrassment. Why does he do this to me? Why can't I react to him like a normal person?

His expression shows concern, his green eyes stare into me making me feel...making me feel things I haven't felt in a long time. "Kassidy, I was just teasing. I would love to share Mr. Ling's with you."

"Cool." I sound like a complete idiot, I'm sure.

Davis nods, his smile wide, his eyes bright. "Cool."

We both place our orders and he follows me back to my building. I make my way to the parking garage, while he parks out front. When I make my way back to the entrance, Davis is patiently waiting for me by the keypad, and God does he look incredible standing there. I swear it's as if he's at a photo shoot. He's wearing faded jeans and this blue t shirt that hugs what the man has. And holy shit, does he have. I mean I can literally count the six pack through the thin material. What I wouldn't do...

Then I realize he's standing by the

keypad—*the* keypad. My mind is suddenly flooded with visions of my shaky finger trying to punch in the stupid code. The stupid code. Again, I can feel that wave of crimson making itself known. I look up and meekly smile at Davis, as a nervous giggle erupts from me.

Shit!

"I know what you're thinking. Don't worry. I won't tease you or tell anyone about your inability to enter a simple code. A code, you probably have known for quite some time." He smiles his

signature panty-pooing crooked grin and chuckles.

"Thanks," I say as sarcastically as I can. He again just laughs it off and I have to smile and laugh myself. I'm sure I looked pretty hilarious that night. Hell, if it had been Macy I would have peed my pants from laughing so hard.

I easily enter the code and we enter the quiet building. You can only hear the clickety clack of my shoes, as we make our way in silence toward the elevators. After we enter the elevator, Mr. Ling's fills the air and envelopes us

completely. My stomach growls and out of the corner of my eye I can see his shoulders shake. He is definitely laughing at me and at my stomach's need to let itself be known. As we stand there, in the small space, waiting for it to reach my floor, there is a magnetic pull between us and an electric charge surges in the air. I have the overwhelming sensation to get closer to him, to close the Grand Canyon like gap between us. I also have the sudden urge to run my fingers through his disarrayed wind-blown locks and feel his lips against

mine.

Mothertruckershitballs! Where the hell did that come from?

Just go with it.

Just go with it? Are you kidding me?

No, I'm not, just trust me. I won't let you do anything stupid.

You had better not or I will kick your ass.

Testy, testy.

Oh, you haven't seen testy yet, Missy.

All right, but please just trust me.

Fine.

With that resolved, Davis is looking at me with a very puzzled look on his face. He probably thinks I am a nut case. Hell, I think I am and I'm pretty sure I look like one, as I wrestle with my inner self. She is causing me so many problems lately.

"Don't worry I'm not crazy," I jokingly assure him.

"Are you sure? I could have Bellevue on speed dial," he teases back.

"Good to know."

Finally the elevator dings and the doors open. We make our way to my door and he grabs my things so I can easily find my keys. *Damn oversized bag.* Once we are inside he sets out our take out on the counter, while I grab plates, wine glasses and the wine from the fridge. I'm not even sure if he wants to have any, but God knows I do; especially since I'm with him in my apartment—alone.

"Wine?" I ask holding up the chilled bottle.

"Sure."

The wine is poured, the food is dished out and chop sticks are in hand. I am beyond starving at this point and pray to everyone and anyone listening that I don't shovel the food in my mouth like I want to and show some manners. We sit in silence for a while, when I decide to break the proverbial ice.

"So, you've known Jason for quite a while, huh?" I ask pinching a piece of chicken in my chop sticks. I know him and Jason go way back, but I can't remember exactly how far.

"Yeah, we've been best buds since

junior high."

"Really? Wow, you must have some great stories to tell."

"Yep a ton," is all he divulges, as he dips his egg roll in duck sauce.

Is that all he's gonna give me? I don't think so.

"Well, tell me at least one story," I say trying not to sound too eager. But the truth be told, I really am eager to know more about this man.

"A story, huh? I'll tell you what, I'll show you mine if you show me yours." His eyes dance as he speaks those words

with a devilish grin.

"Okay, tit for tat." Two can play this game.

"All right a story, a story." And he is lost deep in thought.

"I got one for ya. We were about twelve years old, I think. Anyway, his sister was having a friend spend the night, so Anderson asked me to spend the night too. Basically so we could torture his sister and her friend. Well, at some point in the middle of the night, we all ended up hanging out trying to scare each other with ghost stories. Anderson

brings up that one of our friends did that Bloody Mary thing. You know, when you say Bloody Mary three times while looking in a mirror and she's supposed to come and you see her in the mirror all covered in blood?"

"Yeah, please tell me you didn't believe that?"

"No, but his sister and her friend did, somewhat. So me being me, dared Anderson to do it. Of course, the girls squealed no, but Anderson was determined. He left the room and went to the bathroom just across the hall and

closed the door. About a minute later we heard him shriek in terror and he came bolting out of the bathroom. He jumped on the bed begging for help. When he finally looked up at us, his face was covered in blood. The girls let out a blood curdling scream and fled. I sat there laughing my ass off with Anderson."

"He wasn't really bleeding was he?"

"No, he had smeared iodine from the medicine cabinet on his face. It was fucking hilarious. Classic Anderson," he

laughs like he was that twelve year old boy again. It is very cute and endearing.

Add that to the pro column of why we need to get to know him better.

"It does sound like Jason," and I have to laugh with him. I can actually picture that totally happening. We laugh together for a good couple of minutes. By the time we stop, we were both wiping tears from our cheeks.

"Okay, your turn."

"A story. I can't really think of any."

"Oh, come on Kassidy, you have to have some good stories about you and

Chloe?"

"Well, there was this one time...."

"Please, don't finish that with in band camp," he chuckles.

I nearly choke, "No, I wasn't, but there was this one time in college actually."

"Go on."

"Okay, but you'll think it's stupid."

"I promise, I won't. Cross my heart and boy scout's honor." And he literally crosses his heart and does the scout's honor sign after wards.

"Like you were ever a boy scout."

"No, but it's the universal guy promising sign. Trust me."

That is the problem. I'm not really sure if I can trust him. I haven't trusted any man since... *Take the leap Cassidy.*

"All right, a story. Well, her parents were out of town and we stopped over their place to get the mail and check on things. Anyway, while we were there, feeding the fish, Chloe whips out a very fat joint. I was a little surprised. I really had never seen Chloe smoke before or even talk about getting high. She asked if I wanted to light up

and I thought what the hell. You only live once right? And I was curious what the fuss was all about. I mean I never did anything like that in high school since my dad was an agent and all, but now that I was away at college I figured why not. What daddy doesn't know won't hurt him. Although I'm sure he knew somehow, I mean he always knew when I was up to something even before I did it. Anyway, we sat on her parents back patio taking toke for toke. It really didn't hit us until we went to leave. Chloe turned the alarm on as we left and

locked the door. But she had forgotten about the mail tucked under her arm. So she quickly unlocked the door, the alarm beeped and buzzed like crazy and she began to throw each piece of mail, one letter at a time, into the house. And let me tell you, her parents always got a lot of mail. I stood there laughing my fucking ass off with tears streaming down my face. She finally finished and remembered to turn the alarm off just in time. I practically peed my pants."

And again we are both laughing with tears streaming down our cheeks.

"That was the best. And you totally surprised me Miss Marshall"

"Oh, Mr. Davis you have no idea the many surprises I have up my sleeve," I playfully tease.

This time he nearly chokes. Apparently I surprised him again. My inner self high fives me.

This is pretty fun.

I told you to just go with it.

For once you were right.

For once?

That's all I'm giving you.

I'll take it, woot woot!

We finish Mr. Ling's and the bottle of wine. "Fortune cookie time,' he announces handing me one.

"You first." I wave to him.

"Okay." He cracks open the cookie and pulls out the fortune.

"Well, what does it say?" I am very curious to know for some reason.

"You will be intrigued by a beautiful brunette." He winks.

"It does not," I gasp, as I try to grab the fortune from him.

"Uh, Uh. This is for my eyes only. If you look at it, it may not come true. And

I would really like my fortune to come true." He smiles, as his eyes smolder.

I feel a burst of heat radiate from my toes and flash across my entire body.

"What does yours say?" he quickly diverts the attention.

"Let's see." I crack open my fortune with very shaky hands making it a crumbly mess.

"Well?"

"It says the chances of you giving someone a third chance are extremely favorable."

Well played.

Thank you.

You're liking this aren't you?

Yes I am.

Good.

His mouth gapes open and I have to chuckle at the expression on his face. Surprised once again.

Woot, woot!

"Well, I better go," he finally says, his face losing all the playfulness it just had. Something dark mars his features and I'm not sure I understand what just happened. Everything was going great. I mean, I said yes to a third chance, a

fresh start. But now I'm not so sure if that's what he wants by his reaction. I could have sworn he was flirting with me, but then again maybe not. I am out of practice. Maybe I spooked him by being too forward? Or maybe I'm just reading more into this? No, I'm definitely reading what I need to read. Something's changed. Something shifted between us and I'm not sure what it is.

"Um, okay." I am a little disappointed to say the least.

"Thanks Kassidy for having me over, it was quite a surprise," he says as

we walk towards the door.

"Anytime," I reply this time surprising myself, as I open the door.

"Kassidy," he breathes as he turns away from the door and towards me.

Again, I can feel the magnetic pull between us and the atmosphere becomes electrified. He slowly reaches his hand out to cup my cheek. His hand gently holds my face and he leans down to me. My heart is back at Daytona. He leans in closer and his lips graze mine. I gasp and take in a quick rush of air. His lips are tenderly moving back and forth

against mine, teasing me. My stomach constricts and the fire inside grows hotter. He pulls my face closer to his placing his other hand on my waist. I on the other hand, can't fucking move; his touch, his lips, just him have completely and utterly paralyzed me. I am once again paralyzed by Ryan Davis and his kiss.

His lips are unbelievably soft as they move slowly against mine. His tongue sweeps against my bottom lip and without hesitating, I part my lips to take him in. Our tongues intertwine together.

He tastes sweet, like honey and fortune cookie. He withdraws his tongue and crushes his lips to mine. The kiss grows more feverish with each passing second. My girlie parts are aching for him and I can feel myself grow wetter. He pulls me even closer, pressing me into his chest, and I can feel his dick growing hard against my stomach. His tongue licks my lips and I again invite him in, sucking on it as I do. I am massaging my tongue with his, when he finally releases me. As he does, my body needs and wants him more.

"Thank you for dessert Miss Marshall," he breathes into my face.

"Uh, huh."

"I think both of our fortunes might come true," he calls back as he closes the door behind him leaving me in a state of shock and a pile of lust and need.

My head is spinning, while my body aches to have him close to me again. I think my inner self goes and grabs an ax to hack the door to shreds to get to him. I lean against the door, with the biggest smile on my face and then it hits me.

*Holy Shit! I think she may be right
about Davis.*

Finally.

CHAPTER 12

Davis and I have really been working on that third chance. We haven't seen each other, but have been texting every so often or emailing or chatting on the phone. Even just hearing his voice through the phone does strange and wonderful things to me. It's just been easier this way, since we are both busy I've run out of batteries.. .but shit, I am actually missing seeing him, and touching him and kissing him. That kiss we shared has been playing on a loop in

my brain ever since. I can still feel his lips on mine at times. And quite honestly I want to feel them again. Ryan Davis has somehow wormed and wiggled his way into my life and I'm beginning to realize I like him in it. Strange, but true. A bonus too, my inner self hasn't been as vocal as of lately since I've come to that realization. All's been quite, thankfully, in my head. Although I know she's lurking in there just waiting for a chance to put in her two cents.

As I stare at my coffee contemplating calling him or texting him,

thinking maybe it's too early in the morning, maybe he's in a meeting, maybe he's too busy, blah, blah, blah; my phone alerts me of a new text. I get all giddy inside and a smile grows exponentially as I look at my phone and see his name on the screen. I guess my contemplating is over.

Miss Marshall?

Yes Mr. Davis?

Are ya busy?

I'm always busy.

Are u 2 busy 2 eat?

What did u have in mind?

Lunch l8r 2day?

Sure y not. Where?

Roxy's Diner?

Sounds good.

12 straight up?

See u there.

For the first time in a long time I am really looking forward to lunch. Now if there was just a way to make time speed up things would be even better. So I do what I've always done in the past, I clean my apartment, trying desperately to focus on something other than Ryan Davis. What in the world has this man

done to me?

I arrive at Roxy's Diner, who by the way has the most amazing Reuben sandwiches, and I am most definitely craving one. I have no clue what the hell we were going to talk about, I mean since the other night whenever we talk, email or text, we have talked about everything and anything under the sun. I have really gotten to know a lot more about Davis than I ever imagined. It's almost like I've known him forever. But in all honesty, it doesn't really matter what we talk about, he could just read

me the menu over and over. If I am only going to have to look at him and his eyes and his lips and just him the entire time, in silence, that is fine by me. Talking can be overrated. I enter the restaurant and spot him immediately. He smiles brightly and waves me over as if I could ever miss him. Ryan Davis is a god among mere mortals; there's no missing him.

“Hey,” he says as I sit down across from him.

“Hey yourself.”

“Thanks for meeting me, on such

short notice.”

“No prob, you actually kinda saved me from shopping and being interrogated by Macy,” I tease.

“Glad I could help.”

“So, was there any particular reason why you wanted to meet up?” I question hoping he just wanted to see me and not because of the wedding.

“Um, well the wedding is fast approaching and I was wondering if we should get in a few more rehearsals before the big event.”

I knew it was too good to be true.

That's what I get for hoping. I swear I'm going to kill Chloe for planting that little seed that maybe Davis is different and that there could possibly be something there. What in the hell was I thinking? Okay, Kassidy play it cool and be unemotional and detached from this whole stupid situation. "Um, yeah, sure. That's probably not a bad idea. I would hate to make a complete fool out of myself in front of all of Chloe and Jason's family and friends, and I really don't need that on video either."

"Well, how about tomorrow, if

you're not busy?"

He seems a little anxious, but of course I'm reading more into it. Why am I doing this to myself? Things were just the way I wanted them to be prior to him entering my life. Time to get things back on track. "Tomorrow is actually, perfect."

Davis nods his head in agreement as the waitress comes over to take our drink orders. Davis orders a Cherry Coke, and I order a Diet Coke. When the waitress walks away there is an awkwardness and we both immediately

grab our respective menus and look at them in silence. Just ducky.

Why is this so weird now?

I have no clue. I honestly thought things were going great with him, now I'm not so sure.

Well, if you're not so sure I'm definitely at a loss.

Sorry.

Me too.

“Here you go, are you guys ready to order?”

“We need a minute,” we both announce in unison, with a nervous laugh

underneath. The waitress shrugs her shoulders and leaves us once again alone, in silence.

“Ahhhhh, nothing like a Cherry Coke.” He is really enjoying that Cherry Coke taking huge sips of it.

I can't help but just stare at him and then at his drink, my eyes darting back and forth. And then this idea pops into my head hopefully testing once and for all if I am stupid for thinking and feeling what I am when it comes to him.

“Can I have a sip?” I ask.

“Uh, I don't think so. Ryan Davis

doesn't share a Cherry Coke," he matter-of-factly says. Really what are we two?

"Humph. Well, can I just have one of your cherries?" I say in the sweetest voice I can, urged by my inner self. She's up to something and I'm just going to go with it for once.

Thank God. It's about damn time, woman. And you're right, I do have a plan. Just follow my lead.

Will do. Just don't drive this bus off a cliff.

Trust me.

I'm trying to.

I know.

He eyes me and then his drink, me, his drink, me, his drink and then me one last time. “Yeah, sure.” he pushes his drink towards me.

I pick up my fork and dive it into the glass for a cherry. I work hard at getting one of those little suckers. I swear they know I want one and know that I am trying my damndest to play with him, that they are purposefully avoiding my fork. Then finally, I nab one of the little stinkers and pull it into my hand. I dangle the cherry in front of us

and then put it between my teeth, releasing the plump morsel into my mouth. The sweetness assaults my taste buds and I can't help the slight moan from my lips. Davis gulps, his Adam's apple bobbing up and down, his eyes wide and darker than usual. And if I'm not mistaken he's squirming in his seat. I think my plan is working. God, I hope it is.

“Delicious,” I purr in my sexiest voice.

Now to turn it up a notch or two and see what Davis can handle. I place

the stem into my mouth. Davis's eyes bulge slightly out of his head, as my mouth and lips contort, working the stem around. My eyes gaze to the ceiling, as I continue to move my mouth and lips, playing with the cherry stem. My tongue flicks out and I notice his breathing increase with the rapid rise and fall of his chest. He can't take my eyes off of me and I stare back at him with a devilish gleam. I pierce my lips together in a tight "O" and the tip of the stem flicks out. I immediately draw it back in and contort my lips and mouth one last

time.

“There,” I announce, holding the stem out before him feeling victorious.

“Kassidy, I’ve seen that done before.” He shrugs it off like it’s no big deal. He needs to look a little more closely at the stem.

“Oh, I don’t think so Mr. Davis, take a closer look.” And I hand him the stem.

His eyes bug out of his head and it’s as though he’s kinda stopped breathing all together. He inspects the cherry stem and I know he notices that

there is not one, but two knots in it. Yep, I've got mad tongue skills, and by the look on his face and the way he his squirming in his seat, he is realizing that too. Just imagine what I can do with that talented tongue. Gah, what I wouldn't give right now to be able to show you. BoB is getting old and tired and used way beyond the manufacturer's intended use.

Davis's eyes haven't left my lips and is squirming even more. I notice his hand slide under the table even though he tries like hell to be all casual about it. I

inwardly giggle because an image has just taken up residence in my head of Davis and his dick swelling in his pants right at this very moment. *Is it hot in here?*

“Kassidy, will you...um...excuse me, please? I’ll be right back.”

“Sure, take your time,” I reply licking my lips.

I swear before Davis leaves the table I hear him groan in pain. And the way he angles himself as he gets up makes me think even more that he’s hiding something.

I can't believe I just did that to him.

I do and honey, it's been just below the surface all along.

Really?

Yes really! You've just been to blind and straight-laced to realize it.

Well okay then.

As I sit alone in the booth,
pondering what I just did and why, I
can't help but smile probably the hugest,
goofiest grin ever. My cherry stem trick
has him totally shocked and flustered.
God he looked hot all flustered. And I,

Kassidy Plain Marshall, did that. Maybe my earlier thought about him not being interested or whatever is unwarranted.

Chloe and I had spent one really drunken night in college, well one of many actually, with a huge ass jar of maraschino cherries, ya know the industrial sized jar with like a thousand of them, practicing. Chloe was a little more talented than I was, tying three knots in one. She had mad skills and I am pretty sure Jason appreciated those skills and still does.

What in the world is taking him so

long?

If your little stunt had the effect I believe it did, I'm sure he has his hands full, so to speak.

I know I was thinking that but really? Nooooooo, it can't be.

What else could it be? You saw the look on his face and how he got up.

Nooooooooooooo.

Really, Kassidy, get a clue. The man was ready to burst.

The thought of Davis in the restroom taking care of "business" isn't possible. Is it? Yeah, my two-knotted

cherry stem is pretty cool and a little sexy, but it couldn't have had that effect? Could it? I mean would he really need to do that? I just can't imagine. Although the idea of him touching himself because I got him all worked up is quite empowering. I wonder how worked up is he? I mean is it a little worked up or a lot worked up? And if it's a lot worked up I wonder if he needs any help. No way he's doing that. Nope. Not happening. Right?

"Hey, sorry about that," Davis says bringing me out of my absurd thought

process.

"Um, no problem," is all I can muster, trying not to focus on what I was just thinking.

Oh you can try but it won't work. Besides, look at him now, he doesn't look uncomfortable anymore. Does he?

Will you stop already? I seriously doubt he was doing anything other than, using the facilities.

Oh, he was using the facilities all right. And you can think what you want, I know better.

Whatever.

Fine, Miss Naive. Again you keep thinking what you want.

I will.

You do that.

"Kassidy, is everything okay?" he inquires looking at me like I am crazy, once again.

That's funny because you kinda are crazy. You even say so yourself.

I shake my head to shut her up and take a long sip of my Diet Coke, "Totally cool, no rubbing...I mean no problem here. You?"

He practically spits Cherry Coke

all over me, before he clears his throat,
"Just perfect."

Oh, you're perfect alright.

I second that.

All those in favor?

Aye.

Aye.

*I seriously might need to make an
appointment soon.*

No shit.

Thanks.

Anytime.

As we sit there in silence, the air
becomes extremely thick and I feel as if

someone is wrapping his or her hands around my throat. *God, this is getting so uncomfortable again. I don't understand. First awkward, then flirty and hot and then back to awkward. What the hell? Will you help me and think of something to say?* And just like that, the proverbial light bulb brightens.

"Chloe will appreciate the extra practice. I know she won't say it, but I'm pretty sure she's worried I'll zig instead of zag or twirl one too many times and fall right onto the cake or something just as horrible." With my luck it would

probably happen too.

Finally, thank you.

Again, anytime.

"No problem. Besides, it will give us a chance to get to know each even more. After all, I'm sure we'll be seeing a lot more of each other, I *hope*," he somewhat teases with that now infamous crooked smirk and cocked eyebrow and emphasizing that word, hope.

Damn! I did walk in here with panties on, didn't I?

Oh we did. Shit, he's good! Really good!

I can feel the white, hot, heat flash over my entire body and that crimson wave ebb its way up my neck, before it finally settles on my cheeks. He knows exactly what he is doing, especially saying that word "hope", reminding me of my stupidity of vacuuming in my undies. I guess I deserve it after my stunt with the cherry—payback. At least *I'm* not running for the restroom. *Although.*

You know what? Two can play at this game.

*I'm so happy to hear you say that.
Let's play!!*

"I *hope* you will see a lot more of me," I tease back, grabbing another cherry from his drink. I swirl my tongue around the plump dripping fruit, before drawing it into my mouth, pulling it off the stem and strategically placing it in front of him.

There ya go buddy. Take that.

Oh your Kung Fu is strong grasshopper, well played.

Thank you.

You're absolutely welcome.

Davis again squirms in his seat and gulps really hard making his Adam's

apple bop up and down quickly.

Obviously, my inner self is right about the effect I have on him. *Hmmmm, Marshall 2, Davis 1.*

The waitress finally returns to take the rest of our order. I think Davis is a little more than relieved to have something and someone else to focus on, although I'm not going to let him get off that easily.

"So, Davis," I continue once the waitress leaves, as I seductively remove my jacket exposing some skin and what little cleavage I have, "does tomorrow

still work for you?" Again he gulps hard.

"Um, yeah, sure...it still works for me if it still works for you."

"It works for me," I breathe as I lick my lips.

"Good. How about we meet up around one?" he asks shifting on the bench seat.

"One is perfect."

Shit, I'm gonna have to get up early just to get ready. And what am I gonna wear?

Don't worry we'll think of something hot, that will hopefully send

him over the edge, which is what we want and it will be so worth it. Trust me.

I am totally trusting you. You are leading this dance, not me.

Good, cause if you were to lead you'd probably pussy out.

What?!?

You heard me and don't deny it.

Okay, okay, you're probably right.

Probably?

Okay, you are right.

Thank you.

You're not welcome.

Touchy.

Now shut up before he really thinks I'm crazy and goes running for the hills.

"Kassidy?" he says as he waves his hand in front of my face. "You there?"

"Um, yeah, sorry, I was just thinking about something."

"Is one still good for you?"

"Yeah, totally. I'll be there with bells on."

We sit and finish our lunch making idle conversation. He tells me about how things are going with his new job

and he asks me what case I am working on. I have to admit, I am really happy that I have decided to give him a third chance. Ryan Davis isn't that bad after all. He is growing on me, but not like fungus on a rock; it is a good kind of growing. We say good-bye and go our separate ways. As I make my way to my car and walk by this little retro boutique, something in the window catches my inner self's eye.

Stop! That's perfect! Go and buy it and I don't care what it costs! We have to have it for tomorrow! It will be the

cherry on top!

And you know what, she is absolutely right.

I go for an early run the next morning, but not before I have an early meeting with BoB 2.0. Apparently, in the middle of the night, my inner self decided to dream about Davis in all sorts of compromising positions and in the restroom no less. Of course, I was there too and when I woke up gripping my sheets for dear life, moaning, I knew I had to take matters into my own hands.

It is becoming quite clear to me that Ryan Davis is no ordinary man when it comes to the effect he has on my mind, body and soul. In all my experiences, I have never felt or reacted to anyone this way.

I make it to the studio before Davis. *Thank God.* It gives me a chance to practice a little because, let's be honest, I need all the practice I can get and I really don't want to embarrass the shit out of myself in front of him. Reynolds's case has taken up pretty much all of my free time, so I haven't had a chance to

practice lately. To say I am rusty is an understatement. I, however, surprise myself as I get my zombie on. Things are going quite well, until I hear the closing of the door and feel the air in the room change from light and airy to thick and full of electricity. Davis has finally showed up.

"Why Miss Marshall, you're looking good," his velvet voice echoes in the studio.

I turn around to meet his gaze and when I do, he has become frozen in his tracks. His eyes flash from my face to

my shirt, to my face and back on my shirt where, they rest for an eternity it seems. Apparently, the vintage Cherry Coke shirt I purchased is working like a charm and just like my inner self had *hoped*. I can feel his stare penetrate me, turning my insides to goo. However, when I look more closely, I notice a bead of sweat has started to form on his forehead and his emerald green eyes are turning midnight. His chest rises faster and his Adam's apple bops up and down, as he gulps hard several times. I do believe Ryan Davis has finally met his match.

Game on. Let's play.

"Thank you, Mr. Davis, you look pretty good yourself," I tease. And shit if he doesn't look better than good. If I was as brazen as I want to be, I would have attacked him right then and there, as if I were a lion attacking a gazelle. I would have ripped his clothes off and ravaged him right there on the dance studio floor; but, I am not that person and I will not be acting out any fantasies, much to my inner self's disappointment and disapproval. I still can't believe the effect he has on me and it was only

weeks ago I thought of him as a complete and utter asshole and now I am contemplating having and taking him every which way possible. Things have definitely changed, and honestly for the better. Davis is proving he most definitely deserved that third chance and I am now more than willing to give it.

"Um, thanks, um, have you um, been here long?" he stammers running his hand through his hair.

Oh, what I wouldn't give to be doing that.

Not now peanut gallery, we gotta

keep our cool. Remember this is just a game.

Shit, if I have anything to do with it, this game will end and we will have us a nice Ryan Davis snack to nibble on.

Jeez, get a grip woman.

Oh, I will get a grip and it won't be our new purple friend either.

It has been a long time. And as much as my new purple friend is necessary, there's nothing like the really thing.

This is going to go according to

my terms, not yours. And right now my terms aren't going to jump and fuck him the first chance we get. Even though we've gotten close and I know more about him and don't think he's a total asshole anymore, I haven't forgotten the fact that he has a harem in that cell phone. And who's to say third chance or not I, you, we, won't become a part of it. So put your panties back on!

All right, all right, you don't have to get all preachy. I know we're not gonna fuck him the first opportunity we

get. But a girl can dream, fantasize and hope can't she?

Again, put your panties on. I'm in control of this game, not you right now. When I need your help, I'll let you know. Got it?

Sure, sure, fine, whatever. But the other day at the diner...

The other day at the diner was a fluke. Now stop.

"Kassidy, um, are you okay?"

Again he looks at me like I belong in the mental ward of the nearest hospital, and he probably is right.

"Yeah, sure just um, never mind.

No, I haven't been here long."

"So, should we continue with

Thriller?" he questions with that smirk.

Oh, here we go.

"You know, I think I've got that one down, it's pretty tight. I was *hoping* we would practice the waltz. I wouldn't want to step on your toes," I say moving closer to him. I can feel a pull in the pit of my stomach, as I inched closer to him.

"You had *hoped*, huh?" he inquires with a cocked eyebrow.

"Yes, I *hoped*. Is that okay?"

He licks his lips and takes a deep breath, "*Hoping* is a great word and you can *hope* all you want."

"Oh, I will and I'm sure you're pretty good at *hoping* too," I tease further, as I come to stand right in front of him. I can feel the heat radiate off of his chest and shroud me. I am dizzyed by his scent of honey. Before I know what is happening, I slowly reach up to touch his cheek. It is as if I am in a trance of shorts and lose all sense of reality and control.

"You're beautiful," I breathe as his

stubble prickles my skin.

"*You're beautiful,*" he echoes, as his hand cups my cheek and the other finds its way around my waist.

Snap out of it Marshall! Do you want to drop panty right now? Cause that's what's going to happen if you don't snap out of it!

How the does he do that? I mean really, one minute I'm all in control and the next I'm in Lala Land. He's definitely better at this game thing than we are.

Don't worry, we'll hold our own.

I hope my inner self is right. I shake my head and remove my hand from his cheek, as my body protests.

"You ready to waltz across Los Angeles, Davis?"

"What?"

"The dance, it's what we're here for, remember?"

"Right, the dance," he reminds himself shaking his head. Again I am having an effect on him as well. My inner self is all smiles.

We twirl around the dance studio for the next hour, practicing the waltz.

When all is said and done Chloe isn't going to be disappointed or embarrassed. We are amazing actually. We move together as if we are one—one body with two hearts. It is like nothing I have ever felt before. Usually, I suck big huge donkey dick at dancing, but with Davis it just feels right. He is an amazing dancer and moves us so gracefully around the studio. It makes me think about how we would move together if...

Don't even go there.

I wasn't.

Like hell you weren't, cause honey, I have already been there and back.

Seriously?

Seriously, and it was amazing.

Thanks, glad one of us is allowed to "go there".

Sorry.

Like hell you are.

I know. I felt like it needed to be said though.

Whatever.

My inner self is beginning to get on my last nerve. Beginning? Who am I

kidding, she's shredded that last nerve and is dangling on it by the skin of her meddling mouth.

I walk over to my things and grab a towel from my bag; wiping the sweat off my neck asking, "So when do you want to practice again?"

"How about sometime this week?"

"I don't think the studio will be available," I say with a tinge of disappointment.

"Well, we could practice at my place. I have tons of room," he says with that crooked smile and cocked eyebrow.

Oh hell, practice at his place.

Oh, this could be a ton of fun.

Or it could be a complete disaster.

He'll have home field advantage.

We'll get a game plan.

"I think practice at your place is a fantastic idea. After all, I was *hoping* I would get to see your new place sometime," I laugh, stressing that word of his, hope.

"Really?" he shockingly replies, as he nearly chokes.

"Yeah, is there a problem?"

"Um, shit, no problem. You, uh, just

surprised me."

"Oh, you have no idea how many surprises I'm full of," I playfully tease.

"I look forward to all of them, Kassidy," he teases back.

"So, when were you thinking we should practice?" I eagerly await his answer.

"How about Friday night, if you don't have any plans already."

"I think I can rearrange my calendar if necessary, I wouldn't want you to be disappointed," I tease picking my things.

"Oh, I don't think you could ever

disappoint me Kassidy. How about seven? I'll get us some take-out too."

"Is that a date, Mr. Davis?"

Let's hope so.

"It can be whatever you want it to be, Miss Marshall," he breathes into my face.

"Then it's a date," I quickly reply.

"I was *hoping* you would say that."

He winks at me.

"I'm sure you *hope* I will say a lot of things."

"You have no idea."

And with that I step around him and

head for the door. As much as I want to go tit for tat with him, if I stay any longer I'm sure I will be walking out of there without my panties. And that isn't going to happen anytime soon.

Not if I have anything to do with it.

Before I head out the door, I turn around to take one last look at him and God does he look completely edible. His arm muscles are glistening with a sheen of sweat, his hair is in disarray, his face is slightly flushed. The man is definitely swoon worthy. I reign in my

desire and put on a mask hopefully
hiding the effect he has on me. "I'll see
you Friday night."

"I'm looking forward to it."

"I was hoping you would say that,"
I give his words back to him as I leave
the studio.

CHAPTER 13

"Hey Bitch, it's about fucking time you got here," Macy harasses, as I sit down to have lunch with her.

"Sorry Skank, you know how it is," I shoot back at her as I stick out my tongue.

I haven't seen much of Macy lately. Apparently she and Chad have been shacking up for the past couple of weeks and haven't been seen or heard by anyone. Chloe is ready to call the police and the FBI and have them send out an

APB. Finally Macy called us both. I guess her hunky muscle man truly has become the one.

"So whatcha been up to?" I can see that thing in her eye; the tale-tell sign she's going to pry and push and torture me.

"Nothing really. Same old same old." A smile, I can't help it because I instantly think of Davis, slowly grows across my lips.

"Kassidy Lillian Marshall why are we smiling like the Cheshire cat?"

"No reason."

"And why are you all like glowy and shit?" she teases waving her hand up and down at me.

"Again, it's nothing."

"Bullshit it's nothing. Now fucking spill it," she demands.

"Really Macy there's nothing to tell."

You know she's gonna get it out of us one way or another. So just tell her already and save us both some grief.

I really don't want to get into it with her right now. I know if I give just a little she is going to want more. It's

always more with her. And when I clam up and not say anything, she pushes and pushes and pries and pries until I just can't take it anymore and cave. No wonder she makes such a good cop.

"Oh my God, oh my fucking God! Someone's been playing parking the beef bus in tuna town. You dirty little whore! You have, haven't you? You better tell me fucking everything!"

She can be so crude; I think it's because she grew up with all older brothers with a single dad and is surrounded by men on the police force.

Sometimes I wonder if Macy was actually born a guy and had a sex change operation because she truly acts like one with tits. And why am I surprised by some of the things she says is beyond me; you think I would be used to it by now.

"Earth to fucking Marshall. You're not getting out of this one by zoning in Lala Land Missy. Now spill it. Who is he and when and where did it happen?"

"Macy, honestly there is no where or when but..."

Oh shit, here we go! Everyone

bring your trays to their upright position, fasten your seatbelts and prepare for a crash landing.

I am trying to ignore my inner self's theatrics, hoping against all odds Macy won't be...well, Macy.

Are you kidding me? Remember when we had a crush on Matthew Sheppard back in high school, she teased us about it, asking a billion and one questions and wouldn't let up until we completely caved. This is gonna be bad.

And for once I can't argue with my

inner self. This is going to be bad, especially if I stall in any way, shape or form. Her nickname amongst her fellow officers is “Make ‘em Talk Macy” so yeah, I’m pretty much screwed.

"Marshall?!" she yells through clenched teeth dragging me out of my internal conversation.

"Okay, okay don't get your panties in a wad. I've kinda been hangin out with um... Davis," I mumble his name.

"Who?"

"Davis," I say as I take a sip of my water trying desperately to hide the

smile I have grown just with mentioning his name.

"Um, I didn't catch that again. Now quit being such a pussy and just fucking say it."

I really don't want to repeat myself. I mean she could have heard me if she were really listening. And besides, I know if I say his name again all my cards will be on the table so to speak, and Macy can be just as bad as Chloe sometimes just with a little more sluttiness mixed in. She stares at me waiting, her perfectly sculpted eyebrow

arched challenging me to not answer her and see what happens. I stare back trying my damndest to bring out my lawyer-tude, but Macy has that whole cop vibe going on, so of course after a few more seconds of staring I crumble. "Davis... I've been hanging out with Davis," I finally confess.

Passengers brace yourself for impact.

I squeeze my eyes tight waiting for her to pounce.

"Eeekkk! Really Davis? You're fucking shitting me? When did this all

happen? I thought he was the biggest dickish asshole that ever walked the fucking Earth?"

Did she just eeekkk?

I believe she did.

Macy is not one for eeekkking.

I know that was otherworldly to say the least and so like Chloe.

You're telling me.

"I guess the night of the bachelorette party. He was really....sweet that night," I smile as I feel that crimson wave creep up my neck, while flashes of that evening and

the morning after dance in my head.

"Kassidy Marshall you are totally crushing on Ryan Davis, aren't you?"

"I... I... I don't really know what it is exactly," I stammer.

"Holy shit, you are. Look at you, you're totally blushing and all giggles and smiles just talking about him," she smirks.

"Well I guess you could say I'm crushing, but that sounds so like high school."

"You can call it whatever you want. You have it bad for him and thank God

it's finally out."

"What are you talking about...it's finally out?" I question with a cocked eyebrow.

"Oh just Chloe has been going on and on about you being totally into him, but you're too fucking stubborn to admit it. Really, she's been like an annoying mosquito in my ear going on and on. Now that you've finally admitted to it, she can give it and me a fucking rest," she says as she rolls her eyes and turns her hand into a talking puppet mocking Chloe.

I know what Chloe thinks about the whole Davis situation, but I had no idea that she has been bothering Macy with it.

"Sorry Mace, didn't mean for that to happen. I know how Chloe can be."

"No prob, I can handle our little meddler. I just told her to shut the fuck up and give it rest. Which eventually she did, a little much to her disappointment, but she did nonetheless. I just feel sorry for Jason, he has to hear about it twenty-four seven."

"Oh man, poor Jason is right. I didn't mean...."

"Kas, don't worry about it. I understand completely. It's hard for you to open up to people, especially guys. I get that and Chloe does too. She just didn't want you to miss out. She feels you and Davis are a match made in heaven. 'They belong together' were her exact words. I'm just happy you have finally realized you have feelings for him, it makes things easier all around, ya know?"

"I know. But what 'feelings' I have for him I really don't know. I do know I have fun hanging out with him and...."

Dumbass!!!

I know.

Better fess up to everything.

"And?" she motions me to continue.

"All right. And...and... and we

kissed."

Good girl, way to rip off the Band-Aid.

"What?!? You two kissed? You better tell me everything right now or I...I... I will kidnap your laptop and hold it for fucking ransom. Got it?!?" she threatens slamming her napkin down.

Macy knows exactly what she is

saying and doing. Threatening to kidnap my laptop is a sure way to get me to say or do anything. My whole entire life is saved on that laptop and I will do or say anything to protect it.

"Fine, I get it. It's really no big deal."

Who are kidding, it's really no big deal? Um, I remember that kiss and believe me it was a big deal, huge.

I remember, God how could I not. I just don't want to give Macy any ammunition.

Well, all things considered, I think

Macy is being pretty mature.

*For now, but that could all
change.*

Don't be such a pussy.

I really wish my inner self and Macy would stop calling me that. I've never really liked that word, nor can I even say it myself. Not sure why either. There's just something about the way it feels on my lips that just doesn't feel right, ya know? My inner self apparently wants to eliminate my aversion to that particular word, because she continues to shout it over and over again. I recite

the lawyer's creed in hopes of drowning her out. Of course I'm unsuccessful and decide just to ignore her, diverting my attention back to Macy.

"Kas, you okay? What is with you lately? I swear it's like you're two different people and need some professional help. Anyway, if it's no big deal, then why are you stalling?"

I ignore her observant statement.

"I'm not stalling."

"Yes you are."

"Um, no I'm not."

"Yes. You. Are."

"Do you want to hear about it or not?"

"Fine. Go on."

"I left work late..."

"As usual," she interjects.

"Yes as usual. And I was starving, so I stopped by Mr. Ling's for some take out. While I was waiting in line, I dropped my cell and who should bend down to pick it up? Davis. He had just moved back here two weeks prior..."

"Wait. What? I totally forgot he was moving here. I've been a little...occupied with...work..."

"Uh huh, sure, work. Anyway, can I continue?"

"Sure, sorry. I've been a little... distracted."

"Well you're out of the loop when people can't get a hold of you for over a week."

"Yeah, yeah, yeah. Whatever, go on."

"Thank you. Anyway, I decided to try to give being nice and invited him to join me for dinner."

"At your apartment?"

"Yes at my apartment."

"Oooooo you little slut."

"Thanks. So it was time for him to go and I walked him to the door. Before he left, we kissed."

"Are you kidding me Marshall? Give details. How was it? Is he a good kisser? Did you feel 'it'?" she insists.

"Oh my God how old are we? Seriously Macy?" I roll my eyes at her.

"Seriously. We haven't had any action details from you in a fucking long time. So give it up."

"Fine. It was..."

Go on tell her the truth.

"It. Was. Amazing. I have never, ever been kissed like that before. It was soft and sweet but erotic and sensual at the same time. Honestly I was left in a fog afterwards. I didn't know which way was up," rip off another Band-Aid.

"Well it's about damn time. And I could tell he would be a good kisser. He has the most amazing lips and jaw," she says as she licks her lips.

"Well he is. We've kinda hung out since and we're gonna practice our dance routine this Friday night after work."

"I can't wait to see this at the wedding," she chuckles.

"Thanks, but I'm actually getting pretty good. The extra practice has really helped."

"I'm sure it has," she teases.

"Anyway that's all there is tell. So, now you and everyone else can get off my fucking back."

That means you too.

I'm just along for the ride and to make sure you don't fuck things up.

"So when are you gonna...?" she asks wiggling her eyebrows.

"Serious, Macy, I'm not you. We all know you and Chad probably know the ins and outs of your intimate places. I'm happy to...to take things slow with Davis. I don't want to put all my faith in something to only have it blow up in my face, as usual. So please, that's not going to happen anytime soon. Shit, he still has his harem in his phone and I don't want any part of it."

"Harem, sharem. I'll go kick their asses if I have to. Besides, Kas, you need to get yourself some and I'm sure Davis is more than happy to help."

"Macy only you."

"No, only me and Chloe are getting any. You need to jump on that bandwagon. You'll feel better. BoB can only do so much, ya know?"

"All right enough. I'm ready to order."

"Fine, but don't be surprised if you're losing your panties soon enough."

Little did she know it has felt like that a couple of times already.

The days drag on as I eagerly wait for Friday night to arrive. I feel like I am

back in high school and the captain of the football team has asked me out on a date. Although back in high school guys didn't pay much attention to me. I imagine the anxiousness I am feeling now, would be what I would have felt in high school. Work pretty much keeps me occupied. However, there are those rare occasions when I will be reminded of Davis. And lately those reminders are everywhere. First on Wednesday in the elevator I heard its version of *Thriller*. Then later that day they put a new Coke machine in the lounge and the cover of it

was Cherry Coke. Next on Thursday, I apparently had ordered a new glass sculpture thingy for my office a while back, which I totally forgot about, and when it arrived it is a bright emerald green. He is everywhere and now every time I walk into my office I will be reminded of his piercing, smoldering, emerald green eyes. It feels as though I am losing my mind and I'm sure Elaine thinks I am going a little insane as well, because every time I look at that sculpture that crimson wave will crash on me causing me to turn several

different shades of pink. Plus, I am all smiles and I tremble a little as well. The feelings of that kiss always come rushing back. Ryan Davis is having a profound effect on me and I began to realize it is turning into more than a crush—something I've been trying to avoid like hell.

Friday actually flies by. I am swamped in Reynolds's case and can't wait for dance practice at Davis's. It is about 5:30 and I am tying up some loose ends when there is a knock on my door.

"Come in," I announce.

"Kassidy, you gotta minute," the familiar voice whispers.

Damn it, it's Jackson.

If he so much as touches us I'm breaking his nose this time.

Back off Tyson.

You better handle him and by handling him, I mean you better set him the fuck straight.

I will. I had every intention of doing that weeks ago.

Jackson has been avoiding me like the plague since our little incident. I have wanted to talk to him about, but

when I have a free moment he is never around. I am quite surprised to see him in my office now.

"Hey Jackson, what's up?"

Why are you being nice? You should be a bitch.

Easy, I'll handle it my way. No one is drawing first blood tonight Rambo.

Fine.

"Um...I'm sure you've noticed I've kinda been avoiding you, but I think we really need to talk," he cowers which is weird considering he's like six feet tall.

"I would like that. I've actually

wanted to talk to you since...well since...since you kissed me."

"About that..."

"Jackson listen, you were completely out of line. I don't know what you think you saw in my expression or mannerisms but it wasn't that I wanted you to kiss me. We are friends Jackson and that's all we'll ever be. And as far as the wedding goes..."

"Don't worry about taking me, you don't have to. I canceled my tux."

"I hate to say it Jackson but good. I don't want to lead you on and going to a

wedding together being in that atmosphere might give you the wrong idea and impression. Your friendship means the world to me and I don't want anything to jeopardize that. Do you understand what I'm saying Jackson?"

"We're just friends. There's no hope?"

Not that word. Another reminder of Davis. They just keep on coming don't they?

Uh huh. I can't go all squishy now over Davis in front of Jackson, he might...

He might misread your, our intentions. Shit, that's it!

What's it?

That night he kissed us, we were lost in Davisland. Right before Jackson kissed us, you, me, we were thinking about that kiss with Davis back in the studio.

Holymothertruckershitballs!

You're absolutely right.

"Kassidy, you okay?"

Great another person thinks I'm crazy and probably ready to have me locked up.

"Yeah, Jackson I'm fine."

"You were totally zoning there for a sec." He smirks and not in that sexy, hot way Davis does.

"Just a sec, huh? Usually it's longer. Anyway, back to what we were talking about. No, there is no hope that this is going to turn into something more. It's something you're just going to have to accept," I say laying it all out for him in simple terms he can hopefully comprehend and remember.

"A guy can always dream. But if that's how you want it Kassidy?"

"I think it's for the best."

"Whose best, yours or mine?" he says with anger in his tone.

"Both of ours Jackson."

"Are you sure about that? It's not just for you? I mean I've seen how you've been walking around here lately. Like you're on fucking cloud nine. There's a guy isn't there?"

"That's really none of your fucking business." Now I am the one getting pissed.

"Really?" he questions.

"Really. We are just friends, but if

you keep acting like such a...such a...
such a dick then consider our friendship
over," I vehemently spew.

"I'm a dick? I'm a dick? You're a
fucking bitch and a tease. Whether you
wanna believe it or not you have been
leading me on and it culminated that
night in your office," he spits back.

"What are you talking about?"

*I swear on our favorite Jimmy
Choo's if this asshole keeps talking I'm
gonna belt him one and I will draw first
blood—again!*

"The way you were looking at me

and then when you closed your eyes.
You were asking for it."

"I was asking for it? Jackson are you kidding me? You want to know the truth because I really don't think you do."

"Give it to me if you can."

"Oh I can give it to you. That night what you thought was directed at you completely wasn't. As a matter of fact, I was thinking about someone else. Someone you will never be!" I yell.

"Oh really and who would that be?"

"Ryan Davis. And if you would excuse me I have a date with him tonight

and I don't want to keep him waiting."

With that being said, I grab my laptop, my gym bag and purse and start to head out of my office. "Oh and Jackson," I say as I stop at the door, "this friendship is done. It was nice knowing you."

With that last comment still lingering in the air I bolt for the elevator.

That was fucking awesome!!! You sure told him.

Hopefully he gets it.

If he doesn't, he's a dumbass and deserves whatever he gets.

I hated to be harsh with him.

*You had to be. The guy is
delusional. You don't want to lead him
on. This should have done it. And now
he knows there's Davis.*

I still can't believe I said that.

I do.

I knew you would.

The elevator finally makes it to the lobby, I exit it and the building. The twilight air feels wonderful on my heated skin. I walk to the parking garage, get in my car and blare the radio as I

head to Davis's, trying to clear my mind of my interaction with Jackson and squelch the nervous feelings bubbling inside over going to dance practice with Davis. I totally forgot what cd is in the player and am pleasantly surprised to hear "Peaches come from a can they were put there by a man..." I just have to laugh. That song always puts me in a better mood simply because it makes no sense and is just plain fun. And right now I need a better mood after my conversation with Jackson. I also don't want to be all gloom and doom when I

get to Davis's, he doesn't deserve it. The Presidents of the United States are definitely what the doctor ordered. I continue on in heavy traffic to Davis's as I sing and bop to the song. By the time I pull up to his place I am like Jackson who? I grab my gym bag and purse and head into his building. It is amazing. When I enter the lobby my jaw nearly hits the floor. The building looks incredible on the outside but inside... holy shit... I am floored to say the least. I have heard how impressive the Solair is, but seeing it live and in person is

something totally different. Davis's firm has great taste, and money to boot obviously. I make my way to the elevators as the butterflies begin to make their selves known.

Why am I still so nervous?

Oh I don't know because, one you have finally realized you have feelings for this man and two we are going to be all alone with him in his place.

You're right. Damn it, home field advantage!

Oh honey, no need to worry you're secret weapon will turn those tables

and the odds will be in your favor.

Ya think so?

*Oh, I know so. He is going to shit
when he sees it.*

*Well, that was the plan. Although I
hate playing games.*

Really?

*Nah, who am I kidding. This is
way too much fun.*

*See flirting definitely suits you
and you thought you were bad at it.*

Well, I do have some help.

*Thanks it's finally nice to be
recognized.*

You're absolutely welcome.

All right girl let's go. Game face

on.

Right.

And with a new found confidence I enter the elevator and squash those stupid butterflies, or more like bug zap them because I don't want them coming back with a vengeance. We are going to eat, practice and then I will be on my way home. Who am I kidding? He's going to pull out his smirk and cocked eyebrow at some point and POOF panties magically disappear. Not that

that's a bad thing. But I really don't want to be another notch in his bedpost or cell phone. If this, whatever this is, is going somewhere I am doing the leading, not him. The elevator finally dings on his floor and opens. I make my way out into the hall and head towards his apartment knowing that I can definitely do this, after all I am Kassidy Lillian Marshall—super lawyer.

You most certainly can. Just breathe and knock on the door.

Got it.

It feels like an eternity before he

finally answers.

"Kassidy," he breathes like he's out of breath.

"Hi," I blush. *stupid crimson wave.*

"Come on in." He smiles at me and it makes my insides turn to goo.

"Thanks."

As I pass by him I can feel the electricity around us. I am suddenly drawn to him. White, hot heat radiates all over my body just by feeling his proximity. I can feel the wetness grow in my panties. He definitely has me. If he were to take me to his bed right now I

will happily oblige.

Keep it together, Marshall.

I'm trying but it's soooo hard. Just fucking look at him.

THUD!!

Peanut gallery? Helllooo? Just great! Apparently I'm riding solo at the moment.

"Can I take your coat?" he questions bringing me out of my Davis induced stupor.

"Um yeah sure. Thanks."

"I ordered Thai food, if that's okay. It should be here shortly."

"Thai food's great," I reply feeling a little uncomfortable. It seems as though my confidence is passed out on the floor.

"You're place is amazing."

"Thanks. Would you like a tour?"

He motions around his apartment.

"Sure." Is all I can think of.

As Davis takes me around his apartment, I begin to realize two things. Davis is a complete neat freak and a minimalist. Everything is in perfect order, in its perfect place. *A man after our own heart, and something to add to the win column.* And what there is, there

isn't much of anything else; just the essentials. In the bathroom, the towels are lined up perfectly by their decorative border. In the kitchen, which looks like it had never been used, everything is shiny and there isn't any clutter on the counters. All there is, is a set of stainless steel canisters, a super complicated coffee maker that can rival any coffeehouse and a block of knives. I know his place is new, but this is more like a model home than a home someone is living in. I have never seen a kitchen or apartment for that matter so clean. I

mean mine is clean, but this is like hospital clean. You can literally eat off of any surface. He is beginning to look a little nervous and I guess it is because I haven't said anything to him since he decided to show me around.

"Wow, Davis, your place is..." I trail off contemplating exactly what to say.

"Go ahead you can say it."

"I was going to say, your place is beautiful."

"Is that all?" he questions with a cocked eyebrow.

God when he does that.

I know, I fucking know.

Welcome back.

Thanks, um I um...

You passed out.

Yeah, sorry about that.

*Do you think you can keep it
together the rest of the evening?*

I hope so.

You better.

I will definitely give it my all.

"Well..." I hesitate.

*"Kassidy, I know what you're gonna
say, it's written all over your face. I'm a*

bit of a neat freak, right?"

"A bit?"

"All right maybe more than I bit, but I can't help it."

"Hey there's nothing wrong with being a neat freak. I'm mean, I'm kinda one myself. Well, if I'm being honest more than kinda. I mean everything needs to have its rightful place. And cleaning I find very calming and soothing. So, you're neat freak status is not so freaky? Does that make sense? I'm not making sense, am I? I hate it when I do that. I mean...I totally

understand your cleanliness issues, even though they are kinda extreme. But hey, I'm not one to judge. The white finger test is something I'm all too familiar with. You can ask Chloe and Macy about it. It drives them crazy. So...yep I totally understand," I ramble, but as the last syllable lingers between us, Davis's lips find mine. The kiss is gentle and unhurried. And I swear his lips are making me tingle all over. And just as quick as it seems to happen, it's over. I feel my inner self begin to throw a hissy fit, but I hold her back.

“I would say I’m sorry for kissing you right now, but I’m not. I needed to. And, yes Kassidy, I totally understand.”

I think my ovaries are screaming for him to help make a baby.

What the hell?

Whoa, his voodoo is strong.

I clear my throat and shake my head trying to regain some control. "So, um before we start practicing would it be alright if I changed? Dancing in this isn't ideal," I ask as I wave my hand up and down my work clothes.

"Yeah sure, you know where the

bathroom or my room is. You can change in either," he sounds nervous all of the sudden, as he runs his hand through his hair.

Am I making him nervous?

I think the idea of you stripping in either his bathroom or bedroom is making him nervous.

Good?

Very good.

"Thanks, I'll be right back."

I head back down the hall to the bathroom. I figure changing in his bedroom, near his bed, isn't a good idea

at the moment. I might jump in it and never leave. I close the bathroom door and proceed to pull plan B out of my gym bag.

He is not going to know what hit him.

I know right. But are you sure it's not too much.

Hell no.

*Cherry Coke shirt was plan A.
This one is Plan B.*

You are devious.

Thank you. I'll take that as a compliment.

I knew you would.

Don't worry it's all in good clean fun. Besides he's had his turn.

Right.

I pull my hair up into a ponytail and I take one last look in the mirror.

"All right here goes nothing."

I make my way back to the kitchen and apparently while I was in the bathroom our food was delivered and it smells wonderful.

"Mmmmm. Smells delicious."

"I hope you like it," he returns obviously to where I am standing and

what I am wearing.

Davis is busy dishing out our dinner and doesn't bother to look up when I re-entered the room. I move over to the table while he makes his way out of the kitchen holding two plates piled high with the most amazing smelling food on them. He places them down and finally turns to me. I am all cool, calm and collected on the outside, but on the inside I am a bundle of nerves trying to channel more confidence. My inner self's gives me a boost aiding me at the moment. When he finally looks at me, his

eyes immediately fall upon my shirt, my "hope" shirt and his eyes nearly bug out of his head while he practically chokes on his own breath.

"You okay, Davis." I smile.

"Um, yeah, um, just perfect. Um, let's sit and eat," he motions for me to sit still staring at my shirt.

I can see his crimson wave making an appearance. Finally I'm not the only one for a change.

We eat in silence for a while. With every bite he takes he still doesn't take his eyes off of my shirt or me. The more

he looks at me the more intense the flash of heat courses over my body. Tonight is definitely going to be interesting and I am definitely going to need my inner self's help if I am going to win this round.

"I don't think I could eat another bite, especially if we're gonna practice," I inform him pushing my plate away.

"Me too. So do you wanna relax or begin practicing."

Oh not so fast buddy. We're here to practice. You may have home field advantage but I'm running this dog and

pony show.

"Um, I might fall asleep if I were to relax, so let's practice."

"Okay, should we practice *Thriller* or the waltz?" he asks.

"I think the waltz. I've got *Thriller* down. Besides I have a better chance of injuring you with the waltz. So let's remedy that," I truthfully say. Lord knows I could probably do him some serious damage with the waltz.

"No prob."

He ushers me into his expansive living room and picks up a very

complicated looking remote. He aims the remote at the high tech stereo system and the room is flooded with, not the waltz but the sounds of Marvin Gaye singing *Let's Get It On*. Immediately that crimson wave floods Davis's neck and face as he fumbles with the remote to silence the stereo.

"Oops, sorry wrong cd." He shrugs going for nonchalance aiming the remote back at the stereo for the second time. This time the room pulsates with the sounds of Puddle of Mudd's *Spaceship* and the lead singer is singing about

getting naked. Davis again fumbles with the remote but is unsuccessful silencing the Freudian slip. As he pushes several buttons the song continues and I stand there and giggle. Finally Davis is successful in his fourth attempt.

"Sorry about that."

"Interesting music selection," I tease.

"Uh..." he utters.

"That's okay Davis," I inch closer to him, "I know..." I breathe staring straight into his fierce emerald eyes.

"You know?"

"Uh huh, I know."

"You know what?" he cocks his head to one side.

I inch closer nearly pressing my body into his chest, "I know...I know that you could really get hurt. So, find our waltz so we can practice." I take a step back still meeting his gaze. All the blood seems to drain from his face as he stares me inquisitively.

Oh that was good. I think he thought...

I know. I was thinking it too.

I know ditto.

"Um right, the waltz. I think this is it," he disappointingly says aiming the remote for the final time at the stereo. This time the sounds of the waltz fills the room.

"May I have this dance, Miss Marshall?" he asks.

"Yes you may, Mr. Davis," I return with a curtsy.

He takes my hand in his and places his other hand on my waist. I can feel the heat from his touch. I, in turn, place my hand on his shoulder. The white-hot heat turns fiery red as it rises from my toes

upward and downward from my head;
combusting in the middle between my
thighs. He has done it again, my panties
incinerate on the spot.

Holy Fuck!

Double Holy Fuck!

He pulls me closer to him and I feel
his breath on the top of my head.

*Mmmm. Honey. I think honey is
my number one condiment now.*

We start to dance, well not really
dance but sway back and forth in place.
The entire time our gaze never breaks.
We are fixated on each other.

"Kassidy?"

"Uh huh?"

"You know we're not really dancing, right?"

"I know."

With my new found confidence and my wing woman in place, I step up on my tippy toes, ease my hand from his shoulder to the nape of his neck and pull him to me. I crush my lips into his and he lets out the most glorious moan that sends shivers not just down my spine, but all over my entire being. I jut out my tongue and his lips immediately part

welcoming me. Our tongues dance when we couldn't. His hand drags up my back, pulling me closer to him. His fingers inch farther along the smoothness of my skin. Deeper. Lower. I gasp in anticipation. He pulls back his tongue and his lips make their way along my jaw line and down my neck.

"Kassidy," he breathes into my neck.

I move my hands to his hair and pull him back to my lips. Our lips move together in sync. I can feel the buildup of anticipation in the pit of my stomach. My

inner self is on her knees begging for more. His body guides me over to couch but never once do his lips leave mine. I feel the couch on the back of my legs and he slowly eases me down still with our lips feverishly moving. I lean back and he leans with me. I can feel him grow harder as he presses into me. His hand cups my cheek, pulling further into him, while his other hand slowly grazes under my shirt. I buck to meet his touch. I so need this. I so want this. I move my hips against him to get any kind of friction to relieve my need and want. He presses

himself further into me. His tender soft lips move up my jaw and he tugs on my earlobe before sucking it into his mouth.

"Holy fuck, Davis," I moan as my eyes roll into my head.

"God, Kassidy, how I fucking want you," he confesses.

Say it. Just fucking say it.

"Me too," I confess back.

Thank the Lord! Hallelujah! It's about damn time!

His hand moves up my shirt and he cups and squeezes my tit over my bra. I moan deeper. I push into him and pull

him into me at the same time. My hand reaches down between us and I can feel....

Holyfuckingshit! What the hell is that?

I believe that's his dick!

OH. MY. GOD. IT'S FUCKING HUGE!!!

You're telling me.

How in the hell?

I don't fucking know.

That's gonna need to go where?

In my small self.

HOLYSHIT!! We're gonna need a

bigger boat.

He pulls back and looks at me puzzled. Apparently my new discovery of the size of his cock not only leaves me dumbfounded, but also I have stopped all movement.

"Kassidy are you okay," he pants.

"Um yeah I'm fine." I shake my head, still reeling from the size of his ginormous dick.

"Are ya sure? If this is too much or too fast, um we can stop?" he asks with hope in his tone.

"It's not too much. It's just..."

Oh don't tell him we think his dick is too fucking big and will probably rip our small little pussy to shreds. And we'll need to be hospitalized and have that special surgery to fix it.

I'm not. But shit what do I say?

You say this...

As much as I need and want him at that very moment I can't fathom the idea nor am I prepared for Gigantore.

"Um, I think I better get going," I unfortunately say.

He pulls away from me looking as disappointed as I feel. "Um yeah sure."

"Davis, I just think we need to take this slow."

"You're right, it's just..."

"I know."

"So it's not just me."

"God no."

"Good." He smiles relieved. It seems as if that cocky Mr. Ryan Davis doubts his mad skills when it comes to the ladies. Well at least with this lady.

Well, you've given him enough reason to.

I know, sorry.

Sorry, schmorry. It's about time

you let out what has been inside since the first time you met him.

I get it.

Good, now don't lose it.

I won't.

You better not or I will kick the living shit out of you. I can't handle any more of your resisting.

Okay, okay, I heard you.

We both pry ourselves from each other and get up from the couch. My body still protests the loss of contact with his, even though my mind has come to terms with the situation. I gather my

things and he walks me to the door.

"I could walk you to the elevator."

"No that's okay. Thanks though."

I turn to him as I open the door. Our eyes immediately lock as if we were targeting each other. He reaches his hand out and cups my cheek, pulling my face to his. Our lips tenderly touch. The white-hot heat again flashes over my body and stretches over to his. I can feel the hypnotic pull between us, but we both resist.

"Until next time, Miss Marshall?"

"Most definitely, Mr. Davis."

"I do hope so," he teases nodding to my shirt.

"Me too." I smile back and walk out the door.

As the elevator doors close behind me I feel an invisible pat on the back.

Well done.

Thanks.

Don't you feel better now that this is all out in the open?

Actually yes I do.

Good, always knew you would.

Of course. But I am going to take things slow with him. I don't want this

to turn into a disaster. My track record isn't so great.

I get it.

Good and this time you better not lose it.

Don't worry I won't. Remember I always have your back.

I'm glad you do.

I make my way out of the building and into the night air. I climb into my car and as I start it, the most perfect song plays through my speakers—REO Speedwagon's *Can't Fight This Feeling*. And at that very moment I know

Kevin Cronin is right. I can't fight this feeling, whatever this feeling is, for Davis. I drive off towards home knowing that I'm not going to fight this feeling or my inner self any more.

As I make my way into my apartment my phone alerts me of a new text. I drop everything on the floor and fish my phone out of my bag. When I see his name on the screen, butterflies swarm in and I feel warm all over.

Did u make it home ok?

Yep, just walking in the door.

**Ya know you're a torturous
woman Miss Marshall.**

Who me?

Most definitely you.

**I have no idea what you're
talking about Mr. Davis.**

If that's how you wanna play it?

Play what?

Oh it's game on Miss Marshall.

Bring it Mr. Davis!

Oh it's brought!!

Good night Mr. Davis.

**It was a very good night Miss
Marshall.**

I wonder if he can see me blush
through the phone?

Night Davis.

Sweet dreams Kassidy.

I plug my phone in to charge and
make my way to bed. Exhaustion finally
hits me and I decide to just crawl into
bed without changing, after all I am
practically dressed for bed anyway. I
creep into the cool sheets that are
actually a relief to me still heated skin,
thanks to Davis. Tonight was interesting
to say the least. I actually held my own
with him and didn't embarrass the shit

out of myself like I thought I would have.

You did great.

Thanks.

Although I wish we would have stayed a little longer.

I know, but if we did we wouldn't be sleeping in our bed right now.

I get that.

Sorry, but I just wasn't...

I know, no need to apologize.

But...

I know don't worry, in due time.

Exactly. They say patience is a virtue, right?

*I think whoever thought of that
didn't have to look at or touch or
whatever, Ryan Davis.*

You're probably right.

I always am.

I'll remember that.

I really wish you would.

And before I can continue my
conversation with my inner self,
darkness comes and I am off to Ryan
Davis Land.

CHAPTER 14

The next day, as I get ready for work, my head is still stunned by my new discovery; Davis is fucking huge. I mean I have seen my share of dicks in my lifetime, sizes varied. But I don't think I've ever encountered an anaconda. Even though I didn't actually see it, I felt it and that's all I need to know.

You're telling me.

Technically, we didn't need to see it to know if he were to let that thing out we would be shrouded in complete

and utter darkness.

It's like the Holy Grail of dicks.

*Well fuck me. If it leaves merely a
flesh wound we're good.*

*Amen, protect our endangered
pussy.*

Really, did you have to say that?

*Of course, it amazes me you still
can't handle that word.*

Well, I don't like it. It's, it's gross.

*Kassidy Marshall you said that
like I just gave you kooties.*

*Circle, circle. Dot, dot. Now I've
got my kootie shot.*

Are you kidding me? What are we, six?

I stick my tongue out at her.

No wonder we can't get laid.

As if that's the reason.

Oh, I'm sure it's one of many.

Please.

You don't have to beg me and probably not Davis either. So what gives? Why the sudden departure yesterday?

I don't know what you're talking about?

Like hell you don't. We could have

gotten some action, but you pussied out.

I know, sorry. I just got...scared. It's been so long.

It's not like they've changed the way people fuck, Kassidy. It's like riding a damn bike.

I feel like I have a bike with training wheels, ya know?

I get that, but still. There's more to it. Who knows you better than me?

I just don't want to put myself out there only to get the shit stomped out of my heart. Davis seems like an okay guy

now. I just don't want to be another number in his cell phone. I want...I want...

WE want more.

Yes, more.

And let me guess, Chloe getting married and Macy finding her hunky muscle man....All these things got ya thinking?

Definitely, how can I not?

I get it, believe me. But these walls (bang bang bang) you have built have to come down. Lord knows I've been taking a pick ax to them for some time

and they are starting to somewhat crumble. But Kassidy you can't...

I know what you're going to say. I can't keep running and hiding like I have been.

Exactly.

I'm truly trying.

I know. Please just listen to me more.

I'll try, I promise.

That's all I'm asking for. You've been doing so much better lately letting out your inner flirt. Now let's finish getting ready for work so we can get

the heck out of here.

I continue putting the finishing touches on my hair and make-up before I get dressed. My inner self has made very valid points. I have a feeling of renewed focus. I will really try to listen to her more and not focus on the negative aspects of Davis. I mean, he is really trying not to be an asshole. He's come a really long way from "sexy hair guy/asshole" at the club that first night. If he is able to change for the better, it seems, maybe I can too. Hell, if Macy gets a miracle why can't I have one too?

I arrive at work only to have Elaine hand me a bunch of messages from opposing counsel. Reynolds's case is due in court and it seems they wanted to settle out of court. This of course is something Reynolds is against even though I advised him to settle. He will get more settling out of court than going to trial. But the douchebag won't hear of it so I trudge along ironing shit out.

I work all morning, straight through to lunch talking back and forth between Reynolds and opposing counsel. Finally,

Mr. Remington gets involved and suggests to Reynolds that he at least meet with them, even though I have suggested the same thing several billion times.

Reynolds finally agrees, and Mr.

Remington is very pleased.

"Miss Marshall?" Elaine says on the intercom.

"Yes Elaine, what is it?"

"There's a Mr. Davis here to see you."

Oh my God, Davis is here!

Keep calm, you can do this.

"Send him in." My voice shakes

with nervousness and excitement.

Oh my God! Oh my God!

I quickly take a look at myself in one of the mirrored frames in my office.

You look fine, still sizzling. Just relax.

That's easier said than done. I can't believe he is here. Davis is in my building. Davis is on my floor. Davis is about to walk through my door and will be in my office.

The door to my office opens and I swear my heart leaps out of my chest, doing a happy dance, before it returns to

my throat. My breathing accelerates when I meet his eyes—his fiery, green, piercing eyes. I stop breathing. At that moment he literally takes my breath away.

Breathe dumbass. All we need to do is pass the out. Get it together. Remember game face.

Right.

I pull myself together and reach into the depths of my soul for the biggest hunk of confidence I can find. I need all the confidence I can get my little hands on. If I could borrow some from Chloe

or Macy I probably would.

"Hi," I smiles.

Davis simply gazes at me from the doorway.

POOF!

Damn it! Those were my favorite!
I know! Mine too!

"What are you doing here?" I question in my attempt at a sexy voice.

"I thought you might be hungry and I had some time so, voila I'm here." As he dangles a white bag out in front of himself.

My inner self pants and writhes on

the floor.

"What do you have there?"

"Oh just a couple of the best burgers in town and some fries." He smiles wider, sexier, as he steps closer to me.

I feel the heat radiate off of him and shroud me like an electric blanket on a cold winter night. I want to snuggle and nuzzle that blanket.

Hopefully, if you let me, we will be soon enough.

I shake my head as I try to ignore my inner self at the moment.

"You're not hungry?" he asks disappointed.

"Oh, no, I mean yes I'm hungry. I was just..... never mind," I try to explain.

"Bellevue?" he jokes.

"Exactly," I confirm.

"So, shall we eat here or..."

"No, my office is fine."

"I don't know, Miss Marshall, being alone with you in a closed room might be a bad idea," he teases with that infamous smirk on his lips and a cocked eyebrow.

"Well, if you don't think you can handle it, Mr. Davis, by all means, we can go to the staff kitchen to eat with the others," I breathe as I close the gap between us.

He gulps thickly. "I can handle it if you can, Miss Marshall," he says with some confidence.

"I think I can handle just about anything you can give Mr. Davis."

"Oh really?" he asks as he taps his finger along his belt buckle.

The crimson wave makes its appearance and I am rendered

speechless.

"Kassidy?"

"Uh huh," is all I utter.

Smack!

Owwwww! What the hell?!?

You are stupefied and letting him win this round, which he is not to. So I smacked some sense into you. Now get it together!

All right, but you didn't have to hit me.

Like hell I didn't.

Fine.

I inwardly rub my cheek and dig

deeper for more courage.

"Anything," I simply state.

Nice! Well done. Woot, woot!

Davis gulps hard for the second time and this time he is rendered speechless.

"Davis, I'm sure the food is getting cold," I say as I point to the white bag.

"Um, right," he stammers.

My inner self smiles, as do I.

"Let's sit on the sofa." I point to the leather sofa and table by the window.

"Um, yeah, sure," he says, still stunned.

Amazing.

I know, right, all cocky one minute and then a speechless pile of goo the next.

And I did that.

Hell yeah you did! Will you please start seeing yourself as the incredibly amazing woman you are?

I'm trying.

Again, try harder.

He takes the burgers and fries out and lays them on the table while I grab a couple of bottles of water from my mini fridge. We start to eat in silence.

"Thanks for bringing lunch." I break the silence.

"Well, I remembered the last time you skipped lunch, when we had Mr. Ling's, your stomach had let itself be known. I didn't want other people to have to be subjected to it," he jokes as he nudges me.

That single touch sends shivers down my spine at the same time that crimson wave leaves a trail of molten heat in its wake. When the two meet in the middle, unbridled lust ignites in the depths of my soul. I slowly try to calm

myself.

Resistance is futile.

So, I'm not going to.

Really? You're finally listening to

me.

Scared? Nervous?

Both, along with a little shocked

as well.

Well, fasten your seatbelt, it's

gonna be a bumpy ride.

Click. Click. Click.

What the hell was that?

Honey, you're driving with the big

girls now. I'm fastening my racing

harness.

Alrighty then. Hold on to something.

Yes, Ma'am.

With my new found courage and confidence, I inch closer to Davis until my thigh touches his. My skin continues to ignite in flames. My mouth feels parched, so I lick my lips to elevate some of the dryness, although there is no dryness between my legs. I feel as though I am trickling all over my leather sofa, turning it into a slip-n-slide. I draw my bottom lip between my teeth and suck

in a rush of air, as I look up at him through my eyelashes.

"Davis," I breathe into his face.

"Uh, huh."

"You um, have a little bit of ketchup, right here," I say as I raise my finger to the corner of his mouth.

As my finger touches the small smear of ketchup, I feel him shiver under my touch.

"There, I got it," I explain.

As I stare into his shocked green eyes, I slowly raise my finger to my mouth and I suck the ketchup off of it.

With closed eyes, I lick my lips and utter, "Mmmmm. You taste delicious." When I open my eyes, Davis's eyes are bulging out of his head, his chest is heaving and his mouth is practically on the floor.

"Davis, are you okay? Belleview?" I happily question as I wave my hand in front of his face.

He just sits there completely stunned.

"Davis?"

"What? Huh?"

"I asked if you're alright."

My inner self is running a victory lap.

"I'm not really sure," he finally says.

"Can I get you something?" I ask as I press myself into his side.

"Um, no, I don't think...."

And before he can finish, I lean into him. I snake my hand around his neck and pull his lips to mine. He doesn't resist. I brush my lips against his and I feel his breathe quicken. I slip my tongue out and flicker it like a snake against his bottom lip. Davis instinctively parts his

lips and puffs out a quick rush of hot, wet air. My tongue tastes his bottom lip before it easily invades his mouth. Our tongues dance and I push into him further. I want to taste, touch and feel every part, every square inch of him. At that moment I don't care about his phone harem. I don't care that he has been an asshole. I don't care that I have called him "sexy hair guy". I don't care that we were in my office. All I care about is that I am having new feelings for him and that I need and want him.

Thank you, Jesus.

Not now.

Sorry, Peanut gallery out. You're more than holding your own.

I pull him closer to me. I want to make him a part of me. Our tongues continue to tango, when I feel his hand slowly move up my skirt. I moan into his mouth. His other hand grabs the nape of my neck as he too, pulls me closer to him. We have almost become one, a part of the other, because of our proximity. His mouth releases mine and my lips protest, until, they feel his mouth and lips on my neck.

"Kassidy," he moans as he continues to kiss and suck on my neck.

"Davis," I echo.

His hand continues to caress up my inner thigh. A wave of anticipated ecstasy slowly crashes over my entire body. I grab his face between my hands and look directly into his eyes, into his soul and not only me but my inner self likes what I see. It is purity, lust, wanting and sincerity all wrapped up in one gorgeous bundle. Davis isn't what I had originally thought and it is all there for me to see in his eyes. Davis has me

hook, line and sinker, although it really isn't like that. He is who I have been waiting for and possibly my more.

Armed with my new discovery, I pull his face to mine and as if he is the air I need to live, my lips smash into his. He meets me with the same urgency. I am lost in the reality of Davisland and if it is a dream, I don't want to wake up from it. His fingers find my panties and tickle and tease me through the thin, in the way, fabric. His fingers gradually pull them aside and meet my wetness. I buck my hips into his long overdue

touch. His finger extend and sweep across my clit, sending a jolt of electrified lust and want throughout my entire body. He continues to gently stroke me, which brings on an onslaught of heated waves that extend from my core into every pore of my being.

"Oh God, Davis," I whisper into his mouth.

"Kassidy," he breathes back.

"Excuse me," I hear a voice speak.

Holyfuckingshit!

Davis and I freeze as we realize the voice didn't come from either one of us.

And with that realization, we adjust ourselves to look less indecent. I turn my head to see who in the hell entered my office unannounced and unwanted, and I see Jackson standing in the doorway.

Fucking twatblocker!

"Yes Jackson, what do you want?" I say annoyed as I stand and adjust myself as discreetly as possible.

"Well if you're not too *busy*, my dad needs you to sign these papers," he angrily spews.

He has no right.

I know, chill.

"You could have given them to Elaine," I remind him.

"She's not at her desk and my dad needs them ASAP," he retorts.

"Fine," I snip as I make my way to my desk.

While Jackson hands me the folder, I hear Davis get up from the sofa and walk toward the door.

"Kassidy, maybe I should...."

"No, stay, I'll be done with this in a sec." As I look away from the papers and stare right at Jackson. I hastily open the folder and quickly sign what I need

to. Once I finish, I push the folder into Jackson and make my way next to Davis.

"Thanks. Who's your friend here Kassidy," Jackson pries.

"Jackson Remington this is Ryan Davis. Davis, Jackson," I hesitantly introduce.

"Hi, nice to meet you," Davis says as he stretches out his hand to Jackson.

"Uh, huh, whatever," Jackson responds as he ignores Davis's gesture and turns and leaves my office.

"Did I..." Davis starts.

"No you didn't. Jackson just has

issues with me," I reply.

"Oh. Oh, he's your date for the wedding," Davis recalls.

"*Was* my date, things went into that gray area and he got the wrong idea one night."

Yeah, because she was thinking of you.

"Oh, so you're dateless." He smirks.

"Yep, dateless."

"Well, maybe we can remedy that," he teases.

"Maybe," I tease back.

"Well, I better get back to the office. I took a very extended lunch."

My inner self and my endangered pussy protest.

"If you have to."

"Unfortunately, I have to. I will take a rain check though."

"Oh, I'll hold you to that."

"You better."

We walk back to the door and he leans down and gently kisses me.

"Definitely next time, Miss Marshall." He smiles.

I simply smile back. As he heads

out, he turns to me and says with a devilish grin, "Oh, by the way Kassidy, there's a little something in the bag for ya still." And then he is gone. I close the door after him and rush over to the sofa and immediately grab the bag. I open it and pull out a jar of Maraschino cherries. Cue the crimson wave. As I stand there, staring at the jar of cherries, it dawns on me and I know what exactly what to do.

Oh I love it!

CHAPTER 15

"Um, Kas, what the fuck is it with the gazillion jars of Maraschino cherries in your fridge?" Macy asks puzzled, as she grabs a bottle of water.

"Cherries?" Chloe chimes in.

"Yeah, there are enough cherries in here to cause us to call an intervention."

"Oh come on there aren't that many," I retort.

"Have you looked in your fridge lately?" Macy asks with a raised eyebrow as she points toward the fridge.

"I haven't seen a jar of cherries since...." Chloe trails off.

Fuck. Here we go.

"Since we tied knots in cherry stems one drunken night in college. Kassidy Lillian Marshall, what are you up to?" questions Chloe in a high pitched voice that probably only dogs can hear.

"Nothing," I quickly reply as my eyes dart from Chloe to the box on the counter, back to Chloe.

You better hope she didn't see that.

See what?

You looked at the box.

No I didn't.

*Like hell you didn't. Cause you
most certainly did.*

Um, I believe you're mistaken.

"Don't think I didn't see that," Chloe
chirps.

"See what?" I nonchalantly say, as I
shift from foot to foot.

"Macy," Chloe advises.

Macy and I lunge at the same time
for the box perched on my counter. The
box slips and slides as our hands reach
and grab for it. Macy elbows me in my

side, hard. I lose my grip on the box and succumb to Macy's victory.

"Got it," Macy cheers.

"Bitch," I spit as I rub my side.

Macy sticks her tongue out at me as she hands the box to Chloe. I feel the crimson wave make it's all too familiar appearance.

Fucking Macy.

Fucking Macy? Fucking you. You didn't have to buy every jar at the supermarket. And you didn't have to leave the box lying around when you knew Nosey One and Nosey Two were

coming over.

I roll my eyes at my inner self. I can hear her snicker as I focus my attention back to the matter at hand, the box.

"I didn't know you liked Tiffany's," Chloe asks with her head cocked to one side.

"Every girl does," I nervously reply.

"Kas, you're not every girl," Macy chimes in.

"Thanks," I snarl as I crinkle my nose.

"So what you'd get, a ring,

earrings....Ewww." Chloe squirms.

"What the fuck?" Macy interjects as Chloe shows her the contents of the box.

"Since when does Tiffany's sell, sell, sell...that's just fucking nasty," Macy continues.

"They're knotted cherry stems," I explain.

"Um, we can fucking see that, huh Chloe?"

"Yep."

"What gives?" they ask in unison as Macy shoves the box towards me.

"It's a joke." And as the words float

out of my mouth I feel my neck and my cheeks flush with red hot heat.

"Why Kassidy, are you blushing?" teases Macy.

"Maybe."

Who are you fucking kidding? It's clearly all over your face.

I know.

"Oh, I would say you are definitely blushing. So, spill it," Chloe confirms and demands.

"Um, um...well." My heated skin begins to cool as sweat not only forms on my brow but also on the back of my

neck.

*Alright let me get this straight,
you can admit you have feelings for
Davis, let him finger your endangered
pussy in the middle of the office and
tell Jackson off, but you can't explain
to your two best friends about your
cherry stem filled box?*

Uh huh.

Have I not taught you anything?

Well...

If you say no I will kick your ass.

I wasn't...

Oh you so were about to.

I was gonna say, yes you have and it was time to rip off another goddamn Band-Aid.

Oh, well, in that case rip away.

"They're a joke for...Davis," I explain and wait for the interrogation.

"Davis?" again they echo each other as they interlock their arms around mine and drag me over to the couch. Their bodies imprison me on the couch as I think, I may as well finish what I started, and after all there is no escape.

"Fess up," Macy nudges.

I take a deep breath to steady my

nerves, "Okay, here it is in a nutshell... we've been hanging out, flirting, had a moment at the diner that involved me tying a knot, well two actually, in a cherry from his drink, we've kissed and I think he's my date to your wedding. Oh and I've recently learned he's a decent guy and um...um...I think...no scratch that, I know I have feelings for him. To what extent I don't know, but they're there," I explain in relief.

That was some nutshell.

Well, I figured one Band-Aid rip is enough and I thought if I stopped I'd

lose my nerve.

Okay. Are you ready, cause here comes the tsunami?

Is anyone ever ready for Macy and Chloe?

*Point taken, hold on to something.
Believe me, I am.*

I brace myself for the storm that is about to hit, dreading I ever opened my big mouth. They both turn to me, with the biggest shit-eating grins on their faces and wink at each other.

Shit, they're gonna take turns. Cue the tag team twins.

"So, let's back up," starts Chloe,
"you've been hanging out and flirting
with Davis, Jason's Davis?"

"Oh please, that's what you're
starting with? Chloe, come on," pleads
Macy.

"Baby steps," replies Chloe.

"Fuck baby steps," Macy screeches
and grabs me by the shoulders, "you
have fucking feelings for Davis?"

"I think...."

Damn it Marshall!

All right!

"Yes, I have feelings for Davis!" I

vehemently confess.

"Shit, you didn't have to fucking yell, Kas, I'm right here," Macy says as she wiggles her finger in her ear.

"Oh Kassidy, I knew it. I just knew it," Chloe gushes as she wraps her arms around me in the tightest hug ever.

"Tell us everything, please," Chloe whispers in my ear as she releases me from her death grip.

"There isn't much to tell, really. We've been hanging out lately and I've just really gotten to know him, the real him."

"Oh come on. Give us fucking details. All the smutty details," Macy inches closer, as if that were possible, as she licks her lips.

"There aren't any smutty details," I lie.

You are so fucking stupid. You know she's not gonna buy it.

She might, I have a poker face.

Poker face in place or not, don't you feel the building heat beginning to radiate to your cheeks.

And like clockwork there it is.

Damn it!

My crimson wave arrives, easily giving me away.

"You honestly thought your rosy cheeks wouldn't give you away? Jeez, Kas, you should know better than that," Macy relishes.

"Fine. We've kissed...." And I am immediately bombarded not only with the images of kissing Davis but the feelings as well. My panties are soaked.

"Continue bitch or the laptop gets it," Macy threatens with her bottle of water poised above my laptop that rests on the coffee table.

"You wouldn't?"

"Like hell I wouldn't," Macy guarantees as she tilts the bottle's opening closer to my laptop.

"I'd do what she says," Chloe warns.

"All right. All right. Just but the bottle down, nice and easy," I beg.

Macy looks to Chloe whom nods and she hesitantly places the bottle down.

Whew! That was close.

You brought that on all by yourself.

Don't remind me.

"We're waiting," Macy glares as she taps the water bottle.

"I'm getting to it; don't get your panties in a wad. The other day he brought lunch to my office...."

"And?" They both eagerly lean in.

"Well, before we were so rudely interrupted, he um...his um...his hand found its way up my skirt and he began to um, to um, diddle my kitty," I clasp my hands over my face and wait.

"It's about fucking time! But wait, what do you mean you were rudely

interrupted?" inquires Macy.

"Jackson walked in."

"That little prick. I hope you told him off?" Macy asks as Chloe nods in agreement.

"Oh, I took care of that little bastard prick fuck," I seethe as I remember Jackson's interruption.

"Oh Kassidy, I'm so happy for you. I told you, you and Davis were meant to be together," Chloe finally speaks.

"Oh Jesus, no need to start picking out fucking china patterns, Stevens. She only got fingered," Macy crudely

reminds all of us.

"We'll see." Chloe smirks as she taps her finger to her temple.

The proverbial cat is out of the bag and a rush of relief washes over me. It feels good, no not good, it feels right to finally say out loud what I have been feeling lately. There is no turning back now; it is out in the open. I have feelings for Davis. The question remains if he has the same feelings for me. I know how his dick reacts to me, so that head is accounted for. I just don't know what the head with the brain is thinking. Sure, he

tried to scratch my itch so to speak in my office the other day, but that doesn't necessarily mean he is into me, thinking about me, or feeling about me the way I am feeling about him. The realization that I have feelings for him and want more is overwhelming to say the least. Hopefully in time all my questions will be answered.

Now that the Nosey Twins know, I hope and pray that the two of them will keep their big mouths shut. I don't want them running to him like we are in high school or middle school for that matter.

Here Davis, check yes or no if you like our friend Kassidy, plays in my head.

"Guys, please don't say anything to him, please? Especially you Chloe," I implore.

"Well, I don't know about our red-headed matchmaker here, but my lips are sealed," Macy promises.

"Chloe?" I look at her with the biggest puppy dog eyes I can muster.

"Well, all right. But if you don't do something about it soon, I'm taking over because this thing with him isn't going to drag out like it usually does. You got

me?" Chloe insists.

"Fine, but just let me do this at my own pace, please Chloe. I know you mean well and believe everyone is destined for someone, but I need to do this my way, on my own terms, at my own pace...I don't want it to be like.." A rogue tear pushes through my wall and trails down my cheek.

"Kas, honey, I didn't mean, I just want you....your way, in your own time. I'm, we're here for you, okay," Chloe and Macy group hug me sealing their promise.

"So, he's gonna be your date?"

Chloe perks up.

"I think so."

"I still thought that you were going with Jackson or solo and I didn't think you would want to be anywhere near him, so you guys aren't seated anyway near each other. Damn it, it's too late to change the seating arrangements.

Kassidy, I'm so sorry. Maybe we can..."

I place my hand over her mouth, "Shhh, it's fine. It's not like I won't see him at all," I ease her worried little mind.

"I know but still."

"Stevens take a fucking pill. It's not like they will be separated by miles and miles of dance floor. I'm sure they'll bump into each other. Okay, I would love to talk about this some more but not here, I'm starving. Who's up for some sushi?" Macy asks as she stands up rubbing her stomach.

"Ohhhhh, sushi sounds great,"

Chloe agrees.

"Then it's settled, Kas?" Macy turns to me.

"Let's go," I finish.

We leave my apartment and head out for sushi. I know I can trust my girls to keep quiet until I am ready, even Chloe. They understand how I feel and will respect my wishes. My only concern is how this is all going to play out with Davis. Does he feel the same way, or am I just to be another name for his cell phone harem? Shit, no need to worry now I have other pressing matters to worry about, like deciding on a spicy tuna roll or a dynamite roll. Oh and not to mention the dance at the wedding. Embarrassing myself is not an option;

and of course mailing my special present for Davis.

I am on my way to meet Chloe and Macy for our nail appointment. Chloe has become a Bridezilla of sorts. She is usually demanding, but the pressure of putting on the perfect wedding has made matters worse. I have surrendered to the fact that the next couple of days I am going to be painted, pulled and teased to make up for a lifetime of not always being a girly girl. The wedding is in two days and when I am not working I am

submerged up to my eyeballs in it. As much as it is an annoyance I would do anything for Chloe.

"Oh Miss Kassidy, it's so nice to meet you," Shauna cheerfully says as I enter the nail salon.

"Nice to meet you too." I smile back.

"Well it's about damn time. Thanks for leaving me alone with Attila the Hun," Macy blurts out across the room.

"Hey, that's Miss Attila the Hun to you," Chloe teases back.

"Sorry, it won't happen again,"

Macy curtsies.

"Okay, Miss Kassidy, have a seat and let's get started," Shauna motions to the nearby station.

As I sit down my phone vibrates. I can't imagine who would be calling me when the two people I talk to the most were with me.

"Hello," I answer as I Shauna takes my available hand and places in a bowl of suds.

"Why, hello Miss Marshall," a velvet voice soothes through the phone.

"Oh, hello Mr. Davis," I reply as I

try to contain my giddiness.

"I believe I have you to thank for my recent delivery," he inquires.

"Who me?" I flirt.

"Um, yes you, unless you know of someone whom would send me a box full of knotted cherry stems?"

My heart skips a beat. "I really can't think of anyone."

"Well played, Miss Marshall," he replies.

"Thank you, Mr. Davis. I believe the score is Marshall 3 Davis 1?"

"You would think that. I believe the

score is Davis 4 Marshall 2."

"You are so mistaken. I'm winning this game."

"You may be winning this game, Miss Marshall, but you can bet that I am going to win the series," he teases.

"Oh you can think that all you want, but the truth is you're gonna lose and lose big."

"We'll see about that."

"We sure will. Ball's in your court, Mr. Davis."

"I'll show you..." he trails off.

"You'll show me what?"

"You'll just have to wait and see."

"I most definitely look forward to it. And don't keep me waiting long," I playfully demand.

"Hopefully, neither one of us will be waiting long." His velvet voice flows out of my phone and wraps around me.

Holytruckingshitballs! I can't believe he can undo me through the damn phone!

God help you if you make us wait!

Easy Miss Impatient, in due time.

Time is due. No more games.

I know, I'm getting tired of them

too.

Finally!

And my inner self does a back flip.

"Bye Davis." I breathe as I feel the crimson wave settle on my cheeks and my heart rate accelerates.

"Bye Kassidy."

As I hang up the phone I feel a burning sensation on either side of me. I turn to right and then to the left and see Macy and Chloe staring at me with their mouths gaping open.

"Are you fucking kidding me? Who the hell are you and where the fuck did

Kassidy go?" Macy screeches.

"Yeah, Kassidy what the hell? That was so not like you. That was really hot and well played," adds Chloe in amazement.

"He just does something to me," I confess.

"I'll say. Shit, if I were I guy I would have a hard on right now after listening to that conversation," cracks Macy.

"Me too," Chloe chimes in.

"Sorry."

"Honey don't be, we like seeing you

like this. Thank God, Ryan Davis came along because we were about to lose all hope. We thought we would have to visit you at the convent," Macy conveys sweetly.

"I second that. I'm so happy for you Kassidy, you have no idea. It broke my heart to see you so, so lonely for so long. Davis has truly opened you up, you seem happier, brighter. And I love that you're so playful with him. He honestly is a great guy, if he weren't I would be telling him to back the fuck off. You're my girl, my sister and your happiness

means the world to me, just know and remember that," Chloe says tearfully.

"Macy, is something wrong?" I question as I notice Macy's eyes well up with tears.

"Nothing's wrong, the fumes in here are killing me." She diverts as she wipes her eyes with the back of her hand.

"Fumes, huh? Okay Macy," Chloe and I speak in unison.

"Yes fucking fumes! Now can you both drop it." The pit bull retracts her fangs and shows me a tender smile.

She's happy for you too.

I know.

We all are.

I know.

*I hope you know that you deserve
this, to be happy.*

I think I do.

*You better because it's been way
too long.*

Too long.

Shauna continues to French my
nails as does Chloe's and Macy's nail
technicians. We continue to talk wedding
plans, especially about the night before,
because we will all be together at my

place. I stare out the window feeling content for the first time in a long time. Davis has done that. I close my eyes as Shauna massages my hand and my mind is flooded with visions of Davis smiling at me. I take a deep breath and see my everything in that smile. We have only known each other for a short time, but somewhere deep inside the feelings have grown and flourished and for the first time I am not so scared.

"Okay my beautiful bitches, a toast. Chloe, we couldn't be happier that

you've found your, as you call it, your destiny. Jason is a lucky man and if he ever does anything wrong by you let it be known that I will castrate his shit faster than he can say 'Macy No!' To Chloe and Jason." Macy raises her glass with a wink.

She is brutal and blunt but her words ring true. We will do anything to anyone that would hurt the other. We are bound together like sisters.

Thank God Macy is on our side.

You can say that again.

Yeah, I pity the fool who decides

to mess with her. She's one tough bitch.

Don't I know it?

I gently rub my side as I try to soothe the bruise that Macy had put there when we wrestled for my box.

We drink our champagne, put on some tunes and just girl talk. It isn't going to be a late night, after all the wedding is tomorrow. Torture will ensue first thing in the morning. I'm not looking forward to it. While Macy and Chloe chit chat, I make my way to bedroom and grab something I have been saving. When I return Chloe and Macy

are in an embrace and they both are crying.

"Hey don't forget me," I cry.

They both reach out their arms, while not breaking their embrace and welcome me in. We hug for what seems like an eternity before I remember the box I am holding.

"Here Chloe this is for you," I choke as the emotional lump is still stuck in my throat.

"What's this?" Chloe asks wiping the tears from her eyes.

"It's a little something for your big

day," I reply.

Chloe carefully unwraps the ribbon and stares at its contents.

"Oh Kassidy," she breathes as a tear escapes, "it's beautiful."

Chloe pulls out an embroidered hankie from the box. It is made out of white silk and had C E A embroidered in aqua on it. With it clutched in her hand, Chloe pulls me in for a big hug and holds me tighter than ever. We both start to cry again and this time it's not me asking not to forget about me, it's Macy who does. The three of us just hold each

other and cry for what seems like an eternity. Finally the gush fest is over and we pull apart.

"Okay, so tomorrow, bright and early we go see Alec for our hair and then Amber for our make-up. So I think we should call it a night," insists Chloe.

"Yes, Mom," Macy and I say in unison.

We all curl up in my bed and eventually they both quickly fall asleep. I stay awake for a little while longer as I go over the dance routine in my mind. At one point my thoughts turn to Davis

holding me, and I smile immediately erupts across my lips. For the first time I look forward to dancing.

Chloe is a tornado in the morning, swirling all around my apartment, making sure everything is in order. Her cell phone is permanently attached to ear as she speaks quite often to her wedding planner. The three of us make our way to the salon to get what Chloe calls pampered. Her idea of pampering is more like having bamboo skewers shoved under my finger nails. But for

Chloe, I will endure such torturous things; it is her day after all.

Alec, twists, pulls and teases my hair into the most elegant wave of curls I have ever seen. Amber plucks, smears, brushes, and glosses every single millimeter of my face. When all is said and done and I look in the mirror, I honestly don't recognize the woman staring back at me.

"Oh, Kassidy, you look amazing," Chloe tearfully compliments.

"Shit, bitch I'd do ya," teases Macy.

"Thanks, guys." I blush.

The three of us look amazing. Chloe looks like the most beautiful bride that there ever was. The limo arrives to take us to The Peninsula. It is great that the ceremony and reception are being held at the same venue. I can feel the butterflies flutter in my stomach. I'm not nervous about the ceremony, although the thought of walking down the aisle in front of everyone and falling on my ass does pop into my brain on several occasions. Audrina, the wedding planner, comes to inform us that it is time. Chloe looks to me and Macy and I

can see her eyes begin to well up.

"Chloe Elizabeth Stevens don't you dare mess up your make up, cause I have no clue as to how to fix it if you do," I joke to relieve some of her nerves.

She chuckles, "Thanks, Kas."

I reach my arms carefully around her, as I am afraid I will wrinkle her or something, and gently kiss her cheek.

"You girls ready?" asks Audrina.

"Yes, I think we are," confirms Chloe.

"Okay then, Macy you're first and then Kassidy," Audrina directs.

"Ready Mrs. Anderson," I ask.

"Ready." Chloe affirms.

The music cues up for our entrance.

Macy starts the long walk to the minister first. Audrina stops me before I follow after Macy.

"Not yet, Kassidy," she directs.

As I stand there, waiting my turn, I feel the butterflies in my stomach pick up speed and it feels as though some of them are attempting an escape. My palms are sweaty and my heart rate is well on its way to win the Daytona 500.

"Kassidy, it's your turn," Audrina

informs me.

I freeze.

"Kassidy?" Audrina nudges.

I am paralyzed.

"Kas, it's okay. I'll be right behind you," Chloe reassures me, full well knowing how I hate being in the spotlight.

I dig down deep for my inner strength to move.

Don't panic, we've got this.

Are you sure?

Trust me.

If I land flat on my face with my

ass in the air, so help me!

No need, I've, you've--we've got this.

With my inner self's reassurance, I step one foot in front of the other and make the long walk down the aisle. I feel all eyes on me, burning into me. My heart goes into hyper-drive, my mouth feels like the Sahara, while my palms are the Nile.

If this is how I react to being a maid of honor, what is going to happen when I'm the damn bride?

Don't think of that now, look.

I suddenly feel a magnetic pull tug at my core. My eyes are instantly drawn to the same direction as the pull and at the end of the aisle, he stands. Davis's green eyes twinkle and dance as I meet his gaze. A wave of calm flashes over me. He smiles as if to say you can do this. In that instance, I know I can. I continue the walk down the aisle, focused on Davis. He is like the Death Star and I am the Millennium Falcon caught in his tractor beam. It feels as though I have the hugest smile on my face because my cheeks have started to

hurt. Davis smiles back as he shakes and bows his head in amusement.

I blush. I finally make it to my place next to Macy without incidents.

I told you, you had this.

Davis helped.

He sure did. She winks.

Chloe gracefully floats to Jason's side. I feel the tears prick as they say their "I do's". Finally, the minister pronounces them husband and wife and the place erupts in cheers and whistles. Chloe and Jason go arm and arm back up the aisle. Davis takes my arm in his and

we follow behind. I feel a tingly sensation that creeps up from my toes and nestles between my thighs.

Holy!

Keep it together. No need to become a pool of orgasmic goo right here in front of everyone.

I'm trying, but when he touches me.

I know, believe me. I feel it too.

"You look beautiful," he whispers, as he leans into me for the photographer to snap a shot of us.

Cue that crimson wave.

"You look quite beautiful yourself,"
I whisper back as I reach deep inside for
a truckload of confidence.

Nice.

Thank you.

*And he really does, right out of the
pages of GQ.*

You can say that again.

The rest of the guests make their
way out into the hall to greet the new
Mr. and Mrs. Anderson. Chloe and
Jason look beyond happy. They are truly
meant for each other. The photographer
pulls the wedding party away from the

guests to arrange us in many poses for memories. Chloe insists that Davis and I be photographed alone in more shots than is necessary. My little meddler is still playing match maker even on her wedding day. Usually I hate having my picture taken, but today isn't the case. Alec and Amber have worked miracles on my hair and make-up. I actually feel pretty good standing next to the Adonis that has walked into my life months ago.

When the photographer finally finishes, Davis's arm snakes around my waist and he pulls me to a secluded

corner. "Have I told you how amazing you look," he breathes inches from my face.

Oh my!

"I believe so, but you can tell me again," I tease as I reach up and sweep back a few strands of hair off of his forehead.

He leans down and tickles his lips along my neck, up to my ear. His teeth graze my earlobe. "You look fucking edible," he puffs into my ear.

My insides liquefy and my endangered pussy cries out, leaving my

panties completely drenched. If my inner self has her way at the moment, I will strip Davis, naked, only using my teeth.

Now is not the time.

But...

No buts. This is Chloe's wedding, remember?

Oh yeah, right.

"Mr. Davis, I know exactly what you're trying to do and it's not gonna work, at least not now."

"I have no idea what you're talking about, Miss Marshall."

"Don't act all innocent."

"Oh, Miss Marshall, you should know by now there's nothing innocent about me or you for that matter." His velvet voice wraps around me.

"Oh, really?" I question with a cocked eyebrow.

"Yes really, but you'll have to wait to find out for sure," he teases.

"Don't keep me waiting too long," I tease back.

"Believe me, I don't think I can," he confesses with that infamous crooked smile of his.

"I think we should get back."

"If you insist, Miss Marshall."

"I insist, Mr. Davis."

"Well then, lead the way." He

smacks my ass with a wink.

Holy fuck!

As he makes his way passed me, I smack him right back. My inner self cheers. We find our way into the room and Chloe immediately calls us over.

"It's time," she announces.

Shit, the dance.

As if he hears my inner thought,

Davis turns to me, "Don't worry, I won't let you embarrass yourself."

"Thanks."

The music starts and a hush comes over the room. Chloe and Jason start first, floating around the dance floor like Ginger Rogers and Fred Astaire. On the eighth count, Davis and I join in. He moves us gracefully across the dance floor and not once do I trip, stumble or mess up. As he holds me I feel heat radiate between us, eventually it consumes the two of us. It is as though we have become the only two people in the room. Not once do we break our gaze into each other's eyes. I can see

deep into his soul and in it I find comfort
and peace. I am hyper aware of my
feelings for him and know I am
definitely looking at my something more.

Oh my God.

I know it's really all there.

I'm....

*You're scared and to be honest so
am I.*

Well fan-fucking-tastic.

Don't worry.

Don't worry?

We'll get past our fears.

I hope so.

I know so.

Finally, the music stops and the crowd cheers and clink their glasses. Then the lights go out, we are shrouded in complete darkness.

"Ready, Kassidy?" Chloe asks.

"Ready," I confirm.

"Well, let's blow the roof of this place and get our zombie on," she encourages.

Thriller begins and the place goes nuts. The four of us give our best zombie and everyone really seems to love it. I am over taken by a confidence, that

comes from I don't know where. I know I would have done the King of Pop proud. As Vincent Price cackles, the place erupts. Zombie dance is a huge success. I have to hand it to Chloe, she knows how to start a party. All my worrying and protesting was for nothing because that was so much fun. I am so elated that I turn to Davis and wrap my arms around him, hugging him tight.

"I did it! Holy shit, I fucking did it!"

"You sure did," he confirms.

As I pull away and stare into his emerald eyes, I am overcome with all

sorts of emotions, that I crash my lips into his. He moans into my mouth and pulls me tighter to him. Our lips and tongues continue the dance our bodies have stopped.

"Yeah, Davis!" someone yells from the crowd of guests.

I immediately feel the flames blaze up my neck and settle on my cheeks. I bury my face in his chest. I have totally forgotten where we are. I turn around to see Chloe and Macy all smiles. Davis ushers me off the dance floor to finish what we started—alone.

The rest of the reception progresses almost like every other wedding; the newlyweds dance, kiss when we all clink our glasses, drink and dance some more. Then it is time for the best man and maid of honor's toasts. Davis goes first.

"As some of you know Anderson, I mean Jason and I, have known each other since we were kids. And until today I have never seen him so extremely happy. Chloe, you've done that and I thank you. I always knew Jason

deserved the best and I know in you he's found that. I hope one day I'm as lucky as him. To Chloe and Jason," as he raises his glass his eyes burn into mine.

Mothertruckerlickingballs! Was that part directed to me?

He was staring at you when he said it.

Holy shit!

I know!

"Kassidy," Chloe whispers, "it's your turn."

"Sorry," I whisper back.

As I look to Davis he mouths

"Bellevue."

I blush right on cue.

"Chloe, you've been my friend, my rock, my sister. I can't think of a time when I haven't seen you happy until today because you're not just happy, you're home. Jason is your home, your heart, your destiny. I can't imagine two people more perfect for each other. I wish you nothing but love and happiness. I love you both." And with that the tears spill out and Chloe and I embrace each other. Before I know it Macy is a part of the moment as well.

The festivities continue. I decide I need another drink and get in line at the bar.

"Hey bitch," someone calls from behind as they nudge my back.

I turn to see Macy has finally pried herself away from Chad, "Hey skank."

"Beautiful, huh?" she asks.

"Most definitely."

"Um, you and Davis look really good together," she encourages.

"Thanks."

"Hey by the way, what is up with

the cupcake favors? I mean don't get me wrong, I love a fucking cupcake, but Chloe has, as usual, left me out of the loop on this one," inquires Macy.

"Oh, the cupcakes. She has been reading this story where the guy in it is obsessed with cupcakes. She can't look at a cupcake the same way anymore and thought it would be a good idea to give everyone something yummy to take home instead of some lame gift," I inform.

"Cool. Well I'm off to find Chad."

"No drink?"

"Nah, just wanted to say hi. Later."

"Later."

Chloe and Jason finally make their departure to start their honeymoon. Most of the guests have dispersed after that, however, the band has one last song to play for those that remain. I stand there, alone, as the female singer takes the mic. The words of Taylor Swift's *Crazier* flows out of her mouth, it stirs something in me.

"May I have this dance," a voice breathes behind me.

I turn to find Davis standing before me. My heart skips a beat. "Yes you

may," I oblige.

He leads me to the dance floor, twirls me around once before he takes me in his arms. We sway to the rhythm as she continues to sing. The words take up residence inside me—inside my mind, heart and soul. When she sings “you showed me something I couldn’t see...” I feel it and know it because Davis has done that to me. In such a short time, he has shown me what I couldn't see at first. He has made me believe, believe in myself, believe in my feelings, believe in him. He has made

me crazier, crazier for him.

Even though the song ends, we continue to sway. He draws his hand to my cheek and pulls my lips to his. My stomach constricts and my thoughts go foggy. I am completely and utterly lost in Davis. Our lips continue to move. His tongue sweeps along my bottom lip and my lips part, as our tongues mingle and intertwine; dancing. My breathing hitches as his hand slowly eases down my back and presses on my ass. I feel his hard length on my stomach. I reach my hands up and lace them into his thick,

dark locks.

Crash!

The drummer drops a cymbal; the sound echoes in the practically empty room and breaks Davis and me from our moment. He looks down at me, eyes blazing onyx with heated passion.

"You wanna get out of here," he asks.

"Yes," the word rushes from my lips.

Davis laces his fingers with mine, hitches me to his side and pulls me off the dance floor. We grab our coats and

make our way to his car.

While I buckle myself in my senses are overtaken by honey and spice. I am enveloped by honey, by Davis. My endangered pussy inhales deeply and smiles as I do.

We make it to his place in record time. In the elevator, the desire for each other is palpable. The elevator ignites with our intensity for each other and we are once again drawn to each other, our lips meeting. He crashes into me and his hands explore my curves. I so want him

right then and there, but the elevator dings its arrival to his floor.

Davis and I race down the hall to his door. He jabs the key into the lock and flings the door open. As soon as it closes, he has me pinned against the wall. His hand pulls my arms above my head, while his other hand trails its way up my thigh, under my dress.

"God, Kassidy, you feel so good," he breathes into my neck as he sucks and licks along the way.

"Davis," I pant.

His fingers tug at my panties. My

breathing stops.

"Kassidy, is this okay?"

I will myself to speak, but when I open my mouth, silence.

"Oh God, I'm so sorry, I just thought..." he panics.

Say something.

I'm trying to.

Try harder.

His hand slowly moves away, leaving my panties in place and he releases my arms at the same time. Instinct takes over and I reach down and stop his hand before it reaches the light

of day again. He looks confused.

"Davis, it's fine. I want this. I've been wanting this," I confess.

"Really?" he says with great relief.

"Really," I assure him.

His eyes light up like a little kid with a free pass to buy whatever he wants at Toys 'R Us. Davis cocks his head to one side, sucks in his bottom lip and immediately ushers me toward his bedroom. He lifts me into his arms as we make our way down the hall. We finally reach our destination and Davis gently puts me down by his bed. He

stands over me, takes off his jacket, his bowtie, unbuttons his shirt and eases it off. His muscular form is flawless. My eyes drink him in, all of him. He is perfect and he is going to be mine. The thought makes my heart stop. I reach my hand to him and trail my finger along his well-defined abs.

"Yummy."

Oh shit, did I say that out loud?

Uh huh.

"You're quite yummy yourself Miss Marshall."

He reaches behind me and skillfully

unzips my dress. I stand up and shimmy out of it.

"Beautiful," he whispers as I stand only in my panties.

I reach down, unfasten his pants and pull them down to his ankles. He easily steps out of them and tosses them aside while his eyes burn into me. Davis steps to me, pushing me into the bed. His hand cups my breast and gently squeezes as he eases me down. Davis's knee part my legs as he slithers up me. He hovers over me, just staring deep into my eyes. I can see deep into his beautiful soul and I

see desire, want, lust and something I can't quite put my finger on.

"Davis?" I utter.

"Sorry, I get so easily lost in you," his voice washes over me.

He breaks his gaze and his lips find my neck. He inhales slowly, breathing me in.

"Heaven," he exhales.

Davis kisses his way down my neck, along my collarbone until his lips meet my breast and erect nipple. His tongue swirls around it, before he takes it between his teeth and gently pulls.

Fire surges from my belly and I arch in ecstasy underneath him.

"You do taste delicious." His breath tickles my heated skin.

"Davis, please," I beg not being able to take much more.

My endangered pussy is screaming for more, while my inner self is sprawled out on the floor taking matters into her own hand.

He continues to kiss down my chest and my stomach. His tongue flickers out and laps at my navel. Finally, his mouth meets my panties taking them between

his teeth he, pulls them off.

My inner self takes notice.

His hand slide up my thigh and his finger finds its way to my slit, teasing me as he trails it along my opening.

"You're more than ready, Miss Marshall," he playfully teases.

"You have no idea, Mr. Davis," I breathe in anticipation.

The tip of his finger tickles my clit and it sends a wave of shudders throughout my body. I close my eyes tighter and my panting increases. He continues to massage my clit, at first

slow and with each second that passes a little faster. I can feel the buildup rise inside me, when his finger makes its way pass my lips, inside me.

"Oh God, Davis," I moan like some porn star.

"I know, baby," his velvet smooth voice reverberates into my neck as it releases a shockwave of electricity.

He pushes his way in me deeper, which causes me to arch my back and push my hips into him. I need him, I want him like no other. He finds that soft fleshy spot on my wall and begins to

gently circle it. A flash of ecstasy radiates throughout every crevice and pore of my being.

"Yes, Davis, Yes," I cry.

He continues his sexual onslaught as he massages that spot fast then slow, fast then slow. I bite my bottom lip in agonizing anticipation.

"Davis, please," I plead not being able to handle it, as I teeter on the edge.

"Almost," he breathes.

His finger continues to push into me, but never leaving that spot. The circling increases faster, faster, faster. I

feel myself constrict around him.

"Da....vis," I pant.

"Let it go, baby, let it go."

And with that I feel a wave pulsate inside me as I step over the edge, coming. My body convulses in pleasure as a slight giggle emanates my lips.

"Did you enjoy that, Miss Marshall?" He smirks with a cocked eyebrow.

"You could say that," I reply as I try to regulate my breathing and probably with the biggest post orgasmic smile on my flushed face.

"Glad I could help," he chuckles. And I have to laugh too and not just because of his remark, but because I am so happy and have never felt anything like this ever.

My inner self shakes her head in agreement as she is laid out and panting in pile of orgasmic goo. She has no comment? She is definitely spent at the moment. As I get my panting under control and the convulsing subsides, my Hell Cat, as he's called it, meows and raises her head. I roll on top of him, quickly pinning him down.

"Kassidy?" he questions perplexed and intrigued.

"My turn." I smile a devilish grin and lick my lips.

I slowly kiss his temple and make my way down his cheek to his jaw line. His stubble tickles my lips as I continue to his chin, down his throat until they find his Adam's apple. My tongue flicks out, tasting it, as it bops up and down. *Is Davis a little nervous?* My inner self relishes the idea, as do I.

"You taste delicious too," I purr looking up at him through my eyelashes.

He simply gulps. Hard. My inner self is all smiles and giggles. I continue my assault as I kiss my way down his chest and run my fingers along it, slightly scratching his muscular form. *God he's gorgeous!* My mouth makes beeline for his nipple and I notice it is hard and erect.

Shall we?

Yes, we shall.

I suck it into my mouth swirling my tongue around it. I then take it between my teeth and tug ever so slightly, hopefully causing pleasure with pain. A

low rasp escapes from his lips.

I think Mr. Davis likes.

I agree.

I release his nipple, smile, and lick and kiss my way down to his navel. I inhale deeply. Honey. My tongue laps at him and I leave a single gentle kiss behind.

"You won't be needing these." I smile as I tug off his boxer briefs.

Oh my!

My inner self's eyes bug out of her head. I knew he felt big when I felt his hard on pressed against me, and from

that other time, but I never imagined.

Cue the darkness.

Holy Shit!

Alert the authorities!. Alert the zoo keeper, fucking anaconda on the loose!.

Will you stop?

We'll look at it, it's insanely huge.

We'll manage.

Have an EMT on standby.

Oh for the love of all that is holy and sacred...Shut the fuck up!

Silence.

I take his shaft into my hand and make circles with my thumb on his head.

A small pearl of wetness seeps out.

"I'd say you're more than ready too, Mr. Davis," I give his comment back to him.

"Oh you have no idea how fucking ready I am, Miss Marshall," he plays with his infamous crooked smile painted on his mouth.

My hand slowly moves up and down his shaft as he jolts. I bend down and take as much as can into my mouth. He groans a primal sound that it makes me wet once again. I gently rise up on his shaft as I trail it with my teeth.

He bucks. "Oh fuck, Kassidy."

My inner self pats me on the back.

My tongue laps out and circles the soft skin on his head, before I take him back into my mouth. I wrap my hand around him where my mouth can't go and gently squeeze. I suck and swirl my tongue around his length and slowly move up and down.

"Shit, Kassidy," he gushes, "if you don't stop, I...I..."

He forces me to release him and before I know it he is on top of me. I shift under his weight as I push my hips

into him. His hand makes its way to my opening and he slides his fingers inside me.

"Davis, I need you, all of you," I beg.

He pulls his fingers out and grips his dick, teasing my opening with his head. White, hot heat flashes over me and I buck with pure unadulterated lust.

"Ball's in my court," he teases.

"Uh huh," I moan.

He pushes inside me and I swell around him. He pulls out and my body protests. I grab him by the hips and pull

him to me. He once again finds my opening and pushes inside me. My body writhes in ecstasy. Davis slowly pumps and pushes into me. He continues to push in and out slowly as our breathing accelerates. My insides pulsate with every pelvic thrust.

"Oh Kassidy, you feel so good," he moans as he leans down and pushes further into me.

I feel myself quiver and a rush of pleasure and emotions swell up as I am about to step over the edge once again. He pumps harder and faster. Our bodies

intertwine as one. I can feel him explode inside me and I fall off the cliff and spiral into the abyss of Davis. He buries his head in my neck and places butterfly like kisses along the way.

We lay there, panting, sweating, and completely spent. I feel him twitch on top of me and my inner self is speechless, but has the hugest smile on her face.

He rises up and gazes into my eyes, "Kassidy, that was, that was..."

"I know," I breathe in his face.

"I never thought, I mean, it's never

felt..." he trails off.

"For me either," I confess.

"Will you stay?" he asks as peace flashes across his face.

"I would love to." And I don't want to be anywhere else.

Davis rolls off me, pulls me into him and cradles me against his chest. He rubs circles on my back and before I know it darkness comes and I drift off into Davisland.

As we lay there in the early morning light, our bodies meld together.

I feel warm and at home. I realize that he isn't asshole, sexy hair guy, or even Davis, he is Ryan. I feel safe in his arms, in his bed. How far have we come. Only to think it was only months ago that I hated him and now now

Oh my God!

You do, don't you?

I...I...I

It's okay, no reason to be scared, I feel it too.

I love Davis? I do. These feelings that have been building for so long, it's been love hasn't it?

It only took you awhile, but it's always been there, even in the beginning when you were being irrational about all things Davis.

You've known all along but never said....

You would have had me locked up for sure if I ever hinted to the fact that you loved him.

You're right, I probably would have.

And then that would have made things worse.

Probably.

You're not gonna jump are you?

God no, I'm not ready for that.

*I didn't think so. When you are I'll
be here.*

I know and again thanks.

Anytime.

We continue to lie there, as he sleeps. I drink him in, relishing in the fact that this man is mine to have and that I truly do love him and for the first time in my life I know truly what that means. My head rises with every breathe he takes as his fingers have started to trace the contours of my body. He peers

sleepily at me through his eyelashes and smiles. Then without realizing what is happening, I am overcome with a flood of emotions, joy, peace, happiness, lust, wanting, needing and above all love. I lift my head, tuck my hair behind my ear and gaze into his smoldering, emerald eyes. With a deep breathe, I am actually ready to jump, my earlier statement nullified, and the words I have been afraid to say just moments ago, float from my lips, "Ryan, I love you."

My inner self does a happy dance and cheers; however I am met with

silence. He just stares at me, while silence continues to fill the room; a silence that seems to last for an eternity, a silence that rips at my core. My heart sinks to my stomach and I suddenly feel my world crumble.

Oh God, he doesn't feel the same!

I shift away from him, pulling the sheets off as I make my way out of the bed. I quickly scurry around the room gathering my things. Tears threaten to spill and I hold them back as best I can, although a couple manage to escape. With shoulders hunched, I walk into the

bathroom and quietly close the door.

He doesn't feel the same. How could I have been so damn stupid? Everything was fine before he came into my life. What in the hell was I thinking? I love you, seriously, why did I say that?

My inner self is too stunned to speak; she just has a look of shock on her face. I guess, like Chloe, she was betting he felt the same. They both were wrong. I turn on the water and splash some on my face, mixing it with the tears that are coming more easily. I get

dressed in a daze. I usually can get a read on a person; that's why I'm such a good lawyer—I can read a jury like no one else. I thought I had a good read on him. That's what happens when you let emotions dictate what you think. You get screwed and apparently added to the harem in his cell phone.

As I continue getting dressed and calm myself there's a knock at the door. "Kassidy?"

I say nothing.

"Kassidy, um, are you..." he trails off.

What? Am I okay? Is that what he's going to ask me? Stupid asshole.

“Stupid, stupid, stupid...” I mumble over and over. And I'm not sure if I'm just talking about him, myself or both.

Both.

I hear something thud against the door and know I can't stay in here much longer. Besides I need to escape this hell I've just created for myself by not only sleeping with him, but also by making the bigger mistake of telling him I love him.

“Stupid, stupid, stupid.”

I finish getting dressed, take one last look at myself in the mirror and choke back the emotion threatening to overtake me. I open the door and quickly brush passed him. I so need to get out of here, like now.

“Kassidy?”

He stops me dead in my tracks. I look back at him and realize this is it, this is my last moment to be with him and I need to be strong and brave. I reach down and pull out the lawyer-tude I’m known for and are comfortable with. “Davis, it’s okay.” I easily lie. It’s scary

how easy it is. I turn away and walk with purpose down the hall, with the purpose of leaving as fast as fucking possible. He follows, trying to catch up.

“Kassidy, hang on, wait a sec,” he pleads.

I ignore him and finally make it to the door. With a trembling hand I reach for the knob as I try to make my escape. The door opens only inches before he closes it shut from behind me, blocking my way out.

“Kassidy, wait, let me....” he rushes out.

“Kassidy...” I cut him off.

“I get it. You don’t have to explain.

I get it.”

He just stares at me looking confused, like he doesn’t know what to do or what to say.

“Kassidy, please?” he questions.

“Please what? Please let me fuck you so I can add you to the fucking harem in my phone? Please don’t expect anything, anything *more*? Don’t worry, I don’t. I was stupid to think that maybe you were different, but I was wrong. Forget I ever said anything; it was a

moment of weakness, a weakness you will never fucking see ever again. Once a fucking asshole, always a fucking asshole!" I yell with my back to him. I shudder and struggle as I finally open the door and leave.

"Miss Marshall, there's another delivery," announces Elaine.

"What?" I am lost in thought and don't exactly hear her.

I have been pretty much lost the past week. Like a fucking moron, I jumped, and told Davis that I loved him.

How could I have been so stupid?

You weren't stupid.

Like hell I wasn't!

You were finally honest, honest

with yourself.

Well, look where it got me.

I just know he felt or feels

something for you.

What he felt was his dick in my

pussy!

Oh, now you can say that word.

Fucking figures. But it was more than

that. Trust me I have a feeling...

Well fuck you and your feeling!

I'm fucking done! I should have known better. He was or is the same asshole that I met months ago; he isn't different.

Kassidy, don't!

Don't what?

Don't put them back up; you've come a long way.

Yeah, and again look what it's gotten me. Nothing but pain and heartache.

Kassidy...

And before my inner self can continue, I start to build my walls back

up, brick by brick. Davis will be the last man to ever hurt me.

As I sit there, alone in my office, my concentration is interrupted. "Miss Marshall?"

"What!"

"I didn't mean..." Elaine cowers.

"Elaine, I'm so sorry. What is it?" I apologize.

Before she can reply I notice the extraordinarily large bouquet of flowers in her arms.

"The delivery?" she nervously questions.

"Just put those in the lobby with the others," I insist.

"And the card?"

"Shred it."

"Yes, Miss Marshall."

Over the past week I have been getting regular deliveries of, I guess, "I'm sorry" gifts from Davis. The lobby is beginning to look like a florist. Besides the ginormous floral arrangements, Davis has sent a bouquet of balloons, which I enjoyed popping a little too much, boxes of chocolates, which Elaine and the other assistants

thoroughly enjoyed, and various gigantic cards, that meet their demise in the shredder. He must have spent a small fortune and it serves him right.

However, I'm not buying or falling for any of it.

Along with the truckload of unnecessary gifts, my phone is inundated with about a hundred, if not more, texts and voice messages, all of which I delete before reading or listening to.

And quite frankly, I wish he would lose my number, but I guess that is the price to pay for being added to his harem.

"Miss Marshall, there's someone here to see you," Elaine giggles.

When I step out of my office, there is a man standing before me dressed as...as...as a bunch of red grapes?

"Um, can I help you?" I chuckle.

"Kassidy Marshall?" the strangely dressed man questions.

"Uh huh," I simply reply trying to contain the huge laugh that is about to erupt.

"Well, this is for you. I'm sorry I hurt you, I didn't mean to. I'm sorry I hurt you, I regret it, I do. What I did, I regret,

so let's make up and forget," he sings.

My eyes somewhat prick with tears, as the little song replays in my head. But before I can become overwhelmed with the tearful emotion that threatens to make itself known, anger raises its ugly head. Who the hell does Ryan Davis think he is? Did he really think I would really give into this sappy song? And why the fuck would he send a guy dressed as a bunch of stupid red grapes?

The grapeman stands there staring at me, waiting.

Oh, he wants a tip.

Just perfect asshole, send another ridiculous gift and this time I have to contribute? Seriously?

It is a sweet gesture.

No. It. Isn't.

Well, I think it is and I think...

I don't give a fuck what you think, traitor!

Traitor?

Yes, traitor!

I am no traitor! I am trying to get you to see things from a different perspective, since you are so damn

narrow-minded!

Narrow-minded?

You heard me.

Unfortunately. And now I'm done listening.

But...

No 'buts'. Silence is golden and duct tape is silver.

And before I can tear the first strip she is quiet, for once.

"Uh, hmmmm," the bunch of red grapes clears his throat.

"Give me a sec," I bark, shaking my head.

I step back into my office to retrieve a tip from my wallet. My cell vibrates when I reach into my purse. I look at the screen; it is *him*. I hesitate, but eventually push ignore. No song is going to undo what he has done, or didn't do. I shove the phone back into my purse, grab a five and go back to the grapeman.

"Here you go." I hand the singing grapes his tip.

"Thanks. Have a 'cherry' terrific day," he cheers.

"What did you say?" I ask thrown

off guard.

"Have a, uh, 'cherry' terrific day?"

He seems to question.

"Why would you say that? You're a bunch of grapes." I wave my hand up and down him.

"Nope, I'm a bunch of cherries. We didn't have a cherry costume, like the guy wanted, just red grapes. So voila, instant cherries," he quickly explains.

I feel the crimson wave make its appearance and wash over my neck and cheeks.

"Well, thanks Miss and again have

a 'cherry' terrific day." He waddles his way through to the lobby.

Elaine just stares at me with this strange look on her face. I don't like it.

"Back to work," I order.

"Yes, Miss Marshall."

I head back into my office and close the door behind me. I slump in my chair, throwing my head back in annoyance.

What the hell?

It was sweet. He didn't have to.

He didn't have to and even if it was sweet, it doesn't change anything.

Really?

Really.

God, you are so damn stubborn!

Deal with it.

Like I have a choice.

Oh, but you do. Now butt out.

You would so like it if I did.

Whatever gave you that idea?

Look, I know you're upset,

frustrated and pissed all at the same time; I get that. But in all honesty, what did you expect him to say?

I don't know, something, anything.

Kassidy, I'm sure you took him by

surprise. Shit, you surprised me.

Ugh! This, you, him... UGH!

"Knock, knock," a voice interrupts as the door opens.

I straighten up to find Mr. Remington and Jackson standing in the doorway.

Oh shit!

"Yes, Mr. Remington, what can I help you with?" I promptly ask.

"Well, Kassidy, Jackson here has finally decided he would definitely like to pursue a career in law and attend law school. And since you're quickly

becoming the best young attorney we have here at the firm, I would like Jackson to assist you on your next case. Get his feet wet so to speak, if you don't mind?" Mr. Remington presents.

Hell yes we mind!

"Not at all Mr. Remington, I wouldn't mind," I say as politely and sincerely as possible.

Are you fucking kidding me?

This is my career.

So?

So, remember duct tape....

My inner self purses her lips, locks

them with an invisible key and throws it away.

Finally.

I finally look to Jackson and he has the biggest "Ha Ha" grin on his face. I so want to reach out and smack it off of him. But I restrain myself, much to my inner self's dismay.

"Thank you, Kassidy, I really appreciate this as I'm sure Jackson does too." Mr. Remington winks and then leaves, leaving Jackson behind.

"So," he starts.

"So," I mimic.

"Look, Cassidy, I'm sure you're not thrilled about this. Believe me it truly wasn't my idea; it was all my dad's. Don't worry I'll be on my best behavior," he eagerly promises.

"You better be," I snap.

"Cross my heart," he again promises as he crosses his heart.

"I swear Jackson if you...."

"No need to worry," he cuts me off.

"Fine," I say.

Are you seriously going to do this?

I really don't have a choice.

Oh, there's always a choice.

Afraid not, besides if I was able to give asshole a third chance, I certainly can give Jackson a second one.

My inner self throws her hands up in frustration, as she mumbles, "I give up, I fucking give up."

"Um, should we get started?"

Jackson hesitantly asks.

"No, not today, I'm heading out early actually," I inform him.

"Hot date?" he teases with an underlining hint of annoyance and jealousy.

"No."

"Touchy. Sorry, I didn't mean..." he defends.

"Sorry, Jackson. I shouldn't have...I mean...it's not you," I try to explain.

"Don't worry Kassidy, no harm, no foul."

"Good. Listen, I gotta go. We'll talk tomorrow?"

"Most definitely," he says with great confidence.

"Fine, I'll see you first thing." I grab my purse and leave Jackson alone in my office and make my way to the elevators happy to know that I will be going to

meet up with Macy for drinks. God knows I could really use one after the day I've had.

I make it home, anticipating the evening. After my night with him, Macy has been great. Since Chloe is on her honeymoon, I unleashed my barrage of emotions on Macy. She was there for me when I really needed her. Macy isn't usually touch feely, but her mama bear came out and I actually fear for his life if she ever runs into him. Part of me, however, relishes the idea.

I shower quickly, pick out something to wear and head to the bar when I get a text from Macy saying there's been a change in plans and I am to meet her at After Dark instead. At first I'm not too thrilled, I really just wanted to sit in a booth at a regular bar, have a couple of drinks and chit chat about anything mind numbing. But now that I think about the wonderfully delicious martini I had that one night my mouth waters and the idea of dancing my ass off, even if I will embarrass the shit out of myself sounds like something I need

right now—just to let loose and have fun. I take a cab to the club and bypass the long line of waiting patrons. Monroe nods and lets me in without hesitation. I immediately make a beeline for the bar and order my first of many dirty martinis. As the cool elixir hit my lips and envelops my tongue, an immediate sense of calm flash over me. Usually, I don't look to alcohol to calm me or sedate me, or to just take the edge off, usually I would be up to my elbows in Lysol and Pine-Sol, but tonight is an exception, a Ryan Davis exception. The

music pulsates and I feel myself sway to its hypnotic rhythm.

"Hey, Bitch," a familiar voice calls from behind.

I turn to find Macy and Chad standing there wrapped around one another.

At least one of us picked the right guy. Too bad it wasn't me.

You don't know that, for sure.

Yeah, I do.

No, you don't.

Yes, I...just shut up, you're gonna kill my buzz.

Mr. Dirty Martini has already begun to work his magic.

"What up, Skank? Hey Chad."

"Come, VIP." Macy pulls on my arm.

We make our way up the stairs to the VIP room. I am more than ready for a good time. Apparently Macy thought ahead and reserved us a table. She doesn't realize it, but she is definitely taking on the role of Chloe in her absence. I quickly inhale the rest of my martini and before I can put the empty glass down; Dodi brings me another one.

"Here ya go, Kassidy," she says as she places the drink carefully down.

"Thanks, Dodi. You're the best."

"I know. Just let me know if you need anything else." She disappears as quickly as she had appeared.

"Hey, Kas, Hottie at three o'clock," Macy nudges my side.

"I don't care," I flat out tell her.

"He's really...."

"I don't fucking care," I seethe as I feel the anger inch its way up from my core.

"Fine, fine, be that way." She pouts

and then sticks her tongue out at me.

I ignore Macy and begin to get lost in the music, when something Macy says pulls me back to reality.

"Chad, are you fucking insane? I can't believe you did this," Macy yells as she punches him in the chest, hard.

"Ow, what the fuck Macy? Shit, I didn't want to be the third wheel on the chick tricycle," Chad says as he rubs his chest.

"I'll deal with you later. Kassidy...." Macy's eyes dart away from me to the stairs.

There standing on the landing is him. I immediately turn to Macy with probably what only can be described as a very pained expression of help and fury on my face.

"I'm sorry Kas, I didn't know. Dumbass here apparently invited him without fucking thinking," she says as she reaches for me.

"I know, it's fine, I'm outta here." I quickly chug my drink and get up to leave.

I move to the stairs and he just stands there blocking the only way out.

"Get out of my way," I grit through my teeth.

"Kassidy, just give me..."

I push on him as hard as I can, causing him to eventually move out of the way. I high-tail it down the stairs as I feel the tears prick my eyes knowing I'm about to lose it. I was fine until I actually saw him, or at least I thought I was. But the moisture pooling in the corner of my eyes is evidence that I am clearly not fine. I've tried to be strong, tried to forget, tried to not think, but seeing him face to face knocked trying off its ass.

I make my way past the writhing bodies on the dance floor and a few couples making out before I reach the exit. Flinging the door open the cooler night air hits me like a welcoming hug. There isn't a cab in sight, so I start to make my way down the street with no real plan as to what I am doing or how I am getting home. The only plan I have at the moment to get as far away from After Dark and him as I can. I'm not too far from the club when I hear him and my name. I try to walk faster and put more distance between me and him, but damn

him and his long-ass legs. Before I can take another step I feel him behind me, and then I feel his hand on my shoulder sending a bolt of shock and pleasure through me. I shudder and hate myself for reacting to his touch the way I am.

"Kassidy," he breathes into my neck.

I jerk from my touch and turn and stare him straight into his gorgeous green eyes. Again I hate myself for thinking anything is gorgeous about him. With my best attempt I shoot daggers at him, hoping to drive home the point that I

want nothing to do with him. Actions do speak louder than words, and I'm afraid my words would fail me at the moment. Him and his damn hypnotic eyes.

"Keep your fucking hands off me," I seethe.

"Kassidy, please," he begs.

"Please what? Please let me add you to the fucking harem of numbers on your phone? Please let me fuck you again? Please let me have not only your body, but your fucking mind and soul too, so I can...I can..." I break into a million pieces in front of him, hating

myself even more than I already do. I never wanted him to see me like this. He doesn't deserve to see how much he hurt me. He doesn't deserve to feel guilty, apologetic or pity or anything. He doesn't deserve anything from me.

"Kassidy, it's not like, I'm not like..." I stop him and gather all the courage I can and sequester the hurt and pain.

"It's not like what? Because from where I'm standing it is! Do you know how hard it was for me...for me to give myself to you like that, only to have you

throw it back at me? My first impression of you was correct; you are a complete and total asshole! No, I'm wrong you're a fucking dick and I'm the asshole for thinking otherwise!" The tears well up in my eyes and begin to spill forth. I quickly turn to walk away from him. I need distance. I need solitude. I need...I need so much and he can't give that to me.

"Kassidy, wait!" he pleads as he grabs me by the shoulders.

"Get. Your. Fucking. Hands. Off. Me." I stress each word as my body

becomes rigid.

I jerk from under his grip and head down the street. But I can still hear him behind me as his footsteps pound on the pavement; coming closer and closer. He easily catches up to me; I feel him reach for me and he spins me around. He grabs me by my arms, pinning them to my side. He gazes into my eyes, and I turn away from him not wanting to see the pity in those eyes, nor do I want to give him the satisfaction, and let him see the hurt in mine.

"Kassidy," he utters as he pulls me

to him.

I look up at him and decide to let him see the pain and agony I've been in since that night, thinking maybe then he will let me go. But when I stare into his eyes I see them begin to glisten and it's like he's beginning to break into a million pieces himself. But he doesn't get to, he doesn't deserve to. "Don't," I tremble.

He leans down to me and crashes his lips to mine, but I resist kissing him. I go stone still as if I were a statue. He doesn't get to kiss me now, not ever. He

tries to get me to open to him, to surrender, but I stay strong and still. I am a statue. I am emotionless. I am not a participant.

He pushes his lips harder into mine and my lips have a mind of their own and I find myself kissing him back. Our lips merge together as one, caressing all the hurt and pain away. I feel my body ignite in flames. He brushes his tongue against my bottom lip and without hesitation my lips part and welcome his. I so want to hate him, to not feel anything for him, but it's useless. I still love this

man and even though I've tried desperately not to, my body and heart know differently. My head is not winning this battle. I decide against my better judgment to pour my heart and soul into this kiss; maybe then I can move on—a good-bye of sorts. I just wish I knew what he was playing at. Our kiss grows in intensity and passion. His hands cup either side of face holding me to him. I feel moisture pool down my cheeks and I can't stop the growing ache deep inside me. An ache because this kiss hurts so good and because I still

believe he could be my more. My body and heart have shut down my brain. Our tongues tango, as our breathing accelerates. My heart pounds in my chest, my body is on fire and my mind is numb. Our tongues continue to intertwine, becoming one, as if they were always meant to be. My heart pounds harder, stronger, and in rhythm with his. The sound they make together seems to say more...more...more. My heart believes it, my soul believes it, my head can't, I won't let it. Our tongues separate and our lips meet once again as

they move together in sync. Finally, we pull away and I feel filled, yet hollow at the same time. I can't do this. I won't do this. This is it...this is good-bye. I stare at him, getting lost in the depths of his green eyes that are showing me things I don't want to believe, I can't believe. I make sure my wall is firmly in place. And then he says something that shocks my system and paralyzes me. "Kassidy, I love you."

All I can do is stare at him in complete and utter disbelief as a rogue tear slides down my cheek. I am numb,

my mind is racing right along with my heart, and yet I say nothing. Even though those words are what I've wanted to hear from him a few nights ago. I say nothing.

"Kassidy, I love you."

Before I can let myself believe and fall again, I do what my walls are begging me to do; I remain silent and leave him standing there jumping into the first cab I see. As I start to get in, I turn and look at him standing there looking like his world is crumbling, just like mine did and is doing.

Once the cab pulls away the tears easily flow down my cheeks and I don't care. I am overtaken by emotion, happiness, sadness, lust, want, love and even hate. I hate that he waited so long to say it and I hate myself for leaving him there, but I had to. My head is spinning and my heart pounds in the walls of chest as if it is trying to punch a hole straight through it. Part of me wants to wrap my arms around him, hold him close to me, explore every inch of him and tell him that I love him too. But the other part, the part that ran, is terrified,

terrified of letting him love me. I have built up my walls before him and I have just started to build them up again. When he said those words "Kassidy, I love you" the bricks came tumbling down one by one, even after I so desperately tried to keep them up and in place. I hate myself for letting that happen. Only a week ago I had said those same words to him and was met with silence, I guess this is payback thanks to my subconscious. Payback is a bitch and right now that bitch's name is Kassidy Marshall. I'm sure he hates me now, too.

The tears somewhat subside as the hiccups take their place.

"You okay Miss?" the cabdriver questions.

"Fine," I whimper.

He finally pulls up to my building; I pay him and dash inside. The elevator takes an eternity to get to my floor.

Thankfully I ride it alone because once again the tears come. I grip the handrail, holding on to it for dear life and ease myself down to the floor.

Hold it together.

I'm trying too.

We'll be home soon, just a couple more floors.

My inner self has been silent since I got into the cab, but the sound of her voice cracks as she is crying too.

Finally, the elevator reaches my floor. I pick myself as I wrap my arms tightly around my torso. I am afraid if I don't my heart and everything else will spill out. I make it down the hall in a daze. I'm basically on autopilot and the lyrics from *A Matter of Feeling* float around in my head. I steady myself against the door jamb as I search my

purse for my keys. It isn't a large purse, but I can't easily find them.

"Fuck!"

I throw my purse to the floor, spilling its contents everywhere. I fall to my knees as I scramble amongst my things in search of my keys. I finally spot them, pick everything up and stand up. With a shaky hand I jam the key into the lock and turn it. The door swings open and I am met by complete darkness and silence. My apartment is as empty as I feel. I stumble inside with a heavy head and heart and close the door behind me.

I don't get very far when I slump down, curl up into the fetal position and let the emotional onslaught begin again. This time the tears rush from my eyes, my body convulses and shivers with every tear and I grip myself tightly practically digging my nails into my flesh.

I am...I am...I am....

You are what? What are you gonna say? Because whatever it is, you're not. The only thing you are is scared.

I'm an insensitive bitch!

No. You're. Not.

All right, I'm a fucking stupid bitch!

No. You're. Not.

Okay then, what the fuck am I then if not one of those because to just leave him there was inexcusable? Did you not see the look on his face? Did you not see the fucking pain in his eyes as I turned away from him and got into the cab without saying a fucking word? Did you? Because I don't think you did. If you had you wouldn't be saying "no you're not" you would be calling something, anything.

Fine, you want me to call you something?

YES!

Fine, you are a stubborn bitch!

For the first time in your life a guy, a really genuine guy, has come along and you were too blind to see what was right in front of you. Now that you have and he has said what we have always wanted to hear from a man, it has completely and utterly scared the shit of you and I understand why you ran. I totally understand why. You, me, we've been dumped on in the past. Our

selection of men hasn't been the greatest. But Davis is different, he isn't like the others. You have every right to be guarded, to be scared. We have a habit of running, especially when we're scared, but this can stop now because we don't have to be scared. The pain you and me saw in his eyes was there because he does love us. He really does. You can fix this, we can fix this. We just need to be brave and give him a chance, give you a chance, give us a chance.

If it were only that easy.

Oh, but it is. You need to let this all out, this emotional tirade that we have been holding onto since you said "I love you" and once that's done, you call him, go look for him, whatever and make it right, make it what you have always wanted. Because it's right there in front of you waiting.

Again, if it were only that easy.

Oh. My. God. See stubborn bitch is the right name for you. Do I have to bitch slap some sense into you because don't think I won't. I have a twitchy palm here waiting.

I swear I hear my inner self clap her hands together as if she were Mr. Miyagi ready to heal Daniel in the *Karate Kid*, while she taps her foot in aggravation.

I fucking mean it Marshall.

Okay, okay.

The tears begin to slow their barrage and my body eases out of the fetal position. I sit up, and wipe the wetness from my face. As I stand up there is a knock at the door and my heart skips a beat and ceases in my chest. I whip around and face the door as anxiety

grips a hold of me. I hesitantly make my way to the door and upon opening it, I am overcome with disappointment and relief at the same time.

"Macy?" I peer at her through blurred, tear filled vision.

"Kas, oh my God, are you okay?" she questions as she embraces me.

Mama bear is back.

"Chad and I found Davis outside the club and he said you had taken off," she says releasing me from her embrace.

Davis, she saw Davis. My heart twists in my chest, my breathing hitches.

I can't breathe, I can't find air.

"Kas, breathe honey, just breathe, it's gonna be okay," Macy reassures me as I fall into her arms.

Once again the tears prick my eyes and then begin to trail down my dried cheeks.

*How much more do I have in me?
How much more of this can I take?*

I honestly don't know. But you're strong, we're strong. We'll get through this.

Macy guides me further inside my apartment, leading me to the couch. I

drop onto it feeling raw and exposed.

"Kassidy, what happened?" Macy asks as I lean into her.

"I just don't know. I guess I got scared," I confess in between sobs.

"Oh honey. I wasn't gonna let him go after you, until I saw and then I figured all would be okay. I am so sorry," Macy says apologetically as she rubs soothing circles on my back.

"Until you saw what?" I inquire.

"Until I saw the look on his face when I stopped him."

"What look, Macy?"

"The look of pure agony of seeing you leave because of him. It pained him greatly and the look of..." she hesitates.

"Macy," I insist.

"The look that he honestly loves and cares for you Kas," she finally divulges.

"You saw that?"

"Of course, you don't need to be a rocket scientist to see that. It was completely written all over his face. That's why I moved out of the way. At first I was like hell's no, but then when I saw it there, I told him to go after you. I

just never imagined that once he said 'I love you', you would have bolted. Although, I guess I should have known based upon past experiences," Macy continues.

Past experiences. Past experiences.

I floated down the hall of Patrick's dorm. Last night was the best, before me made love for the first time; he told me he loved me. No boy or man had ever said that to me. Patrick and I had been dating for about five months and when he finally said those words, my

heart skipped a beat because I knew at that moment I loved him as well and we would be together forever. We were only juniors in college but I could see a future with him. We would live in a big house with a fenced in yard where the twins could run around and play. I usually didn't think of shit like that but Patrick had an effect on me. When I finally reached his door my heart rate accelerated and a huge smile spread across my lips, I was going to surprise the love of my life with breakfast. I heard the thumping of music coming

through the door and decided not to knock because knowing Patrick he wouldn't hear it. I carefully opened the door, as I cradled two lattes in one arm and a bag of fresh chocolate croissants in the other, Patrick loved chocolate croissants. The door surprising opened easily and my eyes fell upon the scene on Patrick's bed. He was glistening and grunting as he hovered, naked, over Megan. I dropped the lattes, their contents splashing hot foam and cream on my feet and legs. Megan groaned and moaned and writhed under him.

The tears began to prick my eyes as my body went numb. I was paralyzed, unable to move, as I watched in horror as the scene unraveled in front of me.

"Patrick," I whimpered.

He grunted, "Oh fuck Megan, you feel so fucking good."

The words and sounds he made tore at my insides, breaking my heart into millions of little pieces. I so wanted to turn away, but I just couldn't, my eyes were fixated on Patrick and Megan fucking in his bed, where he had made love to me only

hours ago.

"Patrick, faster baby, harder," Megan begged.

He thrust into her harder and faster just as she had asked. I stumbled forward, knocking over some books off the bookcase nearby. Patrick turned toward the noise and finally noticed me standing there; Megan did too.

"Hey Kas, you wanna join us?" he breathed.

"Please Kassidy, I've got him all warmed up for us," Megan purred as she licked Patrick's chest.

I was rendered fucking speechless as the tears rolled down my cheeks. I didn't know what to say. I had thought Patrick had loved me, but seeing him, like this with Megan, I was at a loss.

"What do ya say Kas?" he asked as a smile curled at his lips.

Say something, anything. But I couldn't, I turned and ran out of his room. I bolted down the hall while the tears flowed like the River Styx. I flung the door open to his dorm and the sun warmed my tear-streaked face. I couldn't breathe, I couldn't think, I

couldn't feel.

"Hey, are you okay?" some random girl asked.

I looked at her completely devastated as I shook my head.

"Do you need help or something?" she continued.

"No," I muttered.

I turned away from her and continued to run through the courtyard. I just saw my boyfriend, the love of my life, fucking another girl in his bed. He said he loved me, he said he wanted only me, he said.... The bricks slowly

began to take their place on the wall I started to build around my heart. I was never going to be hurt by anyone again.

My mind spins and spirals further into the past.

“Come on, Kassidy, I’ve been so patient, haven’t I?” Kevin begged.

My fingers twist in my lap, my gaze focused on them.

“Look at me, babe.” Kevin’s fingers gently lifted my chin and my eyes immediately found his.

“There’s my beautiful girlfriend.” He smiled wide, his eyes twinkled.

I couldn't help the smile that overtook my lips. Hearing him call me his beautiful girlfriend did something to me.

"Sorry."

"Don't be, Kassidy. I know this is a big step, but I know I'm ready, you're ready, we're ready for this...I promise."

My heart believed him. My head was slow to catch up.

"I love you, Kassidy Lillian Marshall. From the first time I laid eyes on you, I knew you were the one."

The only one. My forever.”

I looked deep into his eyes, practically seeing his soul and felt his words wrap around me. My head caught up with my heart.

I nodded.

Kevin slowly began to kiss me and one by one our clothes were removed. Part of me was still scared to be losing my virginity, but a bigger part of me was more than ready and knew I was making the right decision. Kevin loved me and I loved him. He's been a wonderfully patient boyfriend. Most

guys his age weren't. Donovan Clark was proof of that. He pushed and pushed until Rebecca Donaldson said yes just after two weeks of dating. He dumped the next day and moved on to Tiffany Mills. But I knew Kevin wasn't like that. I knew what Kevin and I had was the real deal.

The next day at school Kevin wasn't at his locker as usual. I didn't see him at lunch either. He hadn't called or left a note in my locker or anything. It was pretty much the same thing the next couple of days as well. I

was beginning to panic and I was getting pretty pissed off too. So, I decided to cut last period a little early and wait for him at his car in the parking lot.

I waited and waited and when I finally saw him, my heart stopped and then shattered into a million pieces. Kevin, my boyfriend, the one that said he loved me, the one I just gave my virginity to, was walking with his arm around Heather Roberts, nuzzling her neck. He didn't even see me waiting for him; he was too busy sucking on her

ear. When they finally got to his car and saw me, he stopped dead in his tracks, but never took his arm from around Heather.

“What’s up, Kas?” he asked.

My heart cracked into a million pieces before I spoke, “Kevin, what’s going on?”

Heather giggled and answered for him, “I’m dating Kevin now. He’s through with you.”

I looked to Kevin for confirmation and he gave me what I never thought I would hear. “Sorry, babe. It was fun

and all, but seriously monogamy is so not my thing. I can't be tied down to one chick. If you still wanna be a side fuck, I could go for that."

I didn't respond, I couldn't. I just pushed past him and Heather and ran home as fast as I could slowly building a wall around myself and my heart. No guy was going to hurt me like that again.

The tears come faster as I remember why I had put up my walls in the first place and with the new found knowledge of what Macy saw in Davis's

face. Something I didn't see. I've had my walls in place for so long and for so many reasons, I have become skeptical when I hear the truth I guess.

You okay?

Yeah, it's just that when Macy said past experiences all those old memories came rushing back. I really hadn't thought about that in ages.

I know, you keep it locked and under tight security and I understand why.

I know you do, thanks.

But shit, Davis I feel...

You feel what?

*Stupid, stupid, stupid. For
someone so bright and with a law
degree, I sure was stupid.*

Not stupid, just confused.

*Well, that's good way of sugar
coating it don't ya think?*

*No and since when have you
known me to sugar coat anything?*

You've got a point.

I always do.

"Kas, you okay, I didn't mean?"

Macy softly asks.

I clear my throat, "I'm fine Macy,

thanks."

"Are ya sure?" she questions as she wipes the tears from my cheeks.

"I'm sure, it's just that..." I start.

"It's just that you're confused, shit who wouldn't be. But Jesus, Kas, you gotta stop doing this to yourself, not every guy you meet and has feelings for you is going to be Patrick Moore or Kevin Connors," she interrupts.

"I'm starting to realize that," I confess because I truly am starting to realize that. Davis is not Patrick Moore. He is not Kevin Connors. No one is

Patrick Moore, except the prick himself.

"Listen, I'm not used to all this mushy gushy shit, so let me just say this, Davis is a decent guy Kassidy and he truly does love you, I saw that tonight. You just need to love yourself enough to let him in. You deserve to be happy and I believe that happiness can be found with Davis," Macy says as she tucks a loose hair behind my ear.

"Thanks Macy, you're doing Chloe proud," I tease.

"If you tell anyone about me being all touch feely with ya, I will kick your

ass. I have my bitch rep to protect. Got it?" she jokes back as she pokes me in the chest.

"Ow, ya fucking brut, I got it. Wouldn't want anyone to think differently about you, God forbid," I say as I rub my now sore chest thanks to Pokey.

"Good. Now, continuing with the mushy gushy I could stay with ya tonight if you want me to?"

"Um, that won't be necessary, I'll be fine. I'm gonna take a nice hot bath, put on my fuzzy pj's and crawl into bed," I

reassure her.

"Are ya sure?" she doubts.

"Totally."

"Well, if you need me, I'm only a ring away," she says as she holds up her cell phone.

"I know, thanks Macy." Macy reaches out for me and hugs me so tight that I think she broke one of my ribs. It truly isn't like her to be all mushy gushy, but tonight I'm glad she was, I really needed that from her.

We both get up from the couch and hug once more before we walk to the

door. Macy opens the door and before she leaves she turns to me, "Kas, things are gonna be fine. Just listen to your heart and not that stubborn head of yours, okay? And don't forget I'm a ring away."

"I'll try and don't worry I'll be fine." And with that the door closes behind her.

I walk into the living room and slump back down on the couch. I pull my knees to my chest and wrap my arms around them, hugging myself tightly.

Can I really let him in?

I think, no scratch that, I know you

can.

Are ya sure?

Positive. Look, things got a little weird, but not too weird where you two can't start fresh. You love him and now you know he loves you. You deserve to see where this goes.

I do deserve it, don't I?

Hell yes you do!!

Well, then operation Fix Things With Davis is underway.

Good, but let's start tomorrow, it's been a long fucking day.

Tomorrow sounds good. I'll call

him and see if we can't meet for lunch?

That sounds perfect.

Cool.

I get up from the couch with the newfound attitude that I do deserve to be happy and Davis just might be the one to bring that happiness. My heart skips a beat at the thought. I start to make my way towards the bathroom when there is a knock at the door.

"Macy, I told you I would be fine, you don't need to stay," I call out as I walk to the door.

I open the door and it isn't Macy.

"Jackson?"

CHAPTER 16

"Jackson, what are you doing here?

How did you..." I am stunned.

"How did I get in? Is that what your pretty, little head is wondering? Some leggy blonde was on her way out so, I made my way in." He smirks devilishly at me.

I can feel the heat radiate off of him and I feel a little light headed, probably due to the waves of alcohol that permeate from his skin. Jackson has been drinking, a lot.

"So, are you gonna invite me in, or what?" he demands.

"Um, yeah, sure, I guess, come in," I hesitate.

Are you fucking insane? Slam the fucking door in his stupid face!!

"What do you want, Jackson?" I nervously ask. For some reason I feel extremely uncomfortable, this isn't the Jackson I am used to. This Jackson seems like a predator and that he has an agenda, an agenda that worries and scares me, just a little. Well, maybe more than a little, I am definitely on high

alert.

High alert, high alert? We're at defcon 2 here. I swear if he...

It's just Jackson, relax, because I'm trying to and you're not helping.

My inner self is a little easier to convince than I am. I'm not exactly sure why Jackson is here, but if the state he is in was any indication of things to come, let's just say my dad taught his daughter well.

Jackson moves passed me, slowly making his way to the living room. He stumbles a few times, confirming my

instincts that he is very drunk.

"Nice place you got here, Kas. I can't believe you've never invited up here before. I guess there's a first for everything." He finally finds his way to the couch and plops down on it as he taps the cushion beside him, indicating he wants me to join him.

I move purposefully toward the couch, noting Jackson's position, and ease myself onto it, keeping a safe distance. I don't think Jackson will hurt me or anything. I think I am really concerned that he would puke on me. If

he does puke, than I will be puking, as well and I don't need to be cleaning that shit up.

You're worried about fucking puke? Are you serious? Honey, there's more to be worried about than that, look in his eyes, because it is all right there.

Jackson's eyes are different. They are wild, as if he is a lion trapped in a cage. I take a deep breath to calm myself, before I speak. "So, Jackson, why are you here?"

"Oh, do I really need an excuse? I

just wanted to see what my pal, Kas was up to? Actually, I thought I would find that pretty boy here, but you're all alone. I guess you just love 'em and leave 'em, huh, Kassidy?" he seethes.

"What?" I ask perplexed.

"You fucking heard me! Don't think I didn't see or don't remember what the two of you were doing in your office not so long ago. I'm not fucking blind, Kassidy. If my father only knew that his favorite, young attorney was turning his firm into some goddamn brothel!" I feel the venom in every word he speaks. This

isn't my Jackson, my friend, this is a jealous and cruel Jackson, the Jackson I don't like.

"Jackson, it's not what you think," I try to reassure him.

"Not what I think, not what I think? Are you fucking serious? A guy knows, Kassidy. And I know that you led me the fuck on, asked me to your stupid friend's wedding, you gave me *looks* when I brought you dinner and then dumped my ass because, what I'm not a pretty boy? I'm not perfect enough for you? I'm not sophisticated and dashing and whatever

the fuck *he* is? Then you have the fucking nerve to parade his ass around the office and let him almost fuck you right there, too? Let me tell you something, Kassidy, you are a cold hearted bitch!" With that last spoken word, I see something strange in his eyes. It is pure hatred, hatred directed at me.

I inch my way, slowly, further to the other side of the couch, but Jackson moves his way toward me, closing the gap between us.

"Jackson, you know you mean a lot to me, but not in that way. We've been

over this and I thought we were passed all this." I am trembling, but try to hide it from him.

"Well, *cock tease*, I guess you thought wrong." And before I can react, Jackson's lips are crashing into mine, hard.

He puts all his weight on me, pinning me to the couch. I tries to push against him, but it is useless, he won't budge. I try slapping, punching, and hitting him, but each blow is met with little resistance. It is as if Jackson is made of steel and my little, toy hammer

like fists aren't making a dent. He doesn't even acknowledge them; he just keeps pushing into me. His hands grip my wrists and hold them down over my head. The tears begin to well up in my eyes, not because of what is happening, but because this isn't my Jackson, this is a Jackson I don't even know. His lips finally release mine and make their way to my neck sucking and kissing.

"Kassidy, I've wanted you for so long. I know you fucking want me too," he groans into my neck.

He's fucking delusional.

"Jackson, Jackson, please, not like this," I beg, trying to distract him.

"Like *how* then? Like how he was going to give it to you in your office? Is that what my little cock tease wants?" he breathes into my face; the smell of alcohol burns my nose.

His lips once again find mine, bruising me. I feel his hard length against my leg. I try to bring my knee up, but his weight still has me pinned to the couch. I squeeze my eyes shut as my mind is spinning out of control, like a hamster on its wheel to nowhere.

Think, Marshall, think.

But before I have a chance to, I hear a voice call out behind Jackson, and then he is yanked off me.

"Get the fuck off of her!" Davis bellows, as he flings Jackson against the wall.

"Oh, well, if it isn't the pretty boy. Too bad you won't be pretty for long," Jackson threatens as he swings at Davis.

I sit, paralyzed, unable to move, ultimately becoming one with the sofa. I clutch a nearby pillow, nearly tearing it to shreds as I sit and watch. My heart

stops, my breathing stops, time completely stops. It is as if everything is happening in slow motion. I don't blink; my eyes are fixated on the two forms that become blurry as the tears well up in my eyes once again. I try to scream, but I only hear the screams echo in my head, they never make it into the room. Davis ducks, missing Jackson's swing and plows his fist straight into Jackson's gut. Jackson doubles over, clenching his stomach, when he balls up his fist and aims for Davis's face. Once again, Davis swerves, Jackson misses and

makes contact with nothing but air, and he stumbles forward from the exertion of missing or more than likely because of his drunken state. Jackson immediately turns around, facing Davis, drawing back his fist again, and pushes forward with all his weight. As if he is "Neo" in *The Matrix*, Davis bends backwards, avoiding being punched, yet again. Jackson makes contact, but with the wall and then cradles his hand to his chest.

"You fucking son of bitch," Jackson yells as spit flies out of his mouth.

Davis answers by punching Jackson

in the face. His fist meets Jackson's nose, causing it to swell and spread upon contact. Blood gushes out, streaming down his face, turning his white shirt a lovely shade of deep red. Jackson cups his nose between his hands and yelps like a wild animal caught in a trap. He lunges at Davis, but Davis sidesteps out of the way and Jackson tumbles to the floor. I sit rigid, completely still; unable to comprehend what is happening in front of me. Davis grabs Jackson by the scruff of his neck, hoists him up and drags him to the door,

throwing him out.

"If you ever, and I mean ever come near her or touch her again, I'll kill you! I'll fucking kill you!" Davis promises as he slams the door on a very injured Jackson.

I just sit there, still unable to move, still holding my breath, still not blinking and still unable to wrap my brain around what just happened. Like my knight in shining armor, Davis has come to my rescue, yet again.

"Kassidy, are you okay?" Davis asks, barely above a whisper as he

makes his way back into the living room, back to me.

"Kassidy, it's okay, he's gone, it's just me, Davis," he again says in a hushed tone with his hands strategically raised, as if he is surrendering.

I just stare at him, still unable to do anything.

Davis cautiously crosses the living room, finally reaching his destination in front of me. I gaze up at him as the tears continue to stream down my face. My lungs ache for air and my body is cramped in pain, as I hold every muscle

rigid.

"Kassidy, honey it's okay, I promise. He's gone and he won't be coming back," Davis breathes as he slowly bends down in front of me, holding out his hand.

His hand slowly settles on my knee, I flinch.

"Kassidy, baby, I'm sorry," he whispers.

I finally blink the tears from my eyes and focus on the form in front of me, focus on Davis. My heart aches and swells in my chest. I feel the bile creep

up inside and coat my tongue. I cup my mouth, spring up and dart down the hall. I empty the contents of the day into the toilet along with the pain of the situation I just witnessed. As I crouch at the bowl, I feel a cool compress on the back of my heated neck. It gently presses into my skin and then it meets the sweat that had formed on my brow. It brings with it much relief.

"It's gonna be okay, Kassidy," Davis reassures me as he brings the compress to my flushed cheek.

I simply blink at him and nod my

head. I will myself to speak, but it is as if my vocal cords had been severed. He continues to wipe the compress, gently, across my face, erasing my tears. It meets my lips and it feels as though Davis is leaving behind with it, gentle kisses. I feel the tears stab in my eyes, so I close them tightly, forcing them to stay inside. My efforts are futile because they still spill forward. Davis scoops me up and cradles me to his chest. I feel his heart beat; it is soothing as is the song he hums. He leads me out the bathroom and carefully lays me on my bed, covering

me with my blanket. He turns, as if to leave, and I quickly grab him by the wrist. Finally the words come. "Please stay, don't leave me," I whimper.

"Not to worry, I'm not going anywhere." Davis scoots in behind me, spooning me.

I grab his arm and drape me around me, as I nuzzle into him. I find my nook and a calm washes over me.

"Thank you," I utter.

"Shhh, no need," he breathes into my hair.

He pulls me into him, tighter. My

heart and his begin to beat in sync; our breathing comes and goes together as well. For the first time tonight, I feel safe, it is as though he is my guardian angel and nothing can or will hurt me, ever. Davis's other arm snakes around underneath me, meets the one that I have draped over me and embraces me. He holds me to him and I am grateful. I feel anchored to him as we become one. He places butterfly like kisses on my head as he continues to hum. My eyes grow heavy, but I try with every fiber of my being to keep them open. Once again I

am defeated and the darkness comes; I easily against all I have, succumb to it.

The morning sun warms my face and the smell of honey swirls around me, as I inhale deeply. My eyes flutter open and my gaze falls upon the most beautiful image inches away from me, Davis, sound asleep. His arms are still wrapped around me, protecting me. A cold chill inches its way up my back as the thought of "what if he hadn't shown up?" enters my mind. I push the thought out of my mind, not wanting to answer it or have it ruin the moment. I draw my

hand to his face; my fingers trace his eyebrow, his jaw line and then his lips. I want to explore every part of this man, but will have to be satisfied with only exploring the godlike features of his face. I lean in closer to him and brush my lips against his, igniting a spark between us. A wide smile spreads across his face and he pulls me closer to him.

"Morning," he breathes.

"Morning yourself," I quickly reply.

His eyes gradually open and my gaze is stunned by the brilliance of their

greenness caught in the morning light. A different shiver rises up my spine, causing me to shudder just a little, igniting a heat that radiates throughout my entire body. I feel as though I can combust, right there in front of him. I squeeze my legs tightly, hoping to relieve some of the ache that has made itself known. My efforts are ineffective as the ache increases, I squirm.

"Kassidy, you okay?" he asks with a look of hurt on his face.

"Yeah, I'm more than okay," I try to reassure him.

"Oh, good. Um, I think we should, um talk about...things," he hesitantly says.

Talk about things sounds like a good idea.

I really don't know.

Come on, Kassidy. We really need to get things straightened out and there's no time like the present.

I know, you're right.

"Talking sounds good," I reply with a smile.

That wonderful crooked smile of his reappears and again I melt. This man

can undo me with that simple, imperfect or perfect smile. He never ceases to amaze me.

"So about...last night," he cautiously starts.

"About last night...thank you. If you hadn't shown up when you did, I don't....I don't...." The tears resurface and begin to trail down my cheek.

Davis cups my cheek in his hand, as his thumb erases my falling tears, one by one, and he kisses me ever so gently. I squeeze my eyes, trying to stop the unwanted tears from falling. His lips

kiss their way up my cheek before settling on each eyelid, kissing my pain away. My eyes flutter open to see him simply smiling at me, but his eyes reflect the pain of the memory of last night as well. I reach up and caress his cheek. He leans into my touch, exhales with eyes shut, and presses his hand to mine. Davis opens his eyes, staring deep into my soul and takes my hand in his and ever so slowly brings it to his lips and places a single kiss on my palm. My heart skips a beat and butterflies swarm in the pit of my stomach. *Oh my.* He releases me

from his grasp and the expression on his face shifts to darkness.

"Kassidy," he whispers his jaw stiff, "I'm glad I got here when I did. If he had...had...had hurt you, I don't...I don't...I don't even know what..." he trails off, as he seems to lost somewhere miles away.

I grab him by the chin, hoping to bring him back from where he disappeared to, and focus on me.

"Davis. Davis, look at me," I insist.

He exhales deeply and his eyes open, meeting my stare. The pain that I

see in them breaks my heart into a million pieces. I want to help him, to fix this, to save him from whatever pain and guilt he is feeling. Davis has no reason to feel any guilt or pain, he didn't do anything wrong.

"Davis, it's okay, I'm okay. I don't think...I don't think Jackson would have really hurt me," I try to convince him and myself.

"What? Kassidy the...the motherfucker had you pinned down, if I hadn't pulled him off of you, he would have..." he again trails off, lost a million

miles away.

"But, Davis, you did show up and you did *save* me. We could go on and on about what ifs, but that is only going to make matters worse. Let's focus on what *actually* happened, otherwise, we will drive ourselves insane with the '*what ifs*'." I am all too familiar with having "*what ifs*" drive you insane; I have done that with the Patrick Moore fiasco.

He shakes his head as if to erase something, "You're right, you're right. I'm glad I got here when I did, I'm sorry you had to see...to see that side of me,

you looked absolutely terrified. I'm sorry if..." I interrupt him by placing my hand over his mouth.

"Davis, I was only terrified that you were going to get hurt. I have seen my share of fights, believe me. I'm a agent's daughter and I cop's niece and cousin, I've seen a take down or two. I was just afraid Jackson was going to seriously hurt you considering how built he is." I smile.

"Size doesn't mean everything, Kassidy. I have seen and been in my share of fights, as well. Jackson has

nothing on me," he teases.

You can say that again.

"No he doesn't. So, size doesn't mean everything, huh?" I tease back.

My Hellcat turns Davis thirteen shades of pink, it is absolutely precious and sexy as hell at the same time.

"Are you blushing, Mr. Davis?" I playfully ask.

"Pink isn't my color, Miss Marshall," he replies with a raised eyebrow.

POOF!!

Damn it I really liked those ones

too.

Thank goodness Victoria's Secret has a panty sale going on.

"Actually, I think pink looks rather sexy on you, Mr. Davis," my Hellcat meows.

He gulps, hard. I have actually made Ryan Davis nervous and it is about damn time. I am really tired of being the one who is always nervous and turning thirteen shades of pink; my how the tables have turned. I inch my way closer to him, our chests touching. I draw my bottom lip between my teeth, who am I

kidding, I am nervous too.

"Uh, Kassidy, I really need to tell you something," he breathes into my face.

"Tell me what?"

"When I said I loved you, I meant it. I have never felt this way about anyone, ever."

My Hellcat retreats and I simply stare at him, unable to speak.

"When I'm with you, I feel completely alive and when I'm not with you, I can't wait to be with you again. You're funny, beautiful, *stubborn*, sexy

as hell and wickedly smart. I know you think I have a fucking harem and want to make you a part of it, but it's not the case. The night of the bachelorette party, when I brought you home and stayed with you, I erased it, erased them all. That night I realized what I was feeling for you and didn't need any random girls' numbers anymore, I only want you, I only need you. If you don't believe me I can grab my phone for you? Kassidy, I love you, it's only ever been you since that night, only you. I love you so much, Kassidy, I can't imagine my world

without you and I don't want to find out what it would be like if I did," he confesses.

I stare at him, completely at a loss for words. It is all there in his eyes, every word he just spoke. There isn't a harem, anymore. He erased it because... because he loves me. He only wants me. He only needs me. My heart speeds around the track, winning the Daytona 500. My eyes well up with tears, for like the billionth time, but this time they aren't tears of pain or sorrow, they are tears of joy, of happiness, of relief, of

finally finding my more—my real more. Davis loves me. He truly, really loves me. Brick by brick the wall cracks, tumbles into a billion pieces and is swept away. I can let this man in, I want to let this man in, I need to let this man in.

"Kassidy..." And before he can continue, I crush my lips to his answering his unasked question.

Our lips move together, tasting each other. I jut out my tongue to taste him even more. He parts his lips and welcomes me into him. Our tongues

explore each other, intertwining, becoming one. His hand moves up my side, pulling me closer to him. I push into him, feeling his length on my sex. I gyrate my hips on him, trying to relieve the ache that is present from earlier and has recently intensified. Davis pulls his mouth from mine and kisses his way down my throat. I arch my back, in anticipation. He moves to hover over me, his eyes boring into me, causing me to combust. His hand reaches for my throat and makes is way down my torso, between my breasts.

He licks his lips, "Oh, Miss Marshall, what you do to me," he exhales.

I wickedly smile at him, knowing that what he does to me, I do to him as well. My inner self is beaming.

He grips the bottom of my shirt and carefully pulls it up over my head, exposing my naked breasts. Davis's eyes smolder as he stares at me, sucking in his bottom lip. I become a pile of goo inside. His hand inches its way up my torso, leaving shivers in its wake. His hand finds my breast, kneading it,

elongating my nipple as he pulls. His mouth meets the other, swirling his tongue around my erect nipple and taking it between his teeth, he gently bites. I moan and writhe underneath him. Davis looks up at me, his eyes dancing, as the scruff on his chin tickles my skin. His tongue flicks out and laps at my heated skin.

"You still taste beyond delicious."
His voice is low and sexy.

He continues to lick and kiss his way down to my stomach. His tongue swirls around my navel, before he sucks

it into his mouth, leaving a little red mark behind—marking me his. I want him to mark all of me his. My body quivers under his touch. His hands reaches for the waistband of my fuzzy pajama bottoms and with one swift pull, they are off. Davis leans down and places several kisses at the waistband of my panties. Thank God, I have had the sense to put on a good pair last night. His fingers wrap around the sides of them, tug at them, and then easily pull them down to my ankles. I shift my feet and free my panties, tossing them to the

floor. He sits up on his knees, between my legs just staring at me, burning my flesh with his stare. My entire body aches for him. I need to feel him on me, in me. Davis's hands graze up my thighs, stopping millimeters from my aching opening. I buck underneath him, trying to push his hands to my sex, to get some much needed relief and release. He leans down, his face inches from my pussy. He cocks an eyebrow, smiles devilishly at me and then his lips and tongue are on my slit. His tongue flicks my clit and swirls around it, before he

sucks it into his mouth.

"Oh, Ryan," I groan.

His tongue and mouth continue their sexual onslaught as I am pushed to the edge. With one last flick of his tongue against my clit, I spiral into the black hole of pure ecstasy; my insides tighten, as my orgasm continues for what seems like an eternity. I pant, as I lick my lips, ultimately turning into a pile of orgasmic goo at his hands, and mouth and tongue, oh that wonderful tongue. A post orgasmic smile spreads across my face.

"Well, Miss Marshall, I thought you

were beautiful before, but seeing you *glow* like this simply takes my breath away." His green eyes dance as he smiles.

"Thank you, Mr. Davis, for... everything," my Hellcat purrs.

He slowly kisses his way back up my torso, to my neck. He gently kisses and nibbles his way up to my ear, sucking on my lobe. His lips graze my jaw and finally meet my lips. I taste myself as he kisses me and the ache once again returns. He leans up on his elbow, peering down at me, smiling.

"I love you, Kassidy Marshall," he breathes.

"I love you, Ryan Davis," I reply.

Our lips find each other again and this time every word we spoke or don't speak is felt in this one kiss. At this moment, it doesn't matter what the past held, all that matters is the present and the future. For the first time, in a long time, I feel I deserve to be loved and that I can truly love back with everything that I have. I'm not that scared, hurt, high school or college girl anymore; I am, for the first time, confident and sure of what

I want. I want Ryan Davis, now and always. Chloe was right, about that whole destiny thing, because I really believe that Ryan is my destiny, as weird as it sounds, it is true. Our kiss grows more intense, more passionate. I grab at the hem of his shirt and he slips it off. I marvel at his sculpted chest, every contour. I rake my hand across it, feeling every muscle. He is perfection. My mouth finds his neck and I gently bite him. A low rumble erupts from his chest.

"Kassidy," he simply moans.

I leave a trail of tender kisses as I

make my way down his chest. My fingers unfasten his pants, pulling them down. He wiggles them off, tossing them beside my panties. With my teeth, I grip the waistband of his boxer briefs and pull them off; they find the place beside my panties as well. I take his hard shaft in my hand, swirling my thumb around his head, a pearl of wetness seeps out. I run my index finger through the wetness, bring it my lips and lick.

"You still taste delicious as well, even more so," I purr.

Davis's eyes dance at me in

anticipation, his breath quickens. I reach down taking him into my mouth. He tastes salty, yet sweet, he tastes like he smells, honey and spicy. I take as much of him as I can into my mouth. I suck and carefully graze my teeth along his length. He bucks under me, moaning. I release him from my mouth, and gently blow into his opening, sending a wave of shivers throughout his body.

"Oh, God, Kassidy," he groans.

My inner self smiles and pats me on the back.

I continue to lick, suck and swirl

my tongue around him, taking in as much of him as I can. I lick my down to his balls, carefully sucking each one into my mouth. His muscles tense. I take his dick back into my mouth, moving up and down slowly and then quickening the pace.

"Kassidy, I'm gonna...I'm gonna..." he grits.

Before he can complete his thought, he explodes in my mouth, filling it with his saltiness. I swallow and smile at him.

"Fuck, Kassidy, that was...shit, that

was fucking hot, but you didn't have to," he says raking his hand through his hair.

"I know, but I wanted to," I simply state.

He pulls me to him, crushing his lips to mine. There is urgency to our kiss, a passion is ignited and explodes. Our hands and mouth explore each other. The ache between my legs intensifies, causing me to become mad with want. I need Ryan like I need and want no other.

"Ryan, I need you, I want you," I breathe into his neck.

I feel him smile against my

shoulder. “You called me Ryan, not Davis.”

“That’s because you’re not him or Davis to me anymore, you’re Ryan. My Ryan.”

“And you’re mine.”

His smile widens and brightens the room as we continue our ministrations. His fingers find my slit and ease their way inside me. He circles my spot on my wall causing me to again writhe in ecstasy. He pulls his fingers out of me, my body protests. I feel his length grow on my leg and he grips it, teasing my

opening with his head. He slips it inside, filling me; my back arches in anticipation. He slowly pumps in and out and then the pace quickens. My hips meet him with each pelvic thrust. He pushes further in me, filling me up beyond capacity. My body quivers and shudders with each push. I tighten around him. I am so close to the edge, when he pushes harder and faster, throwing me off the edge into that black hole of ecstasy once again. This time we come together. We breathe as one as he kisses my neck. Our bodies glisten in the

sunlight. Ryan gently takes my face in his hands and kisses me tenderly.

"I do love you," he again confesses.

"I love you," I easily say.

He pulls me to him, embracing me as he had last night. We simply lay there, breathing each other in. We don't need to speak; we have said everything we need to—our actions and bodies speaking for us. He tenderly kisses my hair as I caress his arm around me. I know right then and there, that everything is going to be okay, and that I can face anything, even Jackson Remington at work. I push

the thought out of my head, not wanting to ruin the moment. I nuzzle closer to Ryan, feeling his warm breath on my neck. I feel tired even though we have just woken up. I close my eyes and smile as Ryan holds me tighter. Our breathing comes and goes as one and it is soothing. My eyes stay closed as I drift off to sleep in the arms of the man that loves me—truly loves me. And I love him.

CHAPTER 17

I just sit at my desk smiling. I can't stop thinking about Ryan and the weekend we spent together in bed. We both have opened up to each other, honestly divulging our deepest darkest fears, secrets and desires. He knows all about Patrick and Kevin and now completely understands why I ran like I did. He of course, reassured me that he wasn't like those two fuckers and if he ever came face to face with either them he would first thank them for fucking up

so badly so he could have me and then kick their asses. My inner self has been quiet as of lately, she is spent, passed out cold on the chaise lounge with that "just fucked" perma-grin on her glowing face. I imagine I look the same. "*Ryan loves me*" is my new mantra, I keep saying it over and over again in my head, afraid that it may not be true, but I do know better. All of our bickering and banter led us to this wonderful place, us being together. I didn't believe Chloe in the beginning, but she was absolutely correct, Davis and I were destined to be

together. I lean back in my chair, close my eyes and allow my mind to drift. My thoughts are immediately flooded with images of Ryan, Ryan's smoldering green eyes, Ryan's perfect face, Ryan's crooked smile, Ryan's well defined, sculpted chest, Ryan's ginormous, glorious cock. I lick my lips as a heat radiates throughout my entire body. My legs slightly quiver and the ache grows between my legs. He isn't even in the room, just in my damn mind, and I easily come undone. *God, what this man does to me.* I decide to go with it, ease some

of the ache. My office door is closed, I'm not expecting anyone, don't have any meetings scheduled, ultimately, I am alone. I ease back in my chair, lift my skirt slightly, thank God I am wearing a skirt, slide my hand under my panties, and feel my wetness seep onto my fingertips. If he makes me this wet just by being in my head, the floodgates must break when he's actually in the room with me, touching me. I slowly ease my finger into my heated, wet opening as images of Ryan continue to flash behind my eyelids. Ryan naked, Ryan hovering

over me, Ryan touching me, everywhere. My finger finds the spot and I start circling it slowly, increasing my pressure and movement with each passing second. I add another finger and push them both into me, deeper. It isn't exactly Ryan-like; my fingers don't even come close. Even so, I press on, pushing and pumping harder and faster, until I see his green eyes, smoldering and dancing before me and then that wicked, crooked smile and I step off the edge, tumbling down into the pit of ecstasy, as only Ryan or Ryan's image can do. I

adjust my panties and my skirt, just in time too, because Elaine is knocking at my door.

"Come in," I quickly say, as I make sure I am in perfect order.

"Miss Marshall, Mr. Remington would like to see you in his office, immediately," Elaine shyly responds.

Shit! What in the hell am I gonna do?

Let's not get our panties in a knot just yet; you never know it might not be about...

Are you kidding me? Like hell it

isn't about Jackson and what Ryan did to him.

Well, there's only one way to find out.

Let's go. It's time Mr. Remington knew just what his prick of son was made of.

That's my girl, you finally grew some balls when it comes to the little shit. You make an inner voice proud.

Ugh, thanks, but you need to stop the melodramatics.

It's just (wiping a tear) you're all grown up.

Nice of you to notice.

Oh come on, you know what I mean. It's just...

I get it. Now let's tend to matters more pressing.

Let's.

"Miss Marshall," Elaine interrupts.

"Yeah, sorry, Mr. Remington, right. I'm on my way," I finally say.

I head to Mr. Remington's office contemplating in my head what to say if it is the Jackson and Ryan situation. I have about fifteen different scenarios running through my head, each worse

than the last and none of them ending well. I shake my head, no need to dwell on what might happen. I finally arrive at Mr. Remington's office.

"Hi, Miss Marshall, Mr. Remington is waiting for you," Mrs. Carrington greets, as she waves her hand toward the closed office door.

I take a deep breath, stand up straight and gently knock on the door.

"Come in," a deep voice calls from the other side.

I pull open the door and walk inside. Mr. Remington is seated at his

desk, a pile of files covering it. As I continue, what seems like the longest walk ever to meet him, I notice Jackson sitting on the sofa against the wall. His head hangs low, but I can see the bruises on his tanned skin and there are a couple of bandages covering his nose. My inner self cheers and claps at Ryan's handiwork. I must admit, I smile the hugest smile ever, internally, and have to stifle a giggle. It is nice to see Jackson that way, sad, but true.

"Ahh, Kassidy, I want to talk to you." His tone gives no indication of

what is to come or how this is going to play out.

Mr. Remington gets up from his desk and comes around and stands beside me. He places a gentle hand on the small of back and guides me over to the sofa, in front of Jackson.

"My son, here, tells of the events that caused him to look like this." Mr. Remington motions his hand up and down Jackson.

"Is that so," I utter.

"Jackson, is there something you want to say to Kassidy?" Mr. Remington

sternly asks.

We were both meet with silence.

Mr. Remington takes a deep breath.

"Jackson Thaddeus Remington, you will answer a question when it is asked!" he loudly orders.

"Yes, sir. Kassidy, I'm sorry for my inappropriate actions towards you. It will never happen again," Jackson shakily answers, not meeting mine or his father's eyes.

"Jackson, you will look at someone when you speak to them," Mr. Remington insists.

Jackson slowly raises his head, his swollen, tear-filled, blood shot eyes, meeting mine, "Kassidy, I'm truly sorry," his voice quivers.

Before I can answer, Mr.

Remington turns to me. "Kassidy, I'm deeply sorry for my son's actions. He will not be interning under your guidance any further. Jackson needs to take some time and discover himself and what he truly needs and wants out of this life. Again, I apologize, I hope you can accept?" Mr. Remington holds out his hand after he speaks.

I reach out my hand to take his. His handshake is firm, yet gentle. I am at a loss for words. This isn't one of the scenarios that played out in my head earlier. I think I am in shock.

"Kassidy?" Mr. Remington questions.

"Um, sorry, I really don't know what to say. Yes, I accept your apology," the words finally flow from my lips.

"Thank you, Kassidy. Things could have ended differently. Thank you for taking pity on my son; he's all I have left," Mr. Remington's voice cracks.

What?

Oh, my God. He thinks you were going to press charges or something. Jackson must have actually told the truth. Well, shit color me pink and call me fucking happy.

You're rambling.

I know, but that's got to be it.

Don't you think?

I think you're right.

"I understand, Mr. Remington," I offer.

"Thank you, Kassidy," his voice cracks again, as he embraces me in a

hug.

"No problem, Mr. Remington".

Mr. Remington nods and that is my cue to leave. As I walk past the sofa, I can't help but feel sorry for Jackson, but know he ultimately got what he deserved. He meets my gaze, briefly, and then lowers his head down in shame once again. I feel complete and utter relief as I walk out of Mr. Remington's office. Here, I thought I was going have to defend Ryan, and myself, when Jackson confessed his sins all along. I guess there are such things as small

miracles. I head back to my office, probably beaming; ready to tackle whatever the rest of the day throws at me.

5 months later

I am running late as usual, no surprise there. I am meeting the girls for lunch at the Cheesecake Factory, I am craving their Asian Chicken Salad; it is to die for. I finally arrive at the restaurant and I immediately spot the meddler, 'cause her arms are fluttering about as she attempts to explain

something to Macy. I sit down, listening to Chloe, mid-conversation.

"So, then, we'll have flowers everywhere, the room will be completely filled," Chloe giddily informs.

"That sounds perfect," Macy easily responds.

The three of us, well rather, the two of them are planning the wedding of the year, and of course, Chloe is in charge. Macy doesn't mind at all, relinquishing complete control over to Chloe, and hell if I care, as long as I don't have to do too

much, I am happier than a pig in shit.

"What color are we going with again?" Chloe inquires in her high-pitched, only dogs can hear, voice.

"Crimson red, the deepest red possible, blood red even," Macy answers.

The two of them carry on as if I'm not even sitting at the table, and I'm not about to complain. Even though Chloe's wedding happened last year, I am not all sunshine and smiles that I am to participate in another one so soon. Justice of the Peace seems to work

better or even an elopement, but Chloe and Macy guarantee me that all I have to do is show up, let Alec and Amber beautify me and walk down the aisle; they will take care of the rest. I'm not about to complain, unless Macy and Chloe decide we need a special dance routine, then I will have to put my foot down.

"So, Mace, no special dance? I can talk to Ricardo and see if he's free." It is as if this annoying little meddler can read my mind or the future.

"No, that was all you Chloe, this

wedding will be different," Macy informs.

"Um, are ya gonna say anything, Marshall," Macy suddenly acknowledges my presence.

"Uh, no, you two are handling things just fine. Just tell me when to show up," I say matter of fact and turn my attention back to my cell phone.

"Kassidy, you have to have some say, some opinion?" Chloe interjects.

"Well, now that you mention it, I totally agree with Macy, no special dance. One performance at a wedding

was enough to last me a lifetime. There, that's my opinion. Now can you put the holy wedding binder away, I don't have much time until I have to be back at the office." I freely give my opinion.

Since the Jackson incident, Mr. Remington has been very accommodating, allowing me to take some time off so I could move in with Ryan. But now that I am settled, it is back to business as usual. I am in the middle of another high priority case, which the senior partners entrusted me with, and I am either attached to my cell,

my laptop or my desk. Ryan, understands, but I don't think my girls are too happy.

"You fucking work too much, you know that?" Macy simply states.

"I know." What else am I going to say?

"So, I've been quiet for some time now, since you've practically avoided me, so I'm gonna say it now, 'I told ya so'," Chloe changes the subject while sticking her tongue out at me.

Here we go.

Well, what did you expect? You

had to know it was coming, you didn't really expect our little meddling matchmaker to keep quiet.

One can hope.

That hoping is a lost cause sister.

Don't I know it?

Woman up, bitch.

I will, I'm trying to, but it's never easy to admit you're wr...you're wro... you're...shit you know what I mean.

Kassidy Lillian Marshall, are you admitting, finally, that you were wrong?

Yes, I was wrong, there I said it.

I think the pigs are flying.

Oh shut the hell up!!

"There she goes again, off in La La Land." I hear Macy in the distance.

"Paging Kassidy Marshall, paging Kassidy Marshall," Chloe jokes, as she snaps her fingers in front of my face.

"What? I'm sorry, I was just thinking...." Before I could finish, I am interrupted.

"You were thinking about playing hide the salami with Davis weren't you?" Macy teases.

"Macy, Chad has definitely rubbed

off on you," Chloe says with a sound of disgust in her tone.

"No, I wasn't, although now you've got me thinking about it, thanks a lot Macy," I say.

And that does it. My mind is bombarded with images of Ryan in the steamy, hot shower, naked and glistening as the water droplets trickle down his torso and drip off his enormous hard on. He easily takes my breath away. The foggy, steam surrounds us as the heat from the water and our bodies ignites the atmosphere with an electrical charge that

could power the entire city. He turns to face me, and holds my face between his hands. He pulls my face closer to his, and grazes his lips against mine. A fire erupts and radiates throughout my entire body, eventually coming to full force between my thighs. His hand dips down, slowly, tickling my stomach. His finger finds my slit and slowly he begins to....

"Kassidy, fuck you're panting, what the hell?" Macy screeches.

"Shit, that's your fucking fault, bitch, thanks a lot," I growl.

"Damn, someone definitely needs to

get laid. I would have thought with the two of you now living together, Davis would be laying pipe every night," Macy crudely comments.

"Shut the fuck up, Macy," I spit back.

"Ladies, retract the claws. You know I could kick both your asses, so knock it the off," Chloe chimes in.

Ain't that the truth!

Yeah, the meddling bitch may be scrawny, but she can kick some ass.

Don't I know it?

"Fine," Macy and I say in unison.

"Okay, now back to what I was saying. Kassidy, I told you so. I told you from the get go that you and Davis were destined for each other and now look, you guys are living together and the future is wide open," Chloe chirps.

"Yes, Chloe you were right and I was...I was...I was wrong," my mouth finally forms the words.

"Holy shit! Kassidy Lillian Marshall has admitted she's wrong. Call the fucking papers, alert the media, shit, inform the president," Macy jokes.

"All right, all right, enough already.

Yes, I was wrong. Can we just move on? Chloe, anything else in the binder that we need to go over, the wedding is just around the corner?" I quickly change the subject.

The rest of the lunch is spent going over a few details for the wedding. I am really surprised at how involved Macy is, I know Chloe was going to have her little hands in every cookie jar, but I didn't expect Macy to be so enthusiastically involved. Chad definitely has an effect on her. We say our goodbyes and go our separate ways.

I don't exactly head back to work right away. I call Elaine and tell her I will be back in about an hour or two, I have a burning I need a cure for.

"Good afternoon, Miss Marshall, Mr. Davis is in his office, go right in," Chelsea smiles.

I open the door and find my sex god sitting behind his desk on the phone. My heart stops, my breathing hitches. I lock the door behind me as I enter the room.

"Tell them we'll meet tomorrow. Yes, tomorrow, I have another meeting

to get to now," Ryan winks.

I try like hell to walk seductively over to him, but I'm sure it comes off as having a load in my panties. I am no Victoria's Secret angel, that was made perfectly clear just now. He hangs up the phone, draws his bottom lip between his teeth and inhales deeply.

"To what do I owe this unannounced visit this fine afternoon?" he eagerly asks.

"Well, Mr. Davis, I was hoping you could help me with a little problem I was having," I tease.

"Really? And what problem might that be?" He cocks an eyebrow.

"Oh, I believe you're very familiar with *my* problem," I continue to tease as I suck on my index finger.

"I think I can help you with *that* particular problem," he announced in a low raspy, sexy as hell, voice.

He slowly makes his way to me, like a lion stalking a gazelle, his eyes smoldering, igniting my skin on fire. My legs go all Jell-O like, as I meet him in front of his desk. His arms snake around my back, pulling into him. I immediately

feel his length on my stomach and the fire between my legs erupts, turning my panties to a pile of ashes.

"So, Miss Marshall, what brought on *your* problem this time?" he questions with a smirk.

"Macy," I quickly answer.

"Macy?" he chokes.

"Well, not Macy herself, but something she said. And of course, as usual, my mind took over and you in, um, different settings, flashed in my head," I confess and turn several shades of pink.

"Oh, really? I do love your pretty

little head." He smiles as his finger gently taps the top of my head.

"So, are ya gonna help me with my problem or should I just leave," I tease as I turn from his grasp towards the door.

"Not so fast Missy, you're not going anywhere."

And before I can give him a good quip, his lips are hungrily on mine, devouring me. He flicks out his tongue and I so easily welcome it into my mouth, tasting honey as I do. Our tongues dance and intertwine, as our hands

explore each other. His hand grazes up my leg, under my skirt, finding its way to my aching, throbbing, wet pussy. I moan into his mouth as his hand presses against my sex.

"Ryan, I need you so bad, I want you now," I breathe as his mouth finds its way down my neck.

He lifts me and in one quick motion, throwing everything off his desk.

God, I feel like I'm in a movie.

Just go with it.

I am, believe me I am.

Me too.

Davis positions me onto the cleared desk, his eyes boring into me, turning me into a pile of goo. I can't believe this man is mine, all mine. His hands pull up at the hem of my skirt, as I wiggle to easily get it to my waist.

"You won't be needing these." He smiles that infamous crooked smile as he tugs off my soaked panties.

"Oh, Miss Marshall, you're problem has really gone overboard this time, tsk tsk," he jokes as his hand meets my wet lips.

"Ryan, please," I beg.

Ryan's mouth finds my neck again, licking and sucking its way to my ear. He takes my lobe into his mouth and sucks on it as if it is a Tootsie pop. I am becoming more undone by the second. I reach down and unfasten his pants and they easily fall to his ankles. My hands, trembling with anticipation, pull at the waistband of his boxer briefs.

He continues to kiss and nibble on my neck while his fingers find my opening and slide in. He begins to caress that spot on my wall slowly, taunting me.

"Please, Ryan, I fucking need you,"

I again beg.

"I know baby, I fucking need you too," he answers back.

His fingers pump harder, faster, pushing me near the edge. Before I can fall into that wonderful abyss of pure ecstasy, Ryan removes his fingers, my pussy and my entire body protest. I wiggle closer to him; trying to get any friction I can to relieve the ache between my thighs. Ryan responds by grabbing his cock and teasing my slick opening. As if it has a mind of its own or Jedi mind voodoo and appendages, my pussy

grabs onto him, willing him inside. Ryan pushes inside me, filling me. My pussy screams out in ecstasy and tightly wraps around him. We begin our steady rhythm together, moving as one. We match pelvic thrust for pelvic thrust, first slowly and then faster. Our breathing accelerates. I can hear our hearts beating together in sync, as the blood rushes through my veins. I am nearing the edge, yet again. I feel the fire grow hotter, stronger. Every muscle in my body tightens, as Ryan pushes one more time, sending me over the edge, spiraling out

of control. I feel him explode inside me, filling me. His mouth finds mine, but this time our kiss is tender.

"God, how I love you," he breathes in me.

"I will only ever love you," I say as my breathing comes under control.

1 month later

Chloe is a whirlwind of activity. She runs around the room, with her binder in hand, making sure everything goes according to plan. I swear, if she wasn't a designer, she would have a very

lucrative career as a wedding planner. Alec and Amber came and went, working their magic on the three of us. I look in the mirror after their teasing, glossing and spackling is complete and I hardly recognize myself once again. I am one sexy looking bitch. Macy looks exquisite as usually, but she really glows today. Chloe, of course, is her cute fiery self, beaming from ear to ear. I am a little more than nervous. The shoes Chloe chose for me aren't my usual Christian Louboutins and with my luck I am going to tumble walking down the

aisle, exposing my ass to the entire guest list. The butterflies easily make their presence known, as do the sweaty palm fairy.

"Kassidy, quit fidgeting, you'll wrinkle your gown. I do have my hand steamer, but that can only do so much, so stop fidgeting," Chloe insists.

I hadn't realized I was fidgeting so much. I am just a big, fucking ball of nerves.

Chloe turns to me and cheerfully announces, "It's time. Kassidy, you can do this, I know you can."

At that moment, Ryan's face flashes before my eyes, smiling. A wave of calm washes over me, settling my nerves. I know I can do this, I am Kassidy Fucking Marshall, attorney at law, and I can do just about anything, especially knowing that Ryan will always be by my side. I take a deep breath, give Chloe a smile and a wink and wait patiently for my turn to walk down the aisle. Audrina informs my dad and I it is my turn and slowly the doors open to the church. I take another deep breath, my dad gives my arm a reassuring squeeze and I make

my way down the aisle, staring at those twinkling, emerald green eyes and that crooked smile, knowing I am walking towards my forever.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Michelle Lee lives in the heart of Nascar Country in Concord, North Carolina with her husband and daughter. When she's not busy working, her days are filled with hanging out with her family and friends, reading, drinking Starbucks, shopping (lots and lots of shopping), and religiously watching the Food Network.

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