

DREAMING WITH EYES OPEN 2:

LEARNING TO FLY

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1. Vacation

Lucky POV

Jesse set me on my feet when we got inside; we found everyone waiting for us in the lounge. They all looked at us expectantly,

"I 'am here to stay" I professed and they all started cheering and laughing.

"It's about time!" Maria said, walking over to me and hugging me and smiling,

"I second that" Angie replied, winking at me, and Jason laughed behind her.

"We're glad you're staying Lucky," he said warmly

"I'm guessing we're not out of the woods yet?" Maria asked, noticing our expressions. Jesse nodded.

"The CIA is probably going to come after Lucky, I wanted to run her to her island. Just until we can figure out how to handle this" Jesse said.

Maria and Jason nodded with understanding; I was shocked that they knew about Jesse being an agent.

"You all know he's a secret agent?" I asked incredulously

They all laughed and I heard Jesse chuckle beside me.

"Well we live with the man, of course we know" Maria said rolling her eyes.

"Humph" I said, a little irritated that I was the only one who didn't know anything. Jesse turned to face me.

"We don't have much time, we can't give Bill and his men a chance to catch us," he said.

"We're leaving now?" I asked, he nodded and turned to Jason.

"Get a car, you'll take us to the airport. I'll call my pilot and tell him to get the Jet ready, we'll be at the airport in an hour" He instructed, and Jason flew out of the lounge.

He looked at me "Go pack little one, make any calls you want to make and leave your phone here" he said.

"Why?" I asked dumbfounded,

"We can't have them trace us, this will buy us more time" he replied.

"Oh" I said, he kissed my forehead and left,

"Come on, I'll help you pack" Angie said pulling me towards the stairs

We walked into my room and Angie immediately opened the closet.

"Given that we don't know when you'll be coming back, we better pack for a lengthy stay," she said, scrutinizing me "But he'll probably get you anything you need in Bermuda" She added.

I nodded not exactly knowing what to do now.

"How are you feeling?" she asked, noticing my apprehension.

"Somewhere between excited and terrified," I confessed, she smiled.

"Try to enjoy this and forget about Bill coming after you. Jesse won't let anything happen to you" she insisted,

I smiled and nodded.

"Hit the shower sister, you don't have all day you know. I'll start packing for you" she said.

"Oh yeah" I said, snapping out of it and rushed to the bathroom.

I finished showering and walked out to my room, not sure what to wear; I didn't know where I was going.

Angela had already packed two huge suitcases, I looked at the one she was packing now; it was filled with my lingerie. I raised my eyebrows at her.

"What?" she asked stifling a laugh "You have to keep the man entertained after all" she said and I blushed.

There was a soft knock on my door and I was shocked at who came in.

"Mandy, Ally!" I exclaimed, going over to hug them; there was a point when I thought I would never see them again.

"Hey Lucky, um wow we need to visit more often I see" Mandy said chuckling

"Hi, we've come to rescue you" Ally said "Hey Angie" she added over my shoulder. I gave them both a confused look, until I noticed they were carrying a suitcase of their own. I sighed.

"Well Jesse said he is taking you to his island, so we brought you a couple of things you might need" Mandy said, laying it on the bed and opening it.

I looked inside and the suitcase was filled with different bathing suits, sunglasses, hats and summer dresses.

"Wow" I said, that's all I could say,

"We didn't exactly shop a lot of these for your wardrobe, so we figured why not now" Ally said, handing me a caramel colored dress; it was above knee length and very beautiful "Go get dressed" she said.

I didn't even notice I was still in my bathrobe, chagrined I walked over to my closet and got dressed. I walked back out and Mandy handed me a pair of nude pumps, I slid them on.

"See, the perfect getaway look" She chimed and Ally laughed,

"I think that's everything," Angie said, closing the last of the suitcases.

"Thanks Angie, you're a life saver," I said and she gave me a smile,

Maria walked in "Are you ready?" she asked and I nodded grabbing my handbag.

"Jason and Jeffery will take your luggage to the car" she said, as I followed her out of my room, the girls quietly followed behind.

We got downstairs to find Jesse talking on his phone in a language I didn't understand; I noted his change in clothing too. He looked gorgeous; my heart leaped *Good God you're hopeless* I thought.

He hung up and took my hands in his "You look beautiful" he said leaning down to kiss my cheek "Are you ready to go?"

"Yes" I said and we all walked outside, Jason and Jeffery were putting my luggage in the Aston Martin, I noted none of them were Jesse's.

"Don't you have luggage? I asked and he smiled.

"No, I have clothes at the island already" he said, I raised my eyebrows at him.

Then again I shouldn't be surprised, he said he hated the suitcase life.

I chuckled when he opened the door for me, and he climbed in the back with me. Everyone leaned in the windows.

"We are going to miss you around here" Maria said, and I squeezed her hand

"We're going to miss you too," I said, looking at Ally and Mandy who blew a kiss our direction.

"Remember if Bill comes here..." Jesse said, looking at Maria

"I don't know of your whereabouts" she finished for him and he smiled.

"Take lots of pictures" Angie called out to us,

I smiled at her "I'll do my best" and waved at everyone as Jason got in the driver seat and started the car.

We sped out of the estate towards the city "How are you feeling?" Jesse asked pulling me closer to him.

"Excited" I said, true this time around, he kissed my hair and made another call, to work maybe.

"I thought you said no phones," I said as he hung up

"Well mine cannot be traced, I made sure of that," he said as Jason parked the car at LAX entrance and we got out.

"I'll make sure your luggage is on the Jet before you leave" Jason said

"Alright, thank you my friend" Jesse said and we waved him off.

We walked in and went through a terminal, I noticed then that people were staring at us; I was about to ask Jesse why when he suddenly frowned and put on his sunglasses.

I looked at him questioningly "You might want to put yours on too" he said

Confused I complied and he pointed his finger at a bunch of what looked like paparazzi came running towards us.

He took my hand "Ignore them and just keep walking" he said,

I was shocked as they started taking dozens of pictures of us, calling Jesse and asking him random questions; he didn't say anything. I stifled a gasp as they started calling *my* name. I was glad I wore my glasses too because the flashing of cameras was blinding me.

We were saved when we reached the gate and walked on the airport tarmac towards a private jet, I took off my glasses and looked at it.

"I should've known you would own a jet too," I teased and he chuckled

"It's more convenient," he said as I walked in and he followed.

My mouth dropped as I took in the interior of the jet; it had 2 beige leather recliner seats and a large sofa surrounding its length with a coffee table in the middle and a door at the back; bathroom I guessed. The interior was very luxurious.

"Convenient" I agreed sarcastically and I took a seat as he pulled out his laptop and started working on it frantically.

I raised my eyebrows at him when he looked up at me; he smiled.

"Sorry little one, just taking a couple of precautions" he said as he closed his laptop and came to sit next to me,

"Precautions?" I asked, confused.

"I was hacking into the airport's security system, as far as they are now concerned this Jet never took off for Bermuda" he said, and then it hit me,

"That way the CIA won't be able to find us," I said, smiling.

"Exactly" he said stroking my cheek,

I chuckled "You're good" I purred.

"I know" he replied leaning in to kiss me when someone cleared their throat

"We are ready for take off sir," said a man in a pilot uniform.

"Yes, thank you" he replied and immediately resumed kissing me; I blushed.

Jesse was not even the least bit as modest as I was.

2. Interrogation

Jesse POV

Lucky and I talked as I massaged her feet, it was a 7-hour flight from LA to Bermuda and according to the captain we were nearing our destination. This trip was not just to escape Bill and the CIA but also for the two of us to work things out. After the mess with Frank I was glad that she still wanted to be with me.

For once I was going to take Maria's advice and leave her be, I couldn't keep pushing her away when all I wanted was to keep her forever.

"Are the paparazzi always like that with you?" she asked suddenly

I made an effort to stay out of the public eye; I liked privacy but unfortunately with my status, that had to be compromised a little.

"Yes and no" I replied "Yes, if they see me out and about, they do go that crazy. No, because I also try not to taunt them with controversies" I added.

"Yeah I figured because I don't think I've ever seen you in the tabloids before" she said resting her head against the pillow. I've never seen Lucky read those magazines; only Angela showed slight interest in them.

I nodded "Just a couple of speculations here and there"

"How on earth did they know my name?" she asked.

"Just because I don't taunt them doesn't mean they don't still watch me like a hawk, word must've got out about you" I said, staring into her eyes.

"Humph, I can already see the headlines 'the Billionaire's new arm candy'." She said slightly frowning.

I sighed, "Now you know better than that" I said, she shouldn't compare herself to the women I was seen with before.

"Do I?" she asked eyeing me. She had no reason to be jealous what so ever,

"Don't be ridiculous," I said grabbing her waist and pulling her closer to me, she wrapped her arms around my neck. "I see that I'll have to show you where my desires lie at the island" I said, running my hand through her soft dark locks.

She took in a shaky breath "And how are you planning to do that?" she asked

I hungrily stared at her plump lips when the captain's voice came through telling us to take our seats and prepare for landing.

I reluctantly let her go, consoling myself with the fact that we'll soon be alone on an island together; I'll have her all to myself then.

We landed at L.F Wade airport; the sun was beginning to set and the lights started to come on. We made our way to the waiting car.

"Welcome to Bermuda" I said as she climbed into the car,

She flashed me a magnificent smile "Wow, its beautiful" she said.

"Downtown docks please" I instructed the driver, who nodded and started the car. I briefed Lucky on some sites we passed on our way there, she seemed genuinely curious and fascinated, I smiled to myself watching her have fun.

We got to the docks and the driver helped load Lucky's luggage in the speedboat I rented, I tipped him and told him I'll be in touch. I was going to need his services again in the near future.

I started it and turned towards Isle Lucky, it was not very far off.

"So you just woke up one morning and decided to buy an island?" she asked, laughing.

"Yeah, heck why not" I said laughing with her,

"You come here often?" she asked.

I nodded "Sometimes alone, it's great for when you just want to live in your own little world" I said, we drove for about 15 minutes then we reached it.

"Wow" she exclaimed as I parked the boat on shore, and helped her out,

"Isle Lucky" I proclaimed, smiling at her expression.

She chuckled "I still can't believe you renamed it after me" she said

"Beautiful island, beautiful woman. It seemed fitting somehow," I said.

She took off her heels giggling as we walked up to the house; it was too dark for her to really see how magnificent the island was. I was going to have to give her a tour tomorrow.

I turned the key and we walked in to the living room, flicking on the lights. The size and décor of this house was a lot similar to my pad in the hills. Except that it had a balcony overlooking the ocean.

"What do you think?" I asked when her eyes widened as she took in her surroundings; she smiled.

"I love it, it's a lot similar to your pad in the hills," she said

I nodded "I'll go get the rest of the luggage" I said, kissing her forehead and headed back outside.

It felt good having Lucky here with me, mostly I took Maria and my cousins and most of the time I came here alone. I used to love being alone; it presented a sense of freedom and peace of mind. But now it just seems like torture without Lucky. I chuckled inwardly as I took the luggage upstairs to the bedroom.

I found Lucky on the balcony, staring at the moon.

I hugged her from behind and she relaxed into my arms "Can't we stay here forever?" she asked, sighing.

I chuckled "Well not forever, but we can stay as long as you want," I said

She turned around and stood on her tiptoes to kiss me, I grabbed her waist kissing her back. I moved my kisses to her jaw then I heard her yawn.

"Let's go to bed little one," I said, stifling a laugh. She was exhausted from the long flight, but she would never say it.

"No, I want you" she said grabbing my face

I chuckled "And you can have me anytime you want, just when you're awake" I teased and she frowned.

Seeing that she wouldn't comply I lifted her in my arms and carried her back into the bedroom. She groaned as I laid her on the bed, with no intention of making love to her.

"Do you always have to do that?" she muttered, pouting

"Yes. Because I can," I said, she glared at me, got up and went into the bathroom. I got out of my own clothes and put on my pajama trousers and climbed under the covers.

She came back out wearing a negligee; she leaned against the doorframe seductively. The only thing missing was those lace top stockings she loved to wear just to drive me crazy.

I chuckled without humor; I knew she was going to torture me for refusing her.

"You play dirty," I said, shaking my head,

"Only because you're being unfair," she said walking to the bed.

She looked at me expectantly, and I just kept staring at her while I pretended to be unfazed, it took everything I had not to ravish her right then.

She threw her hands up "Oh come on, Jesse" she said exasperated,

I laughed as she involuntarily yawned again and covered her mouth realizing she just betrayed herself.

"My point exactly" I concluded, lifting the covers, gesturing her to get in

She groaned defeated and got in. I wrapped her in my arms as she rested her head on my chest.

"Let me into your head, just this once" she said suddenly, I smiled at how she used the same words I did when I asked her to tell me about Travis.

"Sure" I replied, there was nothing I was unwilling to tell her

"Did you really dislike me those first few weeks?" she asked.

"I didn't, I just hated how easily I fell for you; it was something I never had to deal with before. It frustrated me, I should've known I didn't stand a chance," I said; she chuckled.

"Well at least you did better at hiding your feelings, I'm pretty sure you could see how taken I was with you" she said.

I shook my head "I couldn't be sure" I said truthfully, she sighed pausing a little

"Why become an agent?" she asked suddenly. I paused too,

"Well I get to kick the bad guy's ass" I replied and she laughed. "It's something I wasn't able to do for my parents, but do for someone else" I added a little solemnly.

She was silent for a moment "Is Kevin an agent too?" she asked.

"Yes, he and I became agents while we were in college. We were also partners. Taking a couple of missions together" I said.

"Are these missions always dangerous?" she asked with a little anxiety

"It depends," I said "Don't worry little one, I'm always careful" I reassured, she didn't have to worry about me, besides I bet the agency wouldn't want anything to do with me after I broke their protocols.

"I know, I just...don't want you to get hurt," she said, shuddering,

I kissed her forehead "Sleep Lucky, I love you" I said.

She nuzzled onto my chest and smiled "Say that again"

I chuckled "I love you" I whispered fervently.

3. Paradise

Lucky POV

I woke up to an empty bed; crestfallen I rolled over to my other side to find Jesse on the balcony. I sat up staring at his bareback my heart couldn't help but leap, he seemed deep in thought. I got up and walked up to him, I ran my hands over his shoulders; he smiled and turned around.

"Good morning little one, sleep well?" he asked.

"Like a baby" I said, as he kissed me. I looked over his shoulder and gasped as I saw the view of the ocean below us, I put my hands on the railing of the balcony.

"Beautiful isn't it?" he asked, I felt his breath on my hair.

"Stunning" I breathed; I only saw what I could because it was too dark last night. But from what I see now; this island was beyond amazing.

"Just like you" he said tightening his hold on me

I smiled, Jesse could tell me I'm beautiful every second and it still wouldn't wear on me.

"What were you thinking about a moment ago?" I asked,

"You" he simply answered, somehow that brought me anxiety.

"You're not thinking of leaving me again, are you?" I asked, trying to keep my voice normal "Because then I'll have to kill you" I teased.

He chuckled "Never, you will have to kill me to get rid of me" he said.

"Good" I said, happy to know I'll be keeping him.

"Hungry? I'll make breakfast," he said, releasing me and walking back into the bedroom. I followed him,

"Are you sure you know how to use a stove?" I teased. I have never seen Jesse in the kitchen before; I guess he doesn't have to given that he had his own chef.

He laughed, "I might surprise you," he said, putting on a shirt "Get dressed and join me," he said.

I nodded and he walked out, I sighed in contentment and went into the bathroom taking a quick shower. I opened up one of the suitcases and found a short green floral dress, wore it with a two-piece bathing suit underneath. I quickly found some strappy sandals and walked out.

I made my way down the stairs only to be hit by the smell of fresh bacon and eggs, he wasn't kidding.

I sat on the counter chair and he laid a plate in front of me, smiling widely.

"Um wow" I exclaimed "I'm impressed," I said, looking at the delicious food,

He bowed "Thank you," he said. He sat down next to me and we ate, talking and laughing with each other.

"So what's on the agenda today?" I asked leaning towards him, he smiled and his fingers tenderly brushed along my jawline.

"A tour of the island, sex, a tour, did I mention sex?" he purred, his breath on my neck, a warm shiver ran down my spine.

"I believe you did," I said, my arms locking around his neck. He stood up with me in his arms and went back upstairs. *Sex first then* I thought.

It's been well over 2 weeks since we've been here, and I still didn't feel like going back home; it was paradise here. Jesse was right, it's like we've been living in our own little world. Just the two of us existed, and I absolutely loved it.

We spent the majority of the time outside, Jesse showing me the best parts of the island. We explored its magnificent coral reefs and endless white sandy beach, complimented by its tropical landscape.

Jesse showed me a good time to the point of exhaustion; we did everything from snorkeling to windsurfing. He took me hiking too, telling me about the different plants and wildlife.

For once we just decided to relax on the beach and soak up the sun; it felt amazing on my skin.

"After we broke up, how was that like for you?" I asked, my change in the conversation threw him a bit, but he quickly recovered.

"Agonizing" he said, sitting up "I felt pain because I couldn't be with you, but worst of all that I caused you pain too" he said staring into my eyes.

I sat up too meeting his intense gaze.

"Every time I went to bed I had to fight the urge to walk into your room and beg you to take me back," he added, turning his gaze to the ocean.

I raised my eyebrows incredulously, thinking of the nights I've spent doing nothing but wishing he could walk in and do just that. I wouldn't have thought twice about taking him back.

"I'm sorry little one, about everything I've put you through," he said sadly

I shook my head at him "Your heart was in the right place, I can understand why you did it" I said, stroking the side of his face "But to me it wasn't worth it. My safety, my own life was not worth the pain I felt when I thought I could never be with you again," I added looking down. Letting Jesse know how I felt and allowing myself to be vulnerable was a daily struggle. I've built this shell around me for so long, that coming out of it was hard. But somehow Jesse made it seem so easy and natural, like all this time I've hid myself only for him.

He suddenly took me into his arms, holding me tight to him. We were silent in our embrace for a while.

"Did you really think I didn't love you?" he asked suddenly, I looked into his eyes and nodded slowly. I couldn't lie about that, it tore me apart.

He hung his head and shook it in disbelief "After everything? I was very blunt about how obsessed I was with you," he said looking at me.

"I wanted to believe you loved me more than anything," I said, smiling slightly

"Every look, kiss, touch and moment you gave me made me hopeful, but there was always that voice in the back of my head telling me otherwise. And when you told me we couldn't be together anymore..."

"It only confirmed what you feared" he finished for me.

I nodded, a little chagrined at how I doubted his feelings for me before. Looking back now he's right, he was blunt about them. I was just too insecure to see that.

He suddenly pulled me closer to him and gave me his famous sweet and endearing kiss. I parted my lips to allow him full access to my mouth. I moaned, his kisses never ceased to drive me crazy; I gasped when he let me breathe, he began softly nibbling my earlobe.

I trembled "Point taken" I proclaimed breathlessly. He let out a low chuckle

"Tell me what I have to do to convince you, want me to walk through fire?" he asked as if he actually would do it. I chuckled uneasily

"No, just promise to never let me go" I said, resting my chin on his shoulder, breathing in his delicious masculine scent "I promise," he whispered.

I found Jesse working on his laptop and phone in the gazebo, he was been on it a lot lately; he had to go check in at work. We've been here for a month now, and with the CIA tracking us; he had a lot on his mind. I for one hated feeling helpless, I had an idea I knew he wouldn't approve of but I still had to try.

I sat down across from him, laying a glass of juice in front of him; he gave me a smile and turned his attention back to his computer. I took a deep breath

"We should go home" I began.

He eyed me and shook his head immediately "We don't have to Lucky" he said, I sighed, he was thinking of me again. He knew I loved it here, and he would never leave me on an island alone to take care of his matters.

"You don't understand, I *want* to leave" I said, he looked at me baffled "I think its time we faced Bill, I have an idea" I added.

His eyebrows rose and he closed his computer "Lets hear it" he said.

I took another deep breath "I was thinking that I should become an agent too" I said, watching him closely. For a moment he looked like he didn't hear me then his eyes widened in shock "What?" he asked staring at me.

"I should become a secret agent too," I repeated patiently, even though I knew he heard me the first time.

"NO!" he roared standing up "That's out of the question Lucky, I tried to protect you from this and you want to dive head first into it? Have you lost your mind?" he shouted. I patiently waited for him to get it all out; I knew he would strongly oppose it so it didn't surprise me.

I held up my hands "Just hear me out, and I'll never bring it up again" I said, looking at him as he sat back down and eyed me.

"Lets be realistic here Jesse, we can't be apart but being together is still dangerous for both of us, but what if I wasn't as vulnerable. Wouldn't that make things a lot easier?" I said, and he was about to protest but I stopped him with my hand.

"I'm a weakness to you and a liability to the CIA, but if I'm an agent too I would be an asset instead and they'll leave us alone. And your position at the agency wouldn't be jeopardized" I said, my eyes pleading with him.

He thought for a moment then he shook his head stubbornly,

I groaned "Put your feelings for me aside for a second and think about this rationally. It could work and you know it," I said.

I saw his resolve shake as he ran his hand through his black hair; I saw my chance. Time to exercise whatever power I have over him. I went over and sat next to him, he looked at me.

"This is crazy Lucky, do you know what you're asking me to do?" he asked, his voice strained. I put my hand on his shoulder.

"I'm asking you to trust me, and trust that I can do this," I said "I told you that I wanted to fight by your side, I meant that"

"Yeah, I didn't think you meant it literally" he said, I stifled a laugh.

"Please, let me do this. I want to do this," I pleaded batting my eyelashes at him.

He chuckled uneasily, looking at me.

"Please" I tried one more time and he let out an exasperated sigh

"Fine" he said, and I faintly screamed hugging him.

"The agency could still say no, you don't know anything about being an agent," he cautioned, but I wasn't going to let him squish my victory buzz.

"But they could still say yes, besides I have one of the best agents at my disposal. Surely he could show me a thing or two," I said.

"Hell no, if you're going to be an agent I won't be training you," he said standing up. "Oh come on Jesse" I tugged at his arm "You said yourself that I didn't know anything, well you could teach me" I said, grabbing his face in my hands.

"Please" I said softly, okay maybe I was pushing my luck. But I did say that I wouldn't bring it up again, it was now or never.

"Why are you doing this to me?" he asked in a tortured voice,

I dropped my eyes, his protective nature made this very hard for him. I knew that, but he couldn't protect me forever. Me being vulnerable means he is too and I couldn't have that. I looked at him again, silently pleading with him.

"Very well then" he said, and I kissed his cheek, "Curse this thing they call love," he said bitterly. I chuckled

"Bless love," I contradicted as he held my hand and let me to the beach

"Becoming an agent is a very tough task, are you sure you can handle it?" he asked, and I nodded sure of myself. There was nothing I wasn't willing to do in order to reach this goal, for Jesse and me.

"You're underestimating me you know," I said and he rolled his eyes.

We stopped just at the beach and he took a few steps away from me

"Secret agent 101" he proclaimed, and I smiled.

4. Fire and Ice

Jesse POV

"The most important aspect about being an undercover agent is being able to adapt to any situation, and be anyone when required" I said "We have to be chameleons"

Lucky nodded in understanding. I still couldn't believe I'd agreed to this madness. Unfortunately being helplessly in love with her had its side effects. One of them being that I couldn't refuse her in anything she wanted. I didn't doubt Lucky's ability to do this but I worried about her. I was good at my job but even I

had to face death more than I bothered to keep count, and imagining Lucky in those kinds of situations just disturbed me.

I cleared my throat "We have to always be one step ahead of everyone else, physically, mentally, you name it. That's why our training is more rigorous than any other, not just on the body but the mind as well" I said "You have to know how to defuse a bomb in your sleep" I teased, and she chuckled.

"Is your training a lot similar to that of soldiers?" she asked solemnly

"A little, though our training is subjective; it doesn't just focus on one aspect only" I said and she nodded.

"So what will I need to learn?" she asked

"Combat, weapons training, and everything in between" I replied

I gestured for her to come closer; I hated this part of the training, I couldn't possibly teach Lucky how to fight, not the right way.

"Take your best shot," I said and her eyes widened

"You mean like hit you?" she asked and I nodded puzzled, she knew this was part of the 'training'.

"I want to see what I'm working with" I said then eyed her suspiciously "Are you having second thoughts?" I asked, a little hopeful.

"No, I can do this" she said, and positioned herself she threw the first punch in my direction and I easily ducked it.

"Huh nice shot" I said, actually meaning it. Her fist was fast and firm. She beamed "But it's a little sloppy, put both your fists up" I said.

She complied and I continued to set them right, advising her on how to throw one without damaging her own hand.

"Alright again, successively this time" I instructed, and she complied,

She started to get irritated when none of her shots got me, I laughed.

"Are you trying to kill me?" I teased ducking more shots

"Yes, given that you keep dodging my attacks" she muttered.

I chuckled grabbing her wrists to stop her "Rule number one, never let frustration get the best of you. You have to be patient and tactful when attacking," I advised and she nodded.

I continued to show her the basics, she was a quick learner and much to my disappointment; she looked promising. Her drive and stubbornness was an advantage on her part, it would get her through training. I didn't dare tell her that though, I didn't want to strengthen her resolve to do this. My only hope now was that Bill wouldn't buy her crazy idea, but that he turned her down. I would gladly leave the agency if needed be, nothing was more important than being with her.

"That's enough for the day" I said, the sun was already beginning to set. Besides, watching her work up a sweat was doing terrible things to my body.

"How was I?" she asked as we walked back to the house,

"Good, you still have a long way to go" I said monotonously

"I'm terrible aren't I?" she asked crestfallen, I didn't have it in me to put her off.

"No, you're just a beginner. You'll get better" I lied, she did too well for her own good, I watched her smile and I sighed inwardly.

"So we're going home right?" she asked, and I nodded

"We better start packing," I said and she raised her eyebrows

"We're leaving now?" she asked, and I shook my head.

"Tomorrow" I said "But we'll be staying in Bermuda for a couple more days, we got invited to a charity auction ball" I added.

"A ball?" she asked "As in tuxedo's and gowns?"

I nodded "It's going to be fun, trust me" I said, not wanting to blow the surprise I had been planning for her.

Back from loading her luggage in the speedboat, I found her getting ready in the bedroom. I leaned against the doorframe watching her. She ran her fingers through her hair absently and my gaze followed the gesture. She smiled when she saw me,

"I'm curious as to how is this ball works," she asked, I realized this was Lucky's first time, I had attended more parties like this past the point of fascination.

"Actually I was informed that it's a 2-part celebration, the first is a beach party at St. Catherine and then an art auction at St. George Hall. I'm guessing that's where the ball will be held," I said, walking up to her and leaned down to kiss her neck.

She turned around "Sounds like fun" she whispered, her hands on my chest.

"Mmm" I breathed, bushing my lips against her silky skin "Are you ready to go?" I asked lifting my head, *before I change my mind and carry you back to bed* I thought.

She just nodded; I noticed she too was trying to keep her hands to herself. The level of intimacy between Lucky and I always astounded me, all I wanted to do was make love to her every second of everyday. I was never satiated.

I chuckled inwardly as I pulled away from her and we headed downstairs,

"I'm going to miss this place," she said as I locked the door.

"We can come back here anytime you want little one" I said, puzzled by her sadness. I knew she loved the place, but leaving was her idea.

"I know, it was just amazing here," she said wrapping her arm around me as we walked towards the speedboat.

I smiled as I helped her in; glad she had a great time. We sped away back to Bermuda.

Matthew was waiting for us at the docks; he helped whenever we wanted to travel around the city. I told him to take us to a hotel I booked for us.

When we arrived the hotel attendants brought our luggage up to our suite, I tipped them and they bowed and went out.

I looked at Lucky who was examining the suite in quiet appreciation

"It was the only one I could get at short notice," I said.

"No, I like it" she said "Only you can get a five-star suite at 'short notice'." She added sarcastically and I chuckled.

Her sense of humor was one of the many things I loved about her; it was refreshing.

"I have to run a couple of errands," I said "The celebrations are tomorrow, you might want to visit a couple of shops. You don't have a ball gown do you?" I asked as I pulled out one of my black credit cards and gave it to her.

She frowned looking at the shiny card; I hid my smile. She always hated it when I gave her credit cards to use. That's why I always had Ally and Mandy to

get her things; she seemed more accepting when it's from them. Besides my cousins loved shopping for her, but they weren't around right now.

"Don't fight me on this please" I said, she groaned and took the card "You should start getting used to it, you're going to have your own very soon" I added.

I kissed her before she could start her protest. She let out a frustrated moan; kissing me back, I pulled away. "I have to go" I said, kissing her nose "Matthew will take you anywhere you want to go, I'll see you later" I added releasing her.

"Damn you" she cursed breathlessly, I chuckled and turned for the door

"I love you too" I replied and went out.

5. Bermuda

Lucky POV

Jesse left me in the suite breathless and perplexed, I hated when he did that. He would just kiss me and I'd forget what I wanted to yell at him about. He claims I do it too all the time, though with me it doesn't work; okay maybe it does sometimes but still. I sighed walking over to the bed and opened the suitcases, double-checking that I really didn't have a fancy gown stashed in there, much to my disappointment I didn't. I only had what I would wear to the beach party.

I slumped onto the bed defeated; Jesse couldn't be serious about getting me my own credit card. But knowing him, he was.

I knew I couldn't fight him and win; I always give him his way. I could almost hear Angie's voice, *Sweetie you are dating a Billionaire, you better stop whining and get used to it.*

I laughed to myself; if she were here she would've told me the exact same thing. I missed her; Maria and everyone back at the castle. I got up grabbed my bag and went out of the suite, down to the fancy lobby.

"Mrs. Gilbert" the receptionist called out, I was beyond shocked when I saw that she meant me. "Mr. Gilbert left this for you" she said, handing me what looked like a letter. I opened it

I know you're mad at me and I'm sorry, but try to have a good time. Matthew will take you to the docks when you are done, think of it as a surprise peace offering.

Love

Jesse.

I closed the letter and smiled to myself, of course he would try to make emends when I forgave him the second he pissed me off. The receptionist gave me a knowing look and I blushed, thanked her and walked out.

I found Matthew's black sedan at the entrance, when he saw me coming he got out and opened the door for me. He greeted me when I climbed into the car.

"I don't exactly know where I'm going Matthew" I said, he smiled and started the car.

"I'm aware, Mr. Gilbert told me to take you to the mall and to the docks when you're through" he replied, looking at me from the rear-view mirror.

He's thorough, I thought stifling a laugh.

I thought back to how shocked I was to hear myself be referred to as Mrs. Gilbert, and how much pleasure it brought me. I sighed, hey a girl can dream right?

Matthew parked in a huge complex, and opened the door for me.

"I'll be right here when you get beck," he said, and I nodded and walked into the first of the many buildings, glad to see that this was the main shopping building.

Lets get this over with I thought as I went through the many shops and boutiques, I was not sure exactly what kind of dress I was looking for.

I walked into a fancy boutique and was immediately met by two sales ladies, one of them was nice enough but the other kept glaring at me for no reason. Sometimes she would walk over to the other staff and I could swear they were talking about me. I sighed and stopped paying attention to them, I never understood the pettiness women had.

I tried on a couple of dresses, I couldn't decide; its either they were too much, too showy, too sparkly, too big, too revealing.

One of the ladies brought out a strapless purple gown, it was diamante embellished with striking patterns all over. Its full-length skirt was not too big and had an elegant flow.

It was the perfect dress in the perfect color, purple is Jesse's favorite color; I didn't even consider that until I saw the dress.

"I'll take it," I said, looking at myself in the mirror. I didn't dare look at the price tag; I'd probably change my mind. I handed them Jesse's card, they all seemed to ogle it. They thanked me and I walked out.

I spotted a Jimmy Choo store and I had to go in and find shoes to go with the dress. According to Ally and Mandy I was 'forbidden' from wearing anything that's not designer. I found a pair of purple stilettos and a matching clutch bag.

I started roaming around the mall, looking at things I had no interest in buying; I couldn't go to the docks too early. I wanted Jesse to think I was having a good time. I found myself sitting on a bench at the complex park, for a moment I thought I was lost.

I've been here well over 4 hours, surely that's acceptable. I got up and went to go find Matthew, I found him on the same spot I left him on. Was he waiting here all along? Then again if Jesse gave him strict instructions to stay with me, he would want to please him. Jesse was very intimidating when he wanted to be; when he spoke people listened. He was kind-hearted; I would know, but I also knew that he was not the type of man you should cross.

I guess that's one of the things that attracted me to him. That he could go from being abrasive and menacing to being sweet and loving in a snap. He always kept me on my toes, kept me guessing.

"Are you ready to go?" he asked, starting the car,

"Yeah, but take me anywhere but the docks. We'll go there a bit later on," I said, I wanted to be, what do they call it? Fashionably late.

He eyed me confused but drove anyway; he drove around St. George, showing me the best parts of the city. I asked him a couple of questions about some of the sites we passed and he answered pleasantly, he was a pleasure to be around. This was definitely more fun than a day at the mall.

Late in the afternoon he took me back to the hotel to freshen up before I met Jesse. I showered and threw on some new clothes. Not sure what Jesse was planning I opted for a white tank top with a flowing waist high mini skirt, I put on a pair of red wedges and went back out. I decided to leave my hair down, Jesse said he like it better that way.

"I informed Mr. Gilbert that we're on our way" Matthew said opening the door for me. I nodded and climbed in.

The hotel was not that far away from the city docks, soon enough he pulled up and went over to get my door; I got out to find Jesse waiting for us. He smiled as I approached him

"Hey, did you have fun?" he asked, kissing my cheek

"Yes" I lied, I know he knew better but he let it go.

"Did you get my letter?" he asked and I nodded.

"This is unnecessary you know," I muttered,

He took my hand in his "I know, I just wanted a reason to do this" he admitted grinning.

"I should've known," I said, shaking my head and he chuckled

He led me back to the car "Where are we going?" I asked, confused. I thought we'd already reached our destination.

"To the other side of the docks" he said as I climbed back in "I'm going to need you to close your eyes now" he said

Baffled I complied, the car drove for 8 minutes and then stopped, not seeing anything was irritating me.

"Don't peak" Jesse warned as he got out, I heard my door open then he helped me out. We walked for a bit then stopped.

"Okay, you can open them" he said, I opened my eyes to see the hugest cruise ship I've ever seen, my mouth dropped as I took in its size.

"You're taking me on a cruise ship?" I asked incredulously, he smiled and nodded

"It just arrived in Bermuda, its headed for the Caribbean in the morning. I would've loved to take you there on it, but given that we have obligations we'll have to board it for tonight only" he said.

I laughed disbelief; I'd never boarded one before in my life "I didn't know you could do that" I said, looking at him.

"Do what?" he asked.

"Board it for one night only" I clarified, looking at it again.

"No, not on this one, but we can" he said,

"Ah" I said, only Jesse could pull such strings.

Jesse and I boarded the ship; I stared with wonder at the interior of it. It seemed like a mobile Las Vegas. Everything about it was extravagant and glamorous. Jesse showed me almost every part of the ship, and I marveled and smiled at everything I saw. He was right; it was too bad we couldn't stay; put perhaps when this whole CIA business was dealt with we'll board one.

"I want to show you something," he said, as he grabbed my hand leading out of the casino.

"What?" I asked, as we climbed a couple of stairs,

"You'll see," he said smiling. We made our way to the sun deck of the ship, there were people having a pool party but I couldn't take my eyes of the sun setting above the ocean.

We moved to the far end of the deck, I felt his arms wrap around me from behind, his warm breath on my nape.

"This is amazing," I said, not wanting to miss a second of this looking sideways

"It is," he said, "So am I forgiven?" he asked, I forgot that I was even mad at him. "That depends," I said, not wanting to give up just yet.

"On what?" he asked, puzzled

"Weather or not you were serious about the whole credit card thing," I said, frowning a little, the whole idea was unsettling to me.

"I'm serious," he said, without hesitation

"Jesse!" I moaned in complaint.

"It can't be that bad Lucky," he said, "It would really make me happy" he added, I couldn't believe he was going to guilt me into going along with this. And he accused *me* of playing dirty.

"Are you kidding me?" I bellowed

"Nope, I'm just saying that it would really give me peace of mind" he said innocently "Please, for me?" he said in the same tone I used when I asked him to let me become an agent.

I was right; I could never win with him. I groaned "Fine" I said, giving up.

"Great" he said kissing my hair "Now lets go celebrate"

I turned to look at him "What? Where?" I asked.

"Come on" he said, taking my hand and leading me out of the sun deck and back to the main floor, heading south of the ship. He turned into what looked like a nightclub, but it had a more Latin theme to it. A live band was playing really catchy tunes even though they sang in a language foreign to me. I mostly loved the intimacy of the setting.

Jesse pulled me into his arms and we started dancing, the furthest end of the dance floor; it was less crowded here.

Jesse was a great dancer and I was suddenly glad I didn't have two left feet. The band started playing a slower, sexier Latin song and Jesse pulled me closer to him "Lucky do you know the rumba?" he whispered in my ear.

"I can't say I do" I replied, I've been told that I'm a good dancer but I have not attempted it. I've only seen it be performed by professionals; it was a very sexy dance.

"Follow my lead," he said, placing his hands on my hips forcing them to sway to the rhythm, he pulled them closer to his. His hand travelled to the back of my

neck and down my spine. Leaving a sweet burning sensation in its path. I stifled a gasp at the sudden wave of desire that hit me.

The sexual tension between us seemed to grow more and more as the music played on, it was starting to lull to a hypnotic sound in the background. With every passing beat and lyric our bodies got closer, our moves sexier, our breathing a little shallow. No one seemed to notice us, probably due to that it was darker and less crowded here. Our dancing would've definitely drawn some attention.

His lips were inches from my neck. His hand went a little bit up my skirt grabbing my thigh and he lifted my leg to his hip. I shifted my hands from his shoulders to lock them around his neck. Involuntarily pulling his head onto me.

We both froze, he immediately let go of my leg and I unlocked my arms around him, we both took a step back. We knew that if we continued we'd end up causing a real scene and we wouldn't be able to help ourselves.

I stared into Jesse's lust filled eyes, I don't know what my own eyes showed, but I could very much feel the burning need literally choke me. We didn't need words to know that our stay in the ship was over.

Silently I turned and walked out of the club with him quietly following behind; I could feel his gaze burning holes through me, but I couldn't turn around. That would shatter both our self-control.

We rode back to the hotel in still-silence, the heat and tension between us didn't subside, and it only seemed to elevate with every passing minute. Neither one of us has spoken a word since we abruptly ended our dance; I couldn't even look at him. If I did, my arms and legs would be around him in an instant.

Matthew eyed us suspiciously on the rear-view mirror but he didn't say anything, he parked at the hotel. We got out made our way through the lobby and into an empty lift.

Breathe girl I chanted to myself as we stood as far away from each other as the lift allowed. We stared at each other.

He was already making love to me with his eyes, normally when he gave me that look I would drop my gaze and blush. But this time I couldn't, he had me in a trance. I couldn't look away.

We entered our suite, second he closed the door we devoured each other. He crushed his lips to mine, kissing them with a new bewildering edge of passion and lust. My lips parted with a moan, as his tongue sampled my mouth. I urgently took off his shirt throwing it to the ground as he resumed kissing me. His hands grabbed my thighs lifting them up to his hips with ease; I locked my legs around him. He backed me up against the wall, barely letting me breathe, he tore at my tank top and it slid away from me. I didn't even care that he just destroyed my clothes with his bare hands.

I gasped for air as his lips moved to my neck and shoulder "I'm sorry I'm being less of a gentleman little one, you're driving me insane" he purred.

I would've chuckled at that sentiment, but how could I when I couldn't get any air into my lungs. He laid me on the bed quickly removing the rest of my already torn clothes. How can one man's hands feel so electric, so good? How can his mouth feel like heaven on my skin?

Jesse showed me great passion and tenderness when making love, I had the sense that he always held back for me. But not this time around, I loved this new

slightly rough and urgent way he loved me. He always made everything about me, for once I wanted him to take as much of me as he wanted. Boy did he ever! Jesse had a sexual appetite like no other when aroused. Every time we would catch our breath, he would touch me again and immediately ignite desire in me too, making love all over again and again and again.

Surprisingly I was able to keep up with him, as I wanted him just as badly. My wanting to love and pleasure him always made me willing and uninhibited.

"Whoa" I exclaimed, trying to breathe. I heard Jesse chuckle breathlessly. I then realized that my whole body was shaking.

Ah another aftereffect of making love to Jesse. Mind spinning, toe curling, now I can tick off shaking like a leaf as well, great!

"You're trembling love," Jesse said wrapping the coverlet and his arms around me. "Yeah, and whose fault is that?" I muttered and he chuckled.

"This is embarrassing," I mumbled and he kissed my shoulder

"No, its natural." He offered and I shook my head

"This is not natural." I said "You're right its not, sex cant possibly be that good" he said and I nodded yawning.

"Sleep love, before you arouse me again. I don't want to exhaust you," he said

"It's a little too late for that" I teased, how many hours have we been at this non-stop? He smirked chuckling.

I closed my eyes and tried to sleep.

6. Celebration

Lucky POV

I woke up to find Jesse gone; he left a note on my nightstand saying he had to go meet a couple of business associates that were in town. I sat up running my hands on my stiff neck and shoulders. I let out a soft groan when I stood up; my body was sore, my lips a bit swollen.

I chuckled *Wow that was something else* I thought dryly. Last night I got to experience Jesse on a whole new level, I realized that previously he only gave me a fraction of what he was capable of. I got chills just thinking about it.

I picked up my torn clothes from the floor and some of his and went into the bathroom. I took a long bath, grabbed a bathrobe and went to the basin. I finished brushing my teeth when I noticed something below my right ear.

I got closer to the mirror examining it then I laughed hysterically *Jesus, he gave me a hickie!*

I lightly traced the mark. It wasn't visible unless you got really close; you'd think I would've felt him bite me but I didn't.

I got dressed for the beach party, from what I heard it was pretty exclusive; they'd even cleared St. Catherine beach for it.

I put on a white monokini with a gold trim; I wore a matching long wrap skirt and sandals.

I sat down on the dressing table and did my make-up, I didn't apply it unless necessary.

"Your wings are missing angel" Jesse's deep voice came through the door, I turned to see him leaning against the doorframe.

"Hi stranger" I said, smiling at him

"Hey" he grinned, I stood up and walked towards him "You look beautiful love" he said looking me up and down. I also noticed he wore a tank top with a pair of knee-length shorts. I couldn't help but admire his impressive physique.

I wrapped my arms around his waist and he pushed my hair back, he leaned down to kiss me then suddenly he halted.

"Oops" he said touching the area where my hickie is,

I chuckled, "You're a bad man," I teased, and he smiled sinfully.

"How are you feeling?" he asked, still smiling but his tone was a little solemn. Trust him to worry about me even when unnecessary "I'm fine" I said,

I was a little sore in the morning but a hot shower fixed me up quickly.

He gave me a knowing look, then he gently pressed his fingers on my shoulder and I lightly groaned at the soreness. I once again betrayed my own statement, I sighed defeated. He gave me a sympathetic smile,

"I'll behave myself next time" he said, I shook my head at him.

"Don't, I'm not this fragile twig besides love this animalistic Jesse," I said giving him a chaste kiss,

He chuckled and rolled his eyes "Careful what you wish for love, there's still so much I can show you." He said running his hands through my hair.

I bit my lower lip raising an eyebrow "You can show me now." I said, I didn't mind ditching the beach party and having a repeat session of last night. Even though I was still sore. He cupped my chin leaning in closer

"Firstly, we have to go and secondly..." he paused, bluntly staring at my breasts through my swimsuit "Don't tempt me," he said releasing me.

"Are you ready?" he asked.

I nodded stifling a smile, I grabbed my bag off the bed and we headed out of the suite. We drove down to the beach. When got there we went over to the 2 huge bouncers at the entrance. They smiled at us and moved out of the way.

I was right about the party being exclusive, from what I could see there were only about 50 people here. There were fancy gazebos, umbrellas and recliners all over the beach. There was also a DJ booth and a bar close by; in the ocean were speedboats and yachts.

Jesse and I were strolling hand in hand when a man and a woman suddenly approached us, they looked very important.

"Jesse Gilbert, I'm so glad you could make it," the man said, shaking hands with Jesse.

"I'm glad I could come" Jesse replied, looking at me "This is Harry Fanshaw, he's hosting the auction tonight and this is his wife Melinda" he added "This is my girlfriend Lucky" he gestured with his hand.

I smiled and greeted them both,

"Aw you're a very lovely couple," Melinda said, and I blushed and smiled at her. She whispered something in Harry's ear, said her goodbyes and walked away,

"Can we talk?" Harry told Jesse and he nodded. He turned to me

"Go relax a bit, I'll be back okay?" he said and I nodded. He kissed my forehead and he walked away with Harry.

I went to find an empty gazebo and relaxed on the recliner and closed my eyes.

It's been almost an hour and Jesse still hadn't returned. I got lonely.

"Is this seat taken?" a woman asked, I opened my eyes to see a redhead, probably my age smile at me.

"No" I said smiling back and she sat on the recliner next to me.

"Hi, I'm Amber," she said extending her hand to me, I noticed her accent definitely a Bermuda resident, she looked posh too.

"Lucky" I said shaking hands with her "Its nice to meet you" I added

"Likewise" she said "Ah American?" she asked noting my own accent.

I nodded "Yeah I figured, I'd never seen you around here before. You looked important so I thought I'd hang out with you" she said smiling.

I chuckled at her calling *me* important; gosh she's the one who looked important. I was just a girl from Minnesota.

"You're on vacation right? How is Bermuda treating you?" she asked proudly.

"Its amazing, I love it here" I said truthfully and she smiled widely.

We talked for a while about me about her and the ball tonight; my temporary loneliness was cured.

"I'm going to the ball tonight, you're coming right?" she asked and I nodded,

She was very talkative so when she stopped talking abruptly I looked at her.

"Holy moly!" she breathed, "Greece has lost one of its gods" she said, her gaze fixated ahead, she looked at me then pointed towards the beach "Get a load of that" she said.

I took off my glasses and looked to where she was pointing, it was Jesse. He was coming out of the water, running his hand through his wet black hair.

"Woo" she swooned fanning herself, "A man doesn't get more perfect than that. Wow." She said. "I know" I added, in the same enthralled tone. Not bothering to let her know he was *my* Greek god. We both stared shamelessly at him while he approached us.

"Oh my God, is he coming over here?" she asked, frantically fixing her hair. "There's nothing in my teeth right?" she asked, smiling at me

"No" I said, stifling a laugh.

Jesse came over and sat on the edge of my recliner, I sat up and he kissed me "I'm going to have a meeting with those business associates right now, so I'll have to leave you" he said, his forehead resting on mine.

"Its okay, go handle your business. I'll be fine here," I said, looking into his blue eyes. Jesse's head turned to the woman on my right, who was staring at us open-mouthed, I'd forgotten that Amber was here.

"Hi, Jesse" he said, offering her a hand,

"A-Amber" she said shaking it. Jesse nodded and turned back to me.

"I'll meet you at the ball, Matthew will take you there" he said,

"Alright" I said and he smiled, kissed my hand and walked away.

Both Amber and I stared after him, I turned to her and she gave me a scornful look. I shrugged "I forgot to say he's also my boyfriend" I added.

She shook her head in disbelief "You could've gave a girl a little warning you know" she said and started laughing hysterically " I mean damn, I totally made a fool of myself" she added.

I chuckled uneasily "Sorry" I said,

"Oh no honey, don't apologize" she said, "I just wonder how you were able to keep from scratching my eyes out. Then again if you did that to every girl that swooned over him, we'd all be blind," she added.

I nodded sadly, even though he made me feel like I was the only woman in the world; I was not. And any one of them would kill for a chance with him.

"Aw I didn't mean to make you feel insecure sweetie," she said looking at me "Sure we all want him but it doesn't matter because he's so in love with you, it actually hurts my self-esteem" she said, as a matter of fact.

I smiled at her kindness; normally things get ugly and competitive between women, especially if it's about a man's attention. Let alone a man like Jesse.

"You think so?" I asked and she nodded "Yeah he's not going anywhere, besides the two of you make sense together" she added.

"Make sense?" I asked baffled,

"Yeah, I mean you both are drop-dead gorgeous" she said "Damn I would love to see your kids, they would be just...wow" she said imagining,

I blushed; she couldn't be serious. I knew I was decent looking, but not *drop-dead gorgeous* but I couldn't deny that Jesse was. I've always wanted to have kids one day, but there was something about having Jesse's baby that made my heart race. For a moment I too let my mind wander. I imagined myself holding a little baby boy in my arms he looked exactly like his father. I sighed

Amber laughed at my expression and stood up "I'm going to the salon to get ready for the ball tonight. Want to come?" she asked.

I shook my head and she gave me an incredulous look "You weren't going to do your own hair and make-up were you?" she asked again.

Yes I thought, but I knew better; this was a fancy event that needed special preparations, even most of the people here had left. I sighed "No"

"Then come on," she said, and I gathered my things and left with her.

She took me to a high-end salon in her yellow Porsche; Matthew followed us from behind.

"Is he like your bodyguard or something?" she asked as we entered

I shook my head "He's our driver" I said, "Jesse is a little overprotective," I added.

"Ah" she said and we took our seats in front of the mirrors.

"Hey girl" a woman came up from behind us,

"Hey you" Amber said, "I've brought a friend, this is Lucky" she said "Lucky this is Raven, my hairdresser. She works miracles"

Raven smiled at me as we shook hands.

"I know she doesn't have an appointment but can you assist? She's also going to the ball," Amber said,

"Sure, I think Melody is free" Raven said

I smiled at them "Thanks" I said.

The girl named Melody worked on my hair and make up, she put it up with elegant curls, she put a small purple flower in my hair after I told her the color I was going to wear. She kept my make up light and sophisticated.

Amber insisted that she pay, I sighed and let her. We thanked them and walked out. I said goodbye to Amber and got in the waiting car.

Matthew drove me back to the hotel, the sun had already set and it was becoming darker outside.

I went back to the suite to get dressed, I pulled out my purple dress and put it on cautious not to mess up my hair. This event seemed reminiscent of my birthday party, just that now I knew why I was dressing up. I chuckled to myself.

I finished up and grabbed my clutch bag, I took a moment to look at myself in the mirror *Mandy and Ally would be proud* I thought.

I walked out of the suite; I had to carry the skirt of my gown when I walked even though I was wearing stilettos. Matthew opened the door for me, commenting that I looked beautiful; I blushed and thanked him. He drove across the city and parked in front of a huge building, limousines and fancy cars were delivering people who were dressed in the same attire. I took a deep breath when Matthew helped me out, I was a little nervous. It was the first ball I'd ever attended, and not having Jesse with me was not helping at all. I walked up the stairs of the entrance and was met by one of the ushers who greeted and escorted me inside. He left me at the top of the grand staircase leading into the massive ballroom; I went down the stairs hoping I didn't trip over my dress. Keeping up the sophisticated woman façade I tried not to ogle at my surroundings, everything about it was stunning.

I walked through the crowds; some of them stared at me, which made me very uneasy. I tried to look for Jesse but I couldn't see him anywhere, giving up I stood by a less crowded table and waited. I noticed that everyone except for those who were dancing had a Champaign glass, wanting to also blend in I took a glass when a waiter passed.

Some blonde haired guy has been eyeing me ever since I arrived, he said goodbye to his friends and walked up to me. *You've got to be kidding me!* I thought as he approached me. He introduced himself as Louis; I tried to be as nice as I could over the irritation as I told him I was waiting for my date. He seemed unfazed by that idea, he continued making small talk and throwing pick-up lines. I was about to walk away when a hand I knew all too well was suddenly on Louis' shoulder.

"The lady said, she's taken" Jesse said, his voice eerie calm. His furious gaze was fixated on the man's neck, if Louis knew what was good for him he would leave me be immediately. Jesse was also very possessive and territorial.

Louis looked over his shoulder and turned back to me, he was about to continue talking when he suddenly winced in pain.

"Leave" Jesse quietly barked and took his hand off the man's shoulder. Louis quickly walked away without another word.

I stared at Jesse; he looked dashing in his black tuxedo. He sat his still-full glass on the table and looked at me too.

I shook my head "Poor guy" I said, feeling anything but sorry,

He chuckled "What? He wouldn't have stood a chance anyway," he said.

I raised my eyebrows at him "Oh no?" I challenged, even though we both knew he had every other man beat for my affections.

"Yes, because my game is a lot more smoother" he teased, he faked clearing his throat "Do you have a map? Because I just got lost in your eyes," he said.

I almost spilled my drink laughing; hearing Jesse tell such a tacky pick-up line was hilarious. He playfully frowned.

"Real smooth" I agreed chuckling.

"You're wounding my ego" he teased, "Can't shoot a guy down for trying."

"Oh please you don't need to *try*, you never had to; but poor Louis was not working with your advantages" I said, smiling.

"And what are those?" he asked, eyeing me,

"Well for one that I love you" I said, and he grinned.

"Touché" he said nodding to himself. He took my hand and twirled me around; the skirt of my dress flowed around me.

"Magnificent" he breathed, "You're true vision little one," he said stroking my cheek. I touched the back of his hand and smiled.

7. Unforgettable Night

Lucky POV

The guy I recognized as Harry Fanshaw walked up on the stage and the music lulled. He requested for us to take our seats, as the auction was about to commence. He greeted everyone and acknowledged all the important guests that were able to come tonight. He also acknowledged Jesse; who raised his glass as the crowd cheered.

Jesse's confident and refined demeanor never failed to amaze me; hopefully some of it would rub off on me because I failed miserably in comparison. He smiled when he caught me staring at him,

Harry officially opened the auction.

Many different kinds of art paintings and antiques were brought out for auction, Jesse bid on some of them. His fascination with art was very evident at the castle. He asked me which one I fancied and I pointed at the one painting; it looked like a father and a child sitting by the lake, they were fishing. It seemed to remind me of all the fun things my dad and I did when I was a kid, and the fantasy I had of Jesse and his little boy.

Jesse bid on it and raised the stakes, as the guy across from us wanted it just as badly, he and the guy went at it. Jesse got impatient and my eyes widened as he called out a formidable sum, the guy hung his head in defeat.

The auctioneer yelled sold and the crowd cheered. The auction dragged on for another hour then Harry thanked the bidders and proclaimed the auction over.

The crowds went back to wining and dining, some of them went back to the bar and some to the dance floor.

"Shall we?" Jesse asked holding out his hand, I smiled and put my hand in his. He led me to the dance floor and pulled me into his arms.

We swayed to the melody; it was up-tempo and exciting. Jesse was very creative and fun spirited when he wanted to be, gracefully twirling me around all over the dance floor; I couldn't help but giggle. I saw a camera flash in our direction; I thought for sure there was no press here. They did a good job at being discreet then.

The crowd cheered for the live band when the song ended, it seemed we were not the only ones having fun. The band started playing a slower dreamy tune, Jesse tightened his arm around my waist pulling me closer and he held my hand to his chest in the other. I sighed inwardly and rested my head on his shoulder as we moved to the music.

"You didn't have to do that you know," I said, referring to the painting

He shrugged "It was for a good cause, besides I made you happy in the process. That's a bonus on my part" he said, I smiled.

Jesse was actively involved in many charities all around the world, and more so for the Gilbert Foundation; a charity started by his grandparents. It helped orphaned and disadvantaged children from all around the world, he loved it dearly. He gave away as much as he received.

He refers to himself as a dark soul, but I strongly disagree. His giving and unselfish nature only strengthened that resolve. If someone like Jesse was damned then so help me God I was too, and he referred to me as pure and good.

"I was wondering what drew you to it" he said, breaking my train of thought.

"Well it sort of reminded me of my dad and my childhood" I said and paused a little "It also reminds me of a fantasy I have, of you and a child. Imagining you and that fatherly position made me happy I guess. That was something I would've liked to witness first hand" I said, unsure of myself.

Jesse and I have never talked about children before, I wasn't sure he even wanted any. I have never mentioned this 'fantasy' of mine to him either.

"You dream about bearing my children Lucky?" He whispered in my ear

I took a deep breath at his warm tone and nodded. A little chagrined having to admit this, but then again he knew I loved him. He stopped dancing and looked into my eyes, his blue gaze bore into my soul.

"Come with me" he said, holding my hand; he led me off the dance floor and through the crowds. We went up the stairs and turned into the first floor hallway "Where are we going?" I asked, looking around.

"You'll see," he said, as we came across another flight of stairs and he opened a door. It was for roof access, I then understood why he brought me here.

I stared at the St. George skyline; it was wonderful. His arms wrapped around my waist and he kissed my nape,

"What a view" I exclaimed.

"I know," he said "But I also wanted us to have a little privacy," he added,

I turned and gave him a puzzled look; he took a deep breath, not sure what for.

"I promised not to leave you Lucky and I intend on keeping it," he said taking my hands in his "You are everything to me; if you asked me to walk through fire

that day I would've. I love you more than you can imagine, to me the sun rises and sets with you little one, and that's my whole life right there," he said.

I smiled, a little surprised by his confession; Jesse normally showed me his feelings not tell me, it was good to hear them. He looked at the city lights and smiled to himself "Wherever my parents are, they are very happy right now. This is what they wanted for me, I always knew it. But for a very long time I bid it useless and pathetic, I thought I didn't need it, that I could never need it.

He was confusing me "Need what?" I asked, and he smiled,

"You, a proper life, love...kids" he said softly, my heart leaped at the way he said kids. I stared at him adoringly and smiled too.

He looked at the skyline and then at me again; he got down on one knee in front of me. For a moment I looked at him confused, my mind couldn't comprehend what he was doing fast enough and then it hit me. *He was proposing!!*

My hand muffled my gasp, as he took out a ring box out of his jacket pocket and opened it. I stared at the beautiful ring inside; it had a big round diamond in the middle with smaller diamonds surrounding it. It had a more vintage style cut to it and probably worth more than what I could make in my whole life.

"This was my mother's ring, she gave it to me before she passed" he said, chuckling "She said 'Tyler give this ring to the girl you love and pledge yourself to her'. I've had it with me ever since, I just never thought I'd use it" he said looking at me, and gave me a heartbreakingly gorgeous smile.

"So this is me, on one knee pledging myself, my love and devotion to you in hopes that you'd do me the honor of becoming my wife" he said fervently.

I closed my eyes for a second, tears escaping; my heart was drumming in my ears.

"I cannot be expected to live without you" he continued using my own words "In that sense if you don't say yes I will kill you and myself" he teased.

I laughed, fresh tears coming down my face, his expression turned solemn again

"Lucky Melissa Strauss, will you marry me?" he asked

"Yes" I whispered trying to breathe, he smiled and took out the ring; sliding it onto my ring finger. I laughed and cried as he stood up, kissed my left hand and scooped me into his arms twirling us both around laughing too.

I screamed in pure delight, even the wildest, craziest dreams come true. I couldn't believe I was going to be *Mrs. Jesse Gilbert*, something I thought was impossible not so long ago.

He put me down and kissed me fervently, both his hands cupping my face "Thank you" he breathed, I shook my head touching his hands.

"No, thank *you*" I said, "You gave me something I've always wanted and I thought I couldn't have...you. And that's *my* whole life right there" I added.

He tightly embraced me, I rested my head on his chest; feeling pure happiness, I would remember this night for the rest of my life.

I looked over Jesse's shoulder to see fireworks from afar "Did you do that?" I asked incredulously.

"Do what?" he asked, I pointed behind him, he turned and whistled under his breath "I wish I could take credit for that but I didn't" he said staring at them.

I smiled "Coincidence" I said delighted

He shook his head "Its fate" he said kissing me again.

8. Sanctuary

Jesse POV

I held Lucky for a little while longer, not ready to go back to the ball. I was beyond happy when she said yes, I knew she loved me but her agreeing to marry me spoke volumes.

"Were you nervous?" she asked, doubtful I was. I chuckled

"Very" I said, she rose her eyebrows at me "You intimidate me little one, and I've spent my whole life around intimidating people" I added.

She laughed and sighed in contentment "Do you really want kids Jesse?"

"As many as you can give me" I said, she smiled "it seems my theory was right" I added, she looked at me.

"What theory?" she asked confused,

"I was going to marry the girl I deflowered," I said shaking my head in disbelief. The one virgin I sleep with I end up falling for.

"Oh" she said, remembering something that night.

"Why did you sleep with me though? You didn't strike me as the one-night stand type, and when I realized you were a virgin that made sense" I said.

"I was broken when you found me" she said looking down "So I just decided to take Abby's advice and live for once, even just for one night. Even if it was with a kidnapper," she added.

I chuckled "And your virtue?" I asked,

"It didn't matter, there was something about you that just felt right," she said smiling; I hugged her tighter and kissed her neck.

She held up her left hand looking at the ring "So this is your mother's ring? I feel honored" she said reverently "Do you think she would've liked me?" she asked.

"She would've loved you" I said as a matter of fact, she smiled then her expression turned solemn, touching the ring.

"Do you think it's too early for us to get married?" she asked suddenly "Don't get me wrong I love you and I want to spend the rest of my life with you..."

I shook my head "I understand, we've got a lot on our plate right now and many things we have to resolve before we do anything else" I said.

She nodded "But I can keep the ring right?" she asked,

I chuckled and rolled my eyes "Of course you can, it's yours. We don't have to get married right away, we can always have a lengthy engagement," I said inhaling her hair; it always smelled delicious; strawberry like.

"I just wanted the right to call you my fiancée," I added and she laughed, delighted. She was silent for a while looking at the skyline.

"Are we leaving tomorrow?" she asked, I nodded,

"I told our pilot to get the jet ready" I said, "We can leave now and rest, it's going to be a long day tomorrow",

She nodded. "Yeah, let's get out of here" she said and I grabbed her hand and led her back into the hall.

We were back at the party, heading out when that redhead Lucky was sitting with at the beach approached us smiling.

"Lucky! You look amazing girl" she said hugging her, she smiled at me "Hey Jesse"

I nodded in acknowledgement.

"Hey Amber, it's so good to see you again" Lucky said smiling at her

"Were you guys leaving?" she asked, crestfallen.

"Yeah, we're heading out tomorrow" Lucky said, I heard a little sadness in her voice. I looked at her, then Amber gasped taking Lucky's left hand.

Looking back and forth between us "Oh my God, are you two engaged?" she asked, shocked. Lucky nodded smiling again, looking at me.

"Jesse just proposed a moment ago," she said laughing

Amber squeaked in excitement hugging Lucky again and shook my hand "Congratulations, I so saw this coming" she said winking at Lucky "All the best you two" she added.

"Thank you" I said, smiling at her. She nodded looking at Lucky again

"Call Me," she said handing her phone numbers "I'll be expecting my wedding invitation, I'll fly to the US myself" she said laughing.

"Of course I will, thank you Amber for everything" Lucky said in the same sad tone, Amber waved us off and walked away.

"Are you okay?" I asked, she nodded taking a deep breath

"Yeah, I really like her but there's a possibility I might never see her again. You were right, the agency could still say no," she said.

I squeezed her hand "Everything will work out little one" I said soothing her

She smiled "If you're with me, I don't doubt that one bit" she said.

We walked out to find a couple of paparazzi taking pictures of the other guests; they spotted us and ran to us taking pictures. Lucky and I stopped to smile for the cameras, as they asked about the ring on her finger. I didn't like to humor the press but when I attended functions like this I tried to be cordial.

"We're engaged," I proclaimed and they erupted into another set of questions, we waved and retreated into the car. Matthew congratulated us as he drove us back to the hotel.

"Well a lot of women's hearts are going to break at tomorrow newspaper," she said chuckling; I playfully raised my eyebrow.

"And you're sympathetic?" I asked

"Of course, I mean the most eligible bachelor is off the market. That's something to cry about" she said grinning. I laughed as she rested her head on my shoulder.

The hotel attendants finished up loading our luggage in the car. I checked out of the hotel; thanked the receptionist and walked out. Matthew drove us to the airport and parked close to our jet, he got out and helped the copilot load our luggage into the jet.

I wrapped my hand around Lucky and turned to him "Thank you Matthew, it's been a pleasure" I said, shaking hands with him.

He smiled "The pleasure was all mine Mr. Gilbert, go well and all the best for the future. If you're ever in Bermuda again, please don't hesitate to call me," he said, I smiled and nodded.

"I won't," I said and he ducked his head and climbed into his car, we waved at him as he drove off. I turned to Lucky,

"Are you ready to go?" I asked she nodded and we walked towards the jet. She paused a little looking around and then got in. We took off.

When we reached cruising altitude I pulled out my computer to undo what I did a month ago

"You're uncorrupting the system?" she asked, eyeing me.

I smiled at how she guessed that, in all honesty she would make a good agent because of her perceptiveness. But I still didn't like the idea,

"Yes, this way the airport will be expecting this jet and the CIA will know we're coming" I said looking at her. She nodded stiffly, seeing her frightened unsettled me.

"It's going to be okay Lucky, you know I won't let them hurt you right?" I asked; I would kill them all, including Bill. She nodded.

"I would leave the agency if needed be" I stated, I love being an agent but I love her more. There isn't anything I was not willing to do for her.

She groaned, "That's the thing, I don't want you to leave the agency. I want to help you not hinder you," she said.

I shook my head; I was about to protest when she stopped me with her hand.

"I know, and yes this is the only way" she said, "Trust me"

Not wanting to argue I let it drop, as we sat on the sofa cuddling.

9. Welcoming Party

Jesse POV

It was just after noon when we landed at LAX; I called Jason to come get our luggage. We got out of the jet when I saw Bill standing with three black-suited men behind him and two black SUV's from afar, I groaned. He didn't waste time did he? Lucky looked at me questioningly.

"We have a welcoming party," I said sarcastically, pointing towards Bill and his men. I heard Lucky gasp beside me and I squeezed her hand reassuringly.

We walked up to them and stopped a few steps away from them; I quickly surveyed the men in front of us, their demeanors all-threatening.

There was silence on both sides as Bill looked between Lucky and me scornfully,

"So the two lovebirds finally decided to grace us with their presence" Bill spat.

I saw Lucky flinch at his cold tone "It's nice to see you too Bill" I said in the same tone, glaring at him.

"Your little stunt has caused a bit of a problem for us Jesse my boy" he said, "What do you suggest I do about that problem?" he asked his voice icy.

I didn't reply; I just kept staring at him. When I didn't say anything he turned his gaze to Lucky. I tensed

"Hello Lucky, long time no see. Did you enjoy your little getaway?" he asked in a menacing tone. Lucky didn't reply.

"Careful Bill" I warned, and he raised his eyebrows at me. Bill was very clever; he wanted to test how far I was willing to go to protect Lucky. I've always treated the man with deep respect, and I didn't dare tango with him before. But I would for Lucky.

"Are we going to have a scrap on our hands Jesse?" he asked eyeing me,

"Depends," I said standing my ground, but there will if needed be. Bill laughed deviously and snapped his fingers; the men behind him moved towards us, Lucky went a little behind me. I lifted my hand to stop them.

"Come on now Bill, there's no need to restrain us. We will go with you without protest, there's no need to cause a scene," I said. Gesturing towards the people who have been staring at us.

"Very well then, but if you try to run again Jesse my boy there will be hell to pay" he threatened, his eyes careful.

"We're not going anywhere," I confirmed and he turned towards the SUV's. I rubbed Lucky's shoulders comfortingly as we walked behind him and got in the back of the vehicle.

We drove downtown towards the headquarters; I looked at Lucky the whole way there. She seemed calm and her eyes didn't show fear, but I knew her all too well. Her fingers twitched every now and then; something she only did when she was nervous or scared. I didn't say anything, what with the guards that watched us closely in the car.

We arrived and went into the underground offices, Bill ordered the guards away and led us to his office. Everyone stopped to stare at us when we passed the hallway; I guess word got out about agent Gilbert betraying the CIA for Lucky.

We reached his office and he sat down on his leather armchair, gesturing for us to do the same. He scrutinized us both for a moment

"I heard about your engagement" he started "I don't know weather to say congratulations or what the hell were you thinking," he said.

I waited for him to get it all out; he was furious with me and he should be.

"Jesse you've always been like a son to me, when I found you I saw unfathomable potential. I took you under my wing and molded you into the lethal weapon you are today" he said "But never have I seen you this happy, so I guess that deserves a congratulations" he added standing up.

"Now, what the hell were you thinking?" he said, fury returning to his eyes "What is the first rule of being a secret agent?" he shouted.

"No emotional attachment to clients" I said monotonously

"Exactly" he said "But you broke that rule, and you deviated from a plan both you and I agreed to. What do you have to say for yourself?" he asked.

"This is not something I had any control over, I didn't anticipate this. You think I didn't try sticking to the plan? You know me Bill and you know I love this agency and that I'm loyal it" I said.

"Were loyal," he corrected "Now your loyalties lie elsewhere and that's the problem," he said sitting back down again.

"I can see you love her Jesse, I only hope you understand the risks of that" he said and I nodded gravely.

"Question is what do we do with her," he said, and my eyes flashed. "I know that if you had to choose that you'd pick her, am I wrong?" he asked and I shook my head. He knew me too well

"And if I forcibly took her away, you would snap all our necks without thinking twice. I don't want to fight you for her Jesse, because I know I'll lose. I'm a smart man; I know what you're capable of and I know you could take me down" he said smiling slightly.

His confession shocked me; Bill is not one to admit defeat or weakness. That's why he's one of the most feared men in the agency.

"You're an exceptional asset to us, the agency is not ready to let you go over this. But your fiancée is a liability and weakness the CIA can't afford" he said.

"What if that part was taken care of" Lucky said, speaking for the first time since we arrived, we both looked at her shocked.

"I know I have no business asking this but I'm kind of in the middle of this mess, and I have an idea that could benefit all of us" she told Bill.

I groaned; I knew where this was going. She was going to sell her crazy idea to Bill, I only hoped he wouldn't buy it.

Bill eyed me surprised, then looked at Lucky "Really? What did you have in mind?" he asked, genuinely curious.

"That I too become an agent," she said and Bill's eyebrows shot up. She held up her hands "Hear me out first. Instead of being a weakness and a liability, I will become an asset to both the agency and Jesse," she said sure of herself, she was good. Bill thought about it more.

"Feather more Jesse won't have to lose me, and you wouldn't have to lose him over this either. Think about it Bill, this way everybody wins. Jesse will stay and you won't have to erase my memory because I'll be one of you. The rule will become void." She said.

I was about to speak when she shot me a 'shut up' look,

Bill rubbed his chin deep in thought and then he nodded to himself.

"I hate to say this but your idea could work" he said smiling, Lucky smiled in victory. Bill was a traitor; I was counting on him to turn her down.

"No" I said shaking my head "Be realistic here Bill, she inexperienced and she knows nothing about this business. Its far too dangerous for her" I said.

"Nah, the inexperienced part can be taken care of. Besides she has you, that's an advantage no one else has. You're letting your feelings cloud your judgment," he said and Lucky nodded.

I shook my head rolling my eyes in irritation, as Bill stood up eyeing me

"As long as she is willing to do this, I won't stand in her way. Besides the agency will benefit in the long run," he said resolved.

I slumped back in my seat defeated as Lucky smiled again

"You think you can do this?" Bill asked Lucky, she nodded confidently.

"I can," she said. And Bill put his hands together laughing

"It's settled then" he said and looked at me "Train her first, make sure she's ready for what's coming. I like her determination we can work with that. She has to be as lethal as you are if possible, she is your future bride after all and your enemies will gun for her. Prepare her," he ordered and I nodded stiffly.

I had to admit, Bill was right. If Lucky was as good as any one of us, that will protect her from people who would want to use her against me.

Bill turned to Lucky "The power you wield with your necklace is a big advantage, but I suggest you refrain from using it unless absolutely necessary. And no one else should learn about it, do you understand me?" he asked and she nodded. "Learn and train without its assistance, this will be more beneficial for you" he added "You will first have to go through a series of tests, psychiatric, physical, health wise etc. Then you will be taken to a secret facility where the real training begins and trust me that is not done in stilettos" he said solemnly.

"I never thought it was" Lucky replied in the same tone, and Bill smiled.

"I like this one" Bill told me "I can see why you fell for her Jesse my boy, she has a fire" he said. Lucky blushed and I chuckled; he has no idea.

Bill told us Lucky will start with her tests next week, the sooner she starts with them the sooner she can get in the group that will be departing next month.

The thought of spending a whole month without her was making me miserable, Bill finished briefing us and we went out of his office.

10. Goodbyes

Lucky POV

We arrived back at the estate, it felt good to be back home after the dramatic day we just had. I was happy that Bill gave me a chance to do this; even though I was scared of the unknown, I had to seem sure of myself. In all honesty I was terrified and I hated the thought of being away from Jesse for so long. I couldn't think about it too much or else I'll end up changing my mind. It was too late to turn back now; I had to see this through.

"Welcome home" Angie said, as we walked in. Maria, Jason and Jeffrey were standing behind her; smiling. I hid my left hand in my jean pocket as we went into the lounge.

"Thanks, It's good to be back," I said, hugging all of them. Jason and Jeffrey gave and excuse and then left.

"How was it?" Maria asked smiling. I had to drag out the whole engagement thing; I knew they would just freak out.

"It was paradise" I said smiling at Jesse "And, it was full of surprises. One of them being this..." I added pulling my left hand out of my pocket and held it in front of them. Their eyes both widened as they took a collective gasp

"Oh my God, its Jane's ring. You're engaged?" Maria said, shocked. I nodded and Angie squealed in excitement.

"And I wrote it in the stars" she said hugging me and Jesse "Congratulations" she said, I watched Maria sit down disbelief evident in her expression. I looked at her baffled.

She started speaking to Jesse in Latin; I hated not being able to understand them. Jesse smiled and sat down next to her; hugging her. I saw tears come down her face as she held Jesse's face in her hands.

"Your mother would be so proud of you," she said reverently and looked at me "Of the both of you" she added, I smiled and sat on her other side. Finally understanding her reaction, she was crying tears of joy because this is something she's always wanted. Just never thought could happen; I knew how she felt.

"Congratulations" she said wiping her face, hugging me too.

We told them about Isle Lucky and Bermuda and how Jesse proposed; Angie couldn't stop saying 'aww' every now and then. Up until our encounter with Bill and his men.

Maria shook her head sadly "What was the verdict?" she asked looking at Jesse

"Lucky wants to become an agent too, Bill agreed" Jesse said blankly.

"What?" Maria said even more shocked than before looking at me, fury evident in her brown eyes. Jesse got up and went into the kitchen.

"Thanks" I muttered sarcastically, he left me to face Maria's wrath alone.

"You want to do what!?" Maria shouted standing up

"Maria look, it's the only way for everyone. You saw what happened with Frank; I'm vulnerable and I can't afford to be," I said turning my gaze to Jesse "None of you can" I added. He shook his head and left the room. I finally understood why Jesse agreed in the first place, he was hoping the CIA would turn me down. I hung my head

"I know what I'm doing Maria, I want to be with Jesse without anything hanging over our heads. And if this is what it takes then I'll do it" I said with conviction.

Maria slumped back on the sofa "Not you too Lucky" she moaned "Its bad enough that I have to worry about Jesse, now you too?" she asked looking at me.

I smiled apologetically "I'm sorry Maria" I said, as she shook her head.

"There's nothing I can say to change your mind?" She asked, with no hope in her eyes. I slowly shook my head looking down.

She sighed, "Well then be careful and good luck," she said hugging me, acceptance in her voice. Her tone shocked me, now why couldn't Jesse be like that? I had to make him see reason.

"Thanks" I said.

Jesse and I lay in bed together in silence; I knew when something bothered him or when he had a lot on his mind. I nuzzled my cheek onto his chest.

"Say something please?" I asked; I hated it when he was mad at me.

"Nothing I say will change your mind so what's the point?" he said, his tone making me flinch. I sat up looking at him, my eyes pleading with him.

"Jesse I have to do this" I said, and he sat up too cupping my cheek in his hand

"Why?" he asked, his voice strained as his gaze bore into mine.

"You know why" I whispered touching the back of his hand. He rested his forehead on mine in defeat.

"Should I beg on my knees for you to stay?" he asked quietly

"Please don't, it's hard enough as it is" I said, "You're the love of my life, my air, my everything. Leaving you is hard for me too, please don't make it any worse" I said. He sighed and laid back down on the pillows, he opened up his arms for me; I went back into his embrace. He stroked my hair,

"I know little one, and I'm sorry" he said, "I'm just being a little selfish I guess"

I smiled "Good, because I'm going to be more than selfish when I come back" I said, I was going to stick to him like glue. But for now I had to focus on the task at hand. I heard him chuckle

"You won't hear me complaining," he said then paused "Do what you have to, I'll support you," he added sincerely.

"Thank you" I whispered fervently and he kissed the top of my head,

"Well I 'am your future husband after all, I have to support you in everything you do" he said; "Even if that thing is crazy, delusional and..." he teased.

"Okay, okay, I get it" I cut him off teasing, we both laughed.

"Now, practice being a good husband and make love to me" I purred, he gave me a devilish grin and laid me on my back.

Jesse and I trained hard for the past week; he was strong and agile; intelligent and experienced. I could see why he was regarded as the best, he showed me one thing; that I had a long way to go. He also showed me that he was a slave driver.

Whenever I cast him a scornful look for pushing me too hard, he would chuckle and tell me that he's preparing me for what's coming. I knew worse was coming so I pushed on.

He also taught me the basics of being an agent and using certain gadgets; that part was awesome. He also revealed his secret room where he stashed dozens of weapons and gadgets. I was beyond shocked when he pulled out a book from his big shelf; it slid to the side and revealed a huge metal door. It looked like a laboratory; it was like a candy store for a secret agent. I asked if I too would get my own secret room and he shook his head, telling me that he would give me anything but that. I pouted but let it go.

I also found time to work on trying to control the power in my necklace; it was difficult not knowing how or where to start. In between my prep I was able to take those tests Bill set up for me, I had to go to the headquarters to do them. I didn't miss the stares and whispers the other women gave me. I only hoped there wouldn't be any animosity when we go for training just because of rumored favoritism. There I was not Lucky, I was agent Gilbert's fiancée; it wouldn't have bothered me if they didn't say it with a steel edge to their tones. I didn't say anything to Jesse about it but he knew me too well, I was not fooling him.

The only person that seemed to treat me differently; well not really because we haven't talked yet; but she would wave or smile at me then go back to doing her thing. She had short brown hair and striking dark eyes, she had this edgy look to her, which surprised me because she seemed nice enough. She looked about my age too. Jesse identified her as Carmen Jones, he said like him Bill chose her specifically too. At least I knew who was safe to talk to.

I had to fight with Mandy and Ally for them to cut my hair, I threatened to go to another salon if they didn't do it. I couldn't keep it as long as it was, I wouldn't

have time to maintain it properly. Jesse didn't like the idea either, but they were all being ridiculous; I could always grow it back.

On the day of departure both Maria and Jesse came with me to another CIA facility, we found the group saying their goodbyes to their loved ones. Some were already in the bus. We got out of Jesse's Aston Martin.

"Aw senorita, I'm going to miss you so much" Maria said hugging me; she looked like she was fighting back tears.

I squeezed her tight "I'm going to miss you Maria, and everyone back home" I said trying not to break down too.

She wished me luck and got back in the car, giving Jesse and me some privacy, I turned my gaze to him. Every time his blue eyes mesmerized me I was reminded why I was doing this; he was worth it, worth fighting for. He and I just stared at each other for a moment.

"I'm never getting used to that haircut," he teased, and I chuckled.

"You wont have to, it would've grown back by the time I come back" I said, he pulled me into his arms, hugging me tightly "I love you, call me whenever you can" he said cupping my face in his hands.

"I will," I promised, giving him his ring back "Keep it safe for me" I said

"Of course" he said, smiling a little sadly.

He leaned in "Don't kiss me," I said and he froze raising his eyebrow,

"Well for one you don't know how to give a plain kiss, two; there's a bus full of people staring at us" I said uneasily.

"Screw them, I wont see you for a whole month" he said, kissing me the way only Jesse knew how, like it was just the two of us around. I sighed and blushed scarlet when he released me; I slightly shook my head at him.

He smirked, and then he smiled sadly again "Go on little one" he said

I began walking backwards "I love you" I mouthed and he smiled, I walked to the bus, avoiding the stares. I paused at the door of the bus, I looked back to see him turn and get in the car; I watched his Martin speed away. I suppressed the brief sadness that overcame me.

I got in the bus, and either I was paranoid or everyone just decided to be silent; I walked inside trying to find an empty seat. I was relieved when I saw Carmen sitting alone at the back. I had noticed that she too was also a bit reserved and kept to herself.

I went over and sat next to her "Hey I'm Lucky" I said, introducing myself when she looked up, she nodded.

"Hi, Carmen" she said shaking my hand. I nodded too,

"I know," I said and she looked at me a bit surprised "You do?" she asked.

"Sure, Jesse told me about you" I said, and she looked even more shocked

"He did?" she asked, "I'm sorry, he doesn't seem to notice anybody"

"I know, I know, you all worship agent Gilbert" I teased and she smiled sheepishly "He just seems so...intimidating" she said.

"He's human," I said, well human because he breathes and he has a heart that pumps blood; but even I considered him inhumanly perfect. "I asked him about you because you seemed nice to me, it was surprising"

She shrugged "You needed someone who'll at leasest treat you like a human being" she said, smiling "It must be hard" she added gesturing at the glances we got from the front. I sighed.

"You have no idea" I said, "And thanks, your efforts were greatly appreciated" I added smiling back.

A couple more women entered and the bus started moving.

11. Soldier On

Lucky POV

We drove for 4 hours north of California, Carmen and I talked the whole way there, I liked her a lot. She seemed to get me very well; part of that being that we had so much in common.

I knew we had arrived when there were huge buildings in the middle of nowhere

"They're so obvious" Carmen teased, I chuckled

"I know, they might as well put a neon sign saying government facility," I said.

The bus stopped in front of three other women, by the way they were dressed and their demeanors; they were our superiors.

We got out of the bus and lined up in front of them, there was still silence as the woman in the middle walked up to scrutinize us one by one.

I held my breath and stared straight ahead as she reached me, she lingered on my face and gave a skeptical smirk and moved on.

"Attention!" she screamed and we all saluted "Welcome to the worst month of your entire life, my name is Executive Officer Harley and these are my sub-commissioners" she said referring to the two women behind her.

"We will be in charge of your group, though we will not be overseeing your training unless necessary," she said looking at us closely.

"A secret agent is the one of most important person in the US defense forces, therefore we must do everything bigger, faster and better than everyone else" she said with conviction.

"This is not going to be a walk in the park and if you walk through those doors you better be ready to push yourself beyond your own limits" she said looking at us "Cowards and quitters should get back in that bus and leave immediately, for I want to work with agents here" she added, and no one made a move.

"Good" she said "follow me" she turned and headed towards the first building,

She handed us over to another woman who introduced herself as Officer Johnson; she said that she would be overseeing our training. She gave us a tour of the facility and what we will be doing.

At the end of our tour she led us into a large room with beds; it looked like a dormitory.

"Clothes and every other necessities are under your beds, bathroom is down the hall. Get settled in, I will be here bright and early tomorrow" she said and turned for the door. She stopped and the woman with her yelled attention and we all stood up straight in silence.

"They call me black eagle around here, I do not take any prisoners. I will be watching each and every one of you, do...not...disappoint me" she said and walked out. There was another brief silence then the room erupted with whispers and chatter.

I slumped to the edge of my bed facing Carmen who laid her head on her pillow and chuckled without humor "I like her already" she said, sarcasm clear in her voice. I chuckled too

"I wonder how she got her nickname, then again I guess we're going to find out," I said.

"Are you ready for this?" she asked, and I nodded

"As ready as I'll ever be" I said and gave her a questioning look.

"I don't know, you don't seem like the kind of person that would do this," she said.

"What kind of person do I seem like then?" I asked and she gave me an apologetic look "No offense, but you seem like the type that would spend all day planning parties and shopping down Rodeo drive" she said.

"Ouch" I said chuckling "I didn't grow up wearing designer clothes you know, I grew up knowing that I had to work for everything I wanted" I said looking down. She nodded reverently

"I figured" she said smiling "You're a lot more grounded than the average pretty face" she added and I smiled too.

We talked about why I was doing this; my reasons seemed to shock her.

"So you love him *that* much?" she asked incredulous

I smiled and nodded "If it was a crime, I'd get a life sentence" I said, she laughed.

We also talked about her, where she was from, her reasons for being here. She seemed a little skeptical about telling me that part, I figured there was more to why she was doing this than what she led on.

Like Officer Johnson promised at 5 am she walked in, commanding us to be on our feet instantly. She told us to hit the showers and join her in building 2 in an hour.

When we were done, all dressed in white tank tops and khaki pants. We found her waiting impatiently; she greeted us and told us about what we'll be doing today. I could guess given that we were in what looked like a gym, physical training.

"Don't you dare piss me off by falling, whining or giving up" she concluded, introducing us to our instructors. We started doing the most rigorous cardio I've ever done in my life, Jesse was right; he was preparing me for worse things to come. These instructors made what I did with him look like child's play.

Officer Johnson surveyed every move we made, shouting at whoever fell or made even the slightest mistake.

She has to be as lethal as you are if possible, those were the words that kept me going. Knowing that I had to push and be at least as good as Jesse, and I doubted he ever fell or made mistakes.

We were doing dozen of push-ups when my wrist gave out and I fell down

"Get up Strauss!" Johnson shouted at me "We want agents, not beauty queens. Lets go!"

I guess humiliation came with the training then; I got up. I looked at Carmen, she flashed me an encouraging smile. After hours of indoor training, they gave us a 20 minute break and we took the training outdoors.

They gave us a series of challenges, the fastest in running, rock climbing, swimming etc. They weren't kidding when they said we have to do everything right. I couldn't help but admire Carmen's perseverance; I could see that there was more to why she was doing this. She put her heart and soul into everything they gave us, and I thought I was inspired; she had me beat.

We had lunch; I could also see that our diet from now on was going to be high in protein. After lunch we continued our training, until late in the afternoon.

We all used what was left of our energy to drag our bodies back to our dorm; I slumped onto my bed groaning.

"Someone just shoot me now" I moaned and I heard Carmen chuckle

"I'm pretty sure Jesse would not appreciate me granting you that wish," she teased; I chuckled as she groaned too "That was hell".

"Tell me about it, but it gets easier right?" I asked hopelessly, I knew better,

"I think it's a matter of *us* getting better at handling it," she said nodding to herself. I scrutinized her more,

"What are you not telling me Carmen Jones?" I asked and she looked at me shocked. She dropped her dark eyes and shrugged.

"What do you mean?" she asked, shifting her gaze

"The real reason why you're here" I said. "I told you why I was here" she replied automatically.

"That's not the only reason," I stated and she looked at me then, I gasped, "I knew it!" I sat on the edge of my bed facing her "Tell me please" I pleaded.

She seemed reluctant for a while and then sighed "Its personal and I really don't want to talk about it" she said. I nodded and was lying back onto my bed.

"But I'll tell you" she added, smiling sadly "I had a childhood friend named Nicole, we were more like sisters than best friends" she said. She took a deep breath

"She decided to marry right after high school, I couldn't understand why she rushed into it like that" she said shaking her head. "She insisted that she was in love, and being a good friend I had to support her decision even though I didn't like it," she added.

"I watch how he was with her, he treated her like he owned her, ordering her around. But she was too blinded to see that he was no good for her." she said, looking at me then. "It was only when she stopped calling me and seeing me that I knew something was seriously wrong. One night she turned up at my door battered and crying" she added sadly.

I stared at Carmen speechless, I could see how much it hurt her too

"She confessed everything to me that night, I told her to tell the police but she disagreed saying it was no use. She decided to run and I told her that I'd run with her" she said, her eyes miles away.

"We ran all over the country, but Nicole never felt safe; she always feared that he was tracking us and that he'd eventually find us" she added "And he did"

I stifled a gasp as Carmen shuddered.

"We settled in a small apartment in Louisiana for some months, I was in my bedroom reading a book when sudden screaming and arguing echoed from the lounge, I knew it was him" she said "He asked her where I was. I was about to go help her when she said I wasn't with her" she added shaking her head "Even though she was the one in danger she didn't want to compromise my safety either" a tear escaped Carmen's eye.

"I wanted to help her but her words froze me, I just looked from afar long enough to see her get hit with three bullets. There was so much blood..." she said her voice breaking. I raised my hand to my mouth in complete shock, my own tears welling up in my eyes.

"He started looking frantically around for me and I knew I had to run or he was going to kill me too. I went through my bedroom window and I ran and ran until my lungs burnt," she said "I don't think I've ever cried that much in my life" she added, silent tears coming down her face.

Carmen had a tough girl persona that seeing her cry right now was shocking and heartbreaking. I sat down on her bed hugging her

"There was nothing you could do to help her Carmen," I offered, sniffing my own tears back. She shook her head wiping her tears away.

"There was, I just didn't know what at that moment. And I knew that had to change" she said "I too was weak and vulnerable, the only difference is that Nicole paid for it with her life" She added.

"That's why you're doing this, to get stronger and to know how to defend yourself" I stated, she nodded.

"And defend my loved ones, I won't lose anyone else; not if I can help it" she added with conviction.

I nodded in understanding "Thank you for telling me" I whispered and she smiled weakly. We didn't even bother going to dinner we just sat on the bed talking more and more until it was time to sleep. I admired how Carmen drew strength and inspiration from everything that's happened to her, letting it propel her forward instead of bring her down. I could see why Bill chose her.

12. Friendship

Lucky POV

After a week of physical training we crossed over to weapons and gadgets training, which was interesting. It was more complex than I thought; each weapon had to be handled a certain way. We also had to understand the

dynamics and functions of each gadget or weapon they gave us. Incorporating it in a way that is more comfortable for us individually.

Unfortunately the animosity I hoped would ease just continued to the point where I didn't notice their mean little comments now. Carmen however had a different view; I had to stop her from starting a fight with those women over their attitude. We've grown closer as friends, she too had a forward nature that somehow reminded me of Jenna; they would just love each other.

We found ourselves sneaking to the gym every now and then, putting in extra effort into our training. Carmen's drive and constant need to push herself rubbed off on me too.

We've been here for only 2 weeks but it felt like a millennia, I was missing Jesse terribly. I sighed as I walked over to the phone booth, it only opened once a week and we were given only 15 minutes on it.

I quickly dialed Jesse's numbers and waited for an answer

"Hello" Jesse's deep voice came through; I smiled. It was good hearing it again; I closed my eyes imagining that I was right next to him breathing in his delicious scent.

"Hi stranger" I teased, and I heard him chuckle

"Hey little one" he said softly "I should make an official complaint, they don't let you guys use the phone much." He added; his tone slightly irritated.

"You've been through this before too remember? And you decide to complain now?" I asked rolling my eyes.

"Well back then I didn't need to hear a particular voice to make me happy" he stated, using this tone I could already see his gorgeous smile.

"You don't sound too good" I teased smiling too

"Well between missing my fiancée and work, I'm surviving" he teased back.

"Don't you go surviving with other women now," I said chuckling

"Very funny" he said sarcastically. He continued to tell me that he was trying to close a deal with those business associates he met in Bermuda. I told him about training and my friendship with Carmen.

I knock on the glass door made me jump; I looked up to see the lady pointing at her watch. I sighed, "I have to go, my time is up," I said "Say hi to everyone back home, tell them I miss them"

"I will, I love you" he said, and I smiled

"I love you too" I said and hung up, sadness washing over me but I squished it.

Just two more weeks and you'll see him again I chanted to myself, walking back to the dorm.

As we went further through week 3, we began our fighting and combat training. Officer Johnson brought us knew instructors for every new training aspect.

The basics Jesse taught me helped me get a hold on things much quicker, at least Johnson seemed impressed with my progress in this part of training. All the other times it just seemed like I bored her.

The next challenge they paired us against each other

"Strauss you're up against Regan" Johnson called out. I walked to the center of the field; taking a deep breath *you can do this* I told myself. The woman I

recognized as Tracey Regan stepped up too with a huge smirk on her face. Obviously glad she will have a go at me. We both stared at each other waiting for Johnson to give us the go ahead. I could hear the whispers from the other women as they watched on

"What's wrong Barbie? Scared? Your fiancé is not here to help you now" she said chuckling smugly. I tried not to let her insults affect me; I took breath remembering Jesse's words *never let frustration get the best of you. You have to be patient and tactful when attacking.*

I heard Johnson call 'go' and we charged for each other, she was aggressive in her attacks but they were not carefully calculated. I was able to duck them as she made the same mistake I did then, get frustrated. I saw that as an opportunity and used some tricks Jesse taught me on her. Much to my surprise some of them really worked, I was momentarily distracted and her blow connected. I staggered back a little then went in for the kill, punching her on the face and stomach. I quickly crouched down and knocked her to the ground, she groaned in defeat as I got up.

"You just got your ass kicked by Barbie." I said and curtsied, Carmen was definitely rubbing off on me. Everyone was silent for a while then they started cheering and hooting, I looked at Carmen and she gave me thumbs up, smiling. Johnson called everyone to order and called on the next two women.

I went over to stand by Carmen after almost everyone gave me a pat on the shoulder. Carmen was even happier for me than I was; she couldn't stop talking about my little statement at the end. I shifted my gaze ahead and froze.

I didn't notice that Executive Officer Harley was watching us today, now I was even more chagrined at my behavior.

At the end of our challenge Johnson told me that Officer Harley would like to speak with me *oh crap!* I thought.

"Oh no, I knew I was in trouble the minute I saw her" I said to Carmen as she walked with me to her office. She smiled anxiously

"Maybe she called to congratulate you," she said with forced enthusiasm.

I gave her a knowing look "There were other women that did well too, besides who gets congratulated by the Executive officer?" I asked.

"Oh yeah" she said grimacing "Good luck" she said, stopping in the hallway

"Thanks, I'm going to need it" I said hugging her and turned into the passage leading to her office.

I took deep breaths then knocked on her door, she called for me to come in and I opened the door walking in. I found her looking outside her window, when she looked at me I saluted.

She acknowledged and sat down on her leather arm chair,

"Officer Johnson said you wanted to see me," I said, hoping my voice didn't convey how nervous I was. She nodded curtly

"Take a seat Strauss," she said and I complied, I couldn't help but admire the many trophies and medals that were stashed in her glass cupboard.

She scrutinized me "You must be wondering why I called you here"

I nodded "For the record you're not in trouble" she clarified standing up.

"You fascinate me Strauss, I've been watching your progress here and I'm impressed" she said, my eyes widened in shock.

“When you first arrived here I thought you were going to be the first one to give up, it seems you’ve proven me wrong” she added. “You’ve proven to be one of our best trainees” she sat back down, looking at me again.

“Gilbert is one of our best agents today, the fact that he wants to marry you raises eyebrows. I underestimated you but I can see that there’s more to you than what meets the eye, obviously he saw that too.” She said “Why are you here?” she asked,

“I want to be as good as he is,” I said with conviction. I had to be

“Good” she said “I work with driven people, I’m glad you are one of them. Continue to work hard and don’t let me down,” she added.

I nodded standing up; she gestured for me to leave, I saluted and went out the door.

13. Rise

Lucky POV

Going into the last week of training, a lot has changed since we arrived here.

I was still perplexed by my conversation with Officer Harley last week; of course I knew a lot would be expected of me because of Jesse’s status in the agency. Hearing her say it though made it very real. It must’ve been difficult to admit she was wrong, although I never thought I impressed anyone from the very beginning.

Like her all the other women were wary of me before, but lately they have developed a weird kind of respect for me. Even though they all called me Barbie now, I can’t complain much; at least the hostility has subsidized.

Other changes have been on my body. With the high protein diet and rigorous physical training it was more toned and defined. Everything from my arms to my thighs, I had a flat stomach but now it looked almost like six-pack abs. I chuckled to myself; at least now I can be compared to Jesse physically.

My hair has almost grown back to its normal waist length; it always grew back quickly especially if I cut it. Which is why I hardly did it in the past. I kept it tied up now, I couldn’t cut it again; I promised Ally and Mandy I wouldn’t.

Everything we’ve learnt over the past weeks is being put to the test this week. Johnson and some instructors grouped us and set up test missions for us, it was exciting to finally do this for real.

When the group missions were done it was time for the individual missions. Those were in the large simulator; it was like you were in an unknown world by yourself. You had to kill or be killed in order to survive, but most of all I liked the realistic nature of it.

I shot my last holographic soldier and the simulator shut down, the metal build of the huge dome came back into view.

"Good job Strauss" I heard our instructor through the speakers and the doors opened. I walked out; glad I didn't screw up.

Over the past weeks I've also sneaked off to train on controlling my powers too, I still couldn't be sure if I made any real progress on that. It was hard trying to control something I don't understand, but I found that when I focus on my core rather than my head that's when I get better responses.

I found that I could move objects, though I haven't tried to move large ones because I had to be discreet about the whole thing.

Another thing I could do was creating a shield, that's how I was able to stop that bullet from hitting Jesse. It didn't freeze in mid air; I just created a shield around Jesse. The rest was still work in progress, I still couldn't figure out how my eyes turned black that time.

At lunch Carmen's voice brought me out of my daydream

"Why do you always wear that necklace?" she asked, I looked up at her shocked.

"Don't get me wrong its pretty and all..." she blabbed on and I shook my head

"I'm not offended," I said, "My grandmother gave it to me when I was a kid, I swore to never take it off" I added, hoping she would let it go.

"Like ever?" she asked incredulously, and I nodded again.

Bill made me promise not to tell anyone else about my necklace, but I really wanted to tell Carmen. She and I had practically shared secrets like we've known each other our whole lives.

She scrutinized me and shook her head "There's something you're not telling me" she said, sure of herself. I tried to compose my expression

"Why would you think that?" I challenged and she shrugged.

"Your eyebrows twitch whenever you're unsure about something," she stated. I groaned, was I an open book to everyone? I deliberated on what to do for a moment then I gave up, why not tell her? She was bound to find out anyway.

"Come on" I said getting up, and she complied, confusion clear on her face.

We walked to the far end of the facility, at the back of the last building, making sure no one saw us. I turned to her

"Okay, first of all I'm not crazy and secondly no I'm not joking, I'm very serious" I said and she chuckled at my solemn tone.

"Uh okay" she said looking at me; I took a deep breath. I didn't know where to begin describing something that baffled even me.

"Remember the energy source Frank was after?" I asked and she nodded "Well this is it" I said motioning towards my necklace.

She laughed "You're pulling my leg right?" she asked and I shook my head solemnly.

"And somehow I can control the energy in some kind of telekinetic sort of way, I don't know much about it. I'm still trying to..." I said and she stopped me.

"Did you just say control it? Like superpowers?" she asked her eyes wide,

I nodded again and she laughed hysterically "Are you insane?" she asked between laughing. I saw that she wouldn't believe me unless I showed her; I

sighed and focused. My gaze shifted to the pot flower on the side of the building and I heard Carmen gasp.

"God Lucky! Your necklace is glowing, does it always do that?" she asked and I shook my head knowing I had control over the thing I moved it towards her. She let out a faint scream at the floating pot plant.

Her eyes frantically shifted from me to the plant "Please tell me you're not doing that" she said.

I chuckled "I am doing that" I said and laid the plant back in its place, I looked at Carmen as she covered her mouth with both her hands.

"Impossible, Lucky how in the world..." she said and I stopped her

"Honestly no one knows, all that I know is that It can never come off my neck" I offered and her dark eyes narrowed.

"What will happen if it does?" she asked, her voice slightly uneasy

I looked down "I'll die" I said looking at her as she leaned her back against the wall; completely shocked.

"But as long as it stays there you'll be fine right?" she asked and I nodded, she seemed to relax a bit at that.

She chuckled a bit "Good, we want Barbie to fight another day" she said and I laughed with her. I always loved Carmen's carefree character, even in sticky situations.

"Honestly though that was cool!" she added and I nodded excitedly "What other things can you do with that baby" she asked and I continued to tell her about the training I've been doing. She seemed genuinely intrigued.

When the last week ended we all gathered in the hall for the Officers to brief us, Carmen and I walked in the hall; some were already seated.

"Barbie! Carmen!" some group of woman called out and waved, we both smiled and returned the gesture.

"Can you believe we actually did it?" she asked chuckling

"No, honestly that first day quitting crossed my mind" I said laughing with her as we took our seats. We all rose as the Officers entered the hall by their rankings followed by our instructors.

Johnson was the first one to step up to the podium and brief us; we all couldn't help but smile as she subtly said she was proud of us. After a couple instructors said a few words Officer Harley stepped up. Commenting on our training and what will be expected of us as CIA agents from now on.

"Your training as a secret agent does not end here, you must constantly grow and expand your knowledge and capabilities through hard work" she said, "But for now you can pat yourself on the back as you've survived our rigorous training" she added, a slight smile playing on the corners of her lips.

"This facility is proud of each and every one of you, go out there and don't let us down," she said "This is where we part ways but we are never far away, we'll be watching" she added sparing me a sideways glance.

"We will meet at the LA headquarters for your official ceremony, until then." she said nodding as we all rose again saluting.

They all went out of the hall the same way they came in, and the cheering and hooting erupted throughout the hall.

14. Reunion

Jesse POV

“Good morning” Maria said enthusiastically as I sat on the kitchen counter

“Morning” I replied as I drank the coffee she lay on the table. I couldn’t help but chuckle at Maria’s barely contained excitement at Lucky’s return.

Glad to see I was not the only one terribly missing her. This whole castle has felt empty without her; she was its sunshine.

“Don’t you look happy today?” she teased and I chuckled

“Well I have reason to be, it’s been a long 4 weeks” I said eating my breakfast and she nodded tersely.

“What time are they arriving?” she asked

“In the afternoon” I said “You might want to call Ally and Mandy over, they’ve been howling me on when she’s coming back” I added.

Maria laughed as we ate breakfast together; my cousins have taken it upon themselves to prepare a winter collection for Lucky’s wardrobe. Their excuse is that styling a woman is more fun and challenging than a man. I knew Lucky wouldn’t like it but I didn’t want to interfere.

“I have to check in at work first” I said standing up, me and my uncle Ben were working on closing a multi-million dollar deal with Jenkins Corp. Hopefully by the time we meet again both parties would be ready to make the deal. I was able to negotiate a couple of important aspects on my chance encounter with them in Bermuda. But we are yet to make it official.

Maria nodded and I went into my garage, I got in the Benz and drove out of the estate. I have been thinking about taking Lucky back to my hometown in Texas, that’s a part of my life...a part of me I wanted her to know. I myself have not been down there in 5 years, there were things I knew I had to put to rest and I wanted Lucky to be there when I did.

I entered the reception and was immediately surrounded by my entourage, giving me things to sign and approve, thank heavens multi tasking was one of my strongest traits.

I sat down on my chair and Bianca entered smiling and extending her hellos, she started giving me a run down of my schedule for this morning as I worked on my computer.

“Set up a meeting with the finance department, and clear my schedule for the rest of this afternoon” I said and she agreed.

I sat back on my seat scrutinizing her more; I’ve really overworked the poor girl over these last few weeks. Partially due to me distracting myself from missing Lucky by burying myself in my work. But the whole thing with Jenkins Corp has been hectic and time consuming.

“Take the rest of the day off,” I said and she looked at me wide eyed “I’ve been working you too much” I added.

She shrugged “Its no problem, besides I love this job” she said smiling genuinely.

Bianca hid behind the competent PA act but I knew she still hovered feelings for me, as did other women. But I didn’t dawn on them too much as only one

woman mattered to me in this world. "I insist," I said but she shook it off so I decided to leave her be.

I drove to the CIA headquarters, I went straight to Bill's office as he has requested to see me before the bus arrives.

"Take a seat Jesse my boy, its good to see you," he said, sitting down. I sat down too "Likewise Bill" I said, glad that our brief indifference was now over. One thing I've always liked about him is that he didn't hold grudges; he dealt with matters accordingly and professionally.

"You must be excited about your fiancée's return," he stated and I nodded smiling. "What did you want to see me about?" I asked.

He picked up a file from a pile of them "Her actually" he said and my eyes narrowed.

"This is an overall evaluation of her performance by Executive Officer Harley and Officer Johnson," he said as he opened it and started reading to me some of their conclusions. My eyes grew wide as Bill read on, it seems Lucky did what she does best. Bill handed me the file and he slumped back to his seat in quiet satisfaction.

"She seemed to have raised a couple of eyebrows at the facility, Officer Harley does not give compliments lightly," he said grinning.

I nodded reverently going through the file; Officer Harley was one of the most respected female undercover agents, and one of the fiercest women in the agency. Her saying such things about Lucky was utterly astonishing.

Bill and I talked more about Lucky and I and our future in the agency, he seemed happy to be keeping both of us. I said my goodbyes and left.

I drove to the recruitment facility and found a couple of other people waiting for the bus to arrive. I waited 10 more minutes then I saw the bus enter.

It stopped and some of the women began exiting the bus, everyone seemed to be in good spirits. I saw Lucky come out with that Carmen woman, not seeing her for so long made me slightly forget just how breathtaking she was. She didn't seem to notice me staring at her as she was chatting to the women next to her. She wasn't kidding about being friends with Carmen, they seemed like long time buddies. I had the pleasure of watching her take her hair down and run her fingers through it absently. Glad to see that her luscious hair almost grew back to its normal length. Her eyes shifted around and her gaze met mine, a wide smile spread across her face; I couldn't help but smile back. She seemed to be saying her goodbyes to Carmen parting with a tight hug and walked towards me.

That's when I really looked at her; one thing that didn't change was her sweet and approachable demeanor, although now it had some edge to it. The biggest change I noticed was her body *my God* just when I thought it couldn't get anymore perfect. I swallowed hard; I couldn't wait to see what it looked like with her clothes off. The thought alone was making my whole body ache.

"Jesse" she said softly wrapping her arms around me, my arms went around her waist lifting her off the ground.

"Hey little one" I said kissing her, and she smiled when I sat her down

She sighed "God I've missed those" she breathed and I chuckled. I breathed in her alluring scent; she always had her own distinctive smell that was just delicious to me. The perfume she always wore only complemented it.

"There's more where that from" I said and she giggled "I've missed you" I said

"As I have you. I'm just glad I'm here with you now" she said as she lay her head on my chest "What did I promise to do when I came back?" she asked.

I laughed resting my chin on top of her head "Be selfish" I said "And what did I promise to do when you did?" I teased.

"Not complain," she said chuckling lifting her head to look at me, I only noticed there was someone calling her when her green gaze shifted to the side.

"Barbie! Its been fun" some woman called out waving at her and she smiled

"It has" she replied waving her off too.

Why was the woman calling her Barbie? Was that a nickname they gave her? I was about to burst into laughter when her gaze silenced me.

"It's a long story, don't ask," she muttered unlocking her arms around me, I went to get the door for her and she climbed in.

We arrived home to find everyone there; they had practically set up a welcome home party. Angela squealed in excitement and ran to Lucky hugging her tightly

"Welcome home babe" she said and Lucky smiled.

"Thanks, gosh I've missed you all so much" she said hugging Ally and Mandy too

"Well thank heavens your hair grew back," Mandy said, touching it "Though it needs serious emergency treatment now"

"Agreed" Ally chimed and Lucky rolled her eyes.

"Don't you two ever stop?" she asked and they both said no. We all laughed with them. She finished hugging everyone else and I put my arm around her, still excited over having her back. My life just wasn't the same without her anymore. We sat in the lounge as Lucky told us stories from her training and everything in between. I listened intently, no wonder she did so well there. She never saw the whole process as punishment or hell, somehow I was glad then that I let her do this. Not that I was afraid she would resent me later on but because of the pride and glitter in her green eyes as she talked about her experience there.

My chef cooked us a gourmet meal, I couldn't help but smile looking at the faces of my family around the huge dining table. The only people missing here was uncle Ben and my parents.

We said goodbye to my cousins as Maria and Angela did the dishes in the kitchen

"You owe us a visit girl," Ally said at the door and Lucky smiled

"I promise to visit a.s.a.p." she said and they both smiled.

"Besides we have to show you your winter wardrobe" Mandy said and Lucky's smile fell as she glared between my cousins and me.

I held up my hands "I have nothing to do with this" I said stifling a chuckle

She groaned, "I can't believe you two," she bellowed but they seemed only amused. "The sooner you appreciate fashion the better for everyone" Ally offered

"You mean the better for you" Lucky corrected rolling her eyes.

"Of course" Mandy said laughing and Lucky laughed too in spite of herself.

"Get out of here" she teased, hugging them one last time. We waved them off as their Bentley convertible drove out of the estate. She turned to look at me

"Don't think you're off the hook, you are just as guilty as they are" she said.

This time I couldn't hold it back, I burst into laughter. She let out an annoyed sound turning,

God I've missed her I thought as I followed her back inside.

We were on the couch when Maria and Angela said their goodnights and left us alone. She played with collar of my shirt as I stroked her hair; she lifted her head from my chest.

"Did I tell you how handsome you are?" she asked, that threw me for a bit then I chuckled at her confession.

"You do wonders for a man's ego little one" I teased as she rolled her eyes "But don't let me stop you" I added amused. Lucky didn't frequently comment on my looks, so when she did it was priceless. I've had people tell me I'm good looking my whole life but when Lucky said it, it was truly delightful.

"You have the most intense blue eyes I've ever seen. Your sensual mouth drives me crazy" she giggled touching it with her fingers "And that rock hard body of yours is worthy of worshipping" she added.

I smiled leaning to brush my lips against hers and they parted for me, I always loved how she reacted to my touch, it was electric.

"And?" I breathed and she moaned

"There should be a special rehab for Jesse addicts such as myself" she whispered.

I chuckled taking her mouth, kissing it passionately. I felt that familiar spark of desire rise within me, I welcomed it with open arms. Letting it completely consume me. She pulled away gasping for breath

"Hell I'm certainly not going to Lucky rehab, I'm taking this drug forever" I purred and she chuckled as I lifted her into my arms carrying her upstairs.

15. Recognition

Lucky POV

Keeping my promise to be selfish, I spent every minute with Jesse. The only time we separated was when he had to go to work. Having spent a week back home my ceremony was tomorrow and I was beyond excited.

Much to my annoyance Jesse gave me my credit card yesterday; it was black and shiny like the rest of his. Except that it had my name on it "Use it," he said sternly.

Fat chance of that happening, he and his cousins have already spent money I didn't even want to think about on my behalf.

I went into his garage and stole one of his cars; I agreed to meet with Carmen in the city. I wanted to go back to work but I didn't know how Jesse would take that. I missed work, besides I didn't want to be the typical housewife.

I glanced at my ring as I drove away, I felt good to have it on my finger again. It felt wrong without it, like something was missing. I thanked the heavens that Jesse would choose to wed me of all people; the idea still baffled me. I guess I would ask *why me* for the rest of my life.

I met with Carmen at restaurant; it was good catching up with her outside of the facility. We talked about almost everything, we were both excited about tomorrow. I was losing track of time.

Soon enough the sun was starting to set, I said bye to Carmen and went to Jesse's Porsche driving home.

I parked in the garage to see all of Jesse's cars there; he beat me home. I went into the lounge to see him on the couch; he was still wearing his work clothes. He had his sleeves rolled up and the first 3 buttons of his shirt undone, revealing his muscular chest; *damn* I swooned inwardly. I walked up to him

"If you didn't just look at me like that, I would've been fuming at you," he said

I looked at him puzzled "What? Why?" I asked.

"You told nobody where you went" he clarified, slight irritation in his tone

"I left a note" I said.

"I saw it, after worrying sick. Your phone was on voicemail." He said

I took out my phone and frowned "Oh, battery died" I said sighing.

He shook his head, grinning, "If you weren't an agent I would've considered getting you a bodyguard" he said wrapping his arms around me.

"Then thank God I 'am" I said, the thought of being followed everywhere by some scary looking guy unsettled me.

"From the look on your face I would've gotten a protest" he said sure of himself.

"You damn right" I said. Then I shook my head, remembering that this was Jesse I was talking to "But it wouldn't have mattered, would it?" I asked, already knowing the answer. Jesse did what he wanted, despite my protests.

He smirked "No." he said leaning down and giving me his famous 'don't argue with me' kiss.

"I hate you." I breathed as he nibbled on my lower lip.

"Yes and I'm Jesus Christ" he teased and I chuckled in spite of myself, that's another thing he countered me with, his sense of humor.

"That's enough you two" Maria said smiling "Dinner is ready" she added.

I wore one of my many Victoria's Secret nightgowns and walked out to find Jesse on the bed with his arms folded under his head.

"Nice" he said looking me up and down, sitting up. I resisted a blush

"I still can't believe you had your closet extended for my own clothes," I said jumping on the bed next to him. Laying my head on the pillows

"You didn't expect to be sleeping in any other bed besides my own did you?" He asked leaning down with me.

"No, I'm your fiancée" I said smiling,

"That you are" he said, I felt the tip of his nose brush up and down my neck, he seemed to be inhaling deeply.

I decided it was time to broach the subject of my wanting to go back to work

"I wanted to ask you something." I started.

"Shoot" he said not stopping caressing my neck with his nose. It was really starting to turn me on; then again everything Jesse did turned me on, sometimes without even trying.

"I want to go back to work." I said thinking it was best to just come out and say it,

That did the trick; he abruptly stopped. He lifted his head looking at me

"You never have to work a day in your life little one" he pointed out. I sighed; he didn't understand, of course I knew he would take care of me. Hell, my whole wardrobe was worth more than a year's salary, but that's beside the point.

"I know that, but I love my job and I miss it." I said and he chuckled

"I won't stop you from doing what you love Lucky" he said, "I don't have a problem with it."

That was easy "Really?" I asked

"Yes." he said and resumed doing what he was earlier, except now with his mouth. I closed my eyes enjoying the amazing sensation "I have a preposition of my own," he said quietly.

"I wanted to take you to Texas, to my hometown" he added, now it was my turn to be shocked, my eyes flashed open and I turned to look at him. For a moment I was speechless, he smiled understanding my expression "There's something I want to do, just say you'll come with me" He said.

I nodded "Of course, I'd love to" I heard myself say. He grinned wrapping his arms around me. I wondered what it was Jesse was going to do there; I knew it was going to be hard anyway. He didn't like to entertain his past a lot and with good reason. He faced tragic loss and pain and by some miracle I have his heart now. I silently promised him that he'd never feel such pain again where I was concerned. I'd try my best to make him happy, somehow I thought of his mother. I looked at my ring, I'm sure if she was alive that's all she'd ask of me. I could hear his breathing change into a slow and even pace, he'd fallen asleep. I smiled closing my eyes too.

I woke up to the sound of water running from the bathroom, it abruptly stopped. Today was the day of the ceremony; I don't think I've ever been this excited about anything. Not even when Jesse took me to his island.

He came out with a towel around his hips and his black hair damp "Morning beautiful, excited?" he asked leaning to me.

"Very" I said lifting my chin so he could kiss me. My hands involuntarily went to his bare chest and down to the towel around him. I heard him chuckled against me,

"Trust me you don't want to do that or we'll end up missing the ceremony," he said and I immediately pulled away and quickly got off the bed. Darting towards the bathroom "Slow down, we've got time" he said.

I looked back to see him laughing hysterically before I closed the door.

We arrived at the headquarters at noon, I got out of the car to see Carmen looking around frantically "Carmen" I called out to her and she looked at me relief painted on her expression.

"Lucky I've been looking everywhere for you, I thought you'd already gone inside" she said, I raised my eyebrows at her

"I'm not late, am I?" I asked; I was sure we got here on time.

"No" she said handing me what looked like uniform "They just gave us these a moment ago" she added.

"Thanks you're a lifesaver, is it time?" I asked and she nodded

"I should go get seated." Jesse said kissing my forehead "See you out there" he said turning and walking away.

I stared after him then felt a hand pull me "Come on lovesick fool" Carmen teased dragging me with her, we laughed as we entered from the back of the hall.

We found a couple of women already in their uniform, some chatting and greeting each other.

Carmen and I went to the bathroom to change into classic khaki military uniform, I adjusted my nametag and wore the hat. For the first time in a long time I felt proud of myself, I achieved something even I thought I couldn't.

We walked back out to see a woman walk in

"10 minutes ladies, wait for my signal and then you can go out" she said and walked out. I turned to Carmen

"Is there anyone coming to see you?" I asked and she shook her head

"No, my family does not know what I'm doing. I'd rather much let it stay that way," she said and I nodded in understanding. My mom and Jenna would kill me if they knew what I did, what I was going to do.

"Well at leased you have me" I offered and she smiled

We waited a moment then the woman came back in and told us to go, we went through a passage and onto the stage of the hall. I saw Officer Harley on the podium and we lined up behind her. She gave a speech about our training and individual performances, I glanced to the crowd and saw Jesse in the second row. He grinned at me and I couldn't help but return the gesture.

The crowd cheered after Harley's speech and Johnson walked to the stage holding a huge platter filled with golden CIA special agent badges.

"These badges signify their achievement and recognition as CIA level 3 agents" Harley said walking towards us.

She picked up the badges one by one clamping them to our uniform, she shook all our hands congratulating us and moving on.

"Well done Strauss," she said clamping the badge to mine and shaking my hand, I gave her a curt nod in acknowledgement. Johnson walked off when Harley was done, turning back to the podium.

"On behalf of the CIA I'd like to welcome you to our forces, lets all rise for our newly recruited secret agents" she said and the crowd stood up cheering. She gestured for them to be quiet "The recruitment facility now declare this ceremony over" she said giving a curt nod.

Everyone saluted as she and her sub-commissioners left the hall followed by our respective Officers. All the women threw their hats in the air as the crowd cheered again and hooted; I took off mine letting it drop to the floor smiling to myself. I let my hair down as Carmen came over and hugged me.

"We're agents!" she said excitedly and I laughed

"I know!" I said incredulously as we walked off stage, I looked at Jesse and we walked over to him.

"Agent Strauss, Jones" he saluted and we both laughed and saluted back,

"Agent Gilbert" I acknowledged, Carmen smiled and turned to me.

"I'll catch up with you later" she said, I nodded not taking my eyes off Jesse and she walked away.

"Excuse me for being forward but there's nothing more sexier than a woman in uniform," he said and I chuckled, "Yeah right" I said hugging him.

"Congratulations little one, I'm proud of you," he said fervently and I blushed Touching my badge. "So if I'm a level 3 agent, then what are you?" I asked

"Elite agent" he said tucking a strand of hair behind my ear "My badge is platinum" he added.

I playfully frowned "Overachiever" I spat and he chuckled

"Bill wants to see us" he said and I looked at him confused "Now? What about?" I asked.

"I don't know either, let's go find out," he said grabbing my hand "Come on"

16. Mission

Lucky POV

Jesse and I went into the underground offices; I considered what Bill could possibly want from the both of us. We walked into his office and he stood up and greeted us and we took our seats.

"I heard today was your ceremony, congratulations" he said sitting down

"Thank you" I said.

"I got a mission for you" he said looking at Jesse "Our good friend Chuck Cooper has a security memory chip he stole from us, we need to retrieve it back immediately. We cannot have him access top secret information in that chip." He added.

"I'm in" Jesse said with a grin "I haven't seen him in a while" he added

Wait if this was a mission for Jesse, what was I doing here?

"Um where do I fit in all of this?" I asked dumbfounded, Bill smiled.

"You're going to set things into motion, we are going for the element of surprise. He already knows he's a CIA target," he said "The guy probably sleeps with bodyguards," he added with a chuckle.

"You mean Lucky should go after him first?" Jesse asked

Bill nodded "He already knows you, and most likely knows our other good agents as well, but he doesn't know her. She can really go undercover undetected" he clarified. I smiled, my very first mission. And I get to do it with Jesse.

"What must I do?" I asked, as he stood up switching his monitor on

"Like I said the guy probably has bodyguards in the bathroom, we need to set up a trap for him. Get him alone and unprotected, this will make getting it

back quicker and simpler” he said, “Once he’s alone, you come in Jesse and finish the job” he added. Jesse nodded

“And how is she going to go about this?” he asked, his eyes narrowing.

“Chuck loves to go to burlesque club in South Hill Street every Wednesday, that’s the best place to catch him off guard” he said.

A burlesque club, me? Oh no. Just then Jesse started laughing hysterically

I stood up “You want me to go undercover as a stripper?” I asked

This is not my ideal mission; I’d probably blow my cover. I didn’t know the first thing about stripping except that it’s disgusting and degrading. Then I remembered that to do this agent thing I have to sacrifice who I ‘am for what the situation requires me to be; even a stripper. I sat back down

“Exotic dancer” he clarified “Will that be a problem? Should we find someone else?” Bill asked and I shook my head.

“No” I said, Jesse was stifling a laugh when I glared at him “You’re loving this, aren’t you?” I asked.

“Tremendously” he said, “I hate to say this...” he added

“Then don’t,” I said chuckling too. He got me, he warned me about this but I insisted I could do anything. But I wouldn’t give him the satisfaction of watching me chicken out. I turned to Bill

“I’ll do it but I don’t know anything about dancing in a burlesque club” I said

“Don’t worry about that, you’ll work with the club’s choreographer for the next two days. You should be ready by Wednesday.” He replied.

“I’ll give you the building’s floor plans so you know where to do this” he added.

“Alright, anything else?” Jesse asked,

“That’s everything, you got one chance to do this or he might think of skipping the country,” he said.

“Got it” Jesse said and we stood up, Bill thanked us and we went out of his office.

“Welcome to the world of secret agents love” he teased kissing my hand

“Shut up” I said then I thought of something, beating him at his own game. I sighed theatrically “I wonder what my fiancé would think about me parading around perverted men in sexy costumes” I said, he froze and I stifled a smile.

He looked down on me and I gave him an innocent look “You play dirty” he said.

He always says that whenever I get him, I stuck my tongue out at him and he chuckled. After saying goodbye to Carmen we drove back home, discussing how we’ll go about getting Chuck.

Even though the whole stripping part bothered me, at least I got to work with Jesse, how many rookie agents can brag about that?

We drove up the driveway only to see a dark blue BMW convertible there, I didn’t recognize the car.

“Whose car is that?” I asked as we got out, he smiled

“Yours” he said simply, I stared at him wide eyed. “What? You bought me a car?” I asked incredulous. He nodded

“That’s the Z4 roadster, fast pretty little thing” he said looking at it “Its in your favorite color” he added and I threw my arms up

“That’s beside the point, I’m not taking it. You might as well add it to your long list of collections” I said and he frowned

"I can't, the car was practically custom made for you," he said

"What do you mean?" I asked and he grabbed my hand leading me towards the car and opened the door gesturing for me to get in.

I groaned and got in, I gasped as I looked around. It had breathtaking ivory white interior, but more so because my name was printed on the leather seats in handwriting I recognized all too well. It was printed in the same blue of the exterior. I looked at him even more shocked now "But how?" I asked

"I signed it myself and sent it to the customizers" he said, but I just continued to stare at the car in awe. He continued to sell me on the car, telling me about the cool things he had installed. I knew he was trying to sell me on it and damn it was working.

I had an appointment with the choreographer of the club the next day; according to Bill my alias was Rose Ginger. I had to wear a blonde wig, and contacts, which made my eyes, have a strange brown color. I went down to the club, parking the BMW far enough so I could walk there. I doubted strippers owned such cars.

According to the manager I was the new girl, that would get a solo performance on Wednesday, I'm pretty sure Jesse had something to do with that. The choreographer introduced herself as Hilary; she was nice enough.

She taught me the group routine and the solo one I would be doing on the stage and pole, glad I didn't blush at the blatantly sexy moves. While in between I checked out the building and where we could hold Chuck without drawing too much attention.

On Tuesday we were putting the finishing touches to my routine, just when I thought the routine was sexy; the costumes were worse. I decided to fish for information about their clientele, fortunately Hilary mentioned Chuck as one of the club's most loyal visitors. I fished some more and she told me that he had a reserved seat and what he normally did here, I had to stifle a cringe every time.

Wednesday Jesse and I went into his secret room he grabbed a couple of gadgets and guns. He dressed in a dark grey slacks and a red plaid shirt; he had its sleeves rolled up. He looked absolutely magnetic

"Are you ready?" he asked as we got in his Bugatti.

"Hell yes, lets get this bastard," I said and he chuckled, speeding out of the estate.

Maria felt better that I was doing this mission with Jesse, although I didn't tell her about the stripping part of it. He parked at the back of the club so I could get out "I wont be far, signal me when you have him" he said kissing my forehead. I nodded already feeling adrenaline course through me. His car drove away and I went in through the back door

I was immediately met by a heavily tattooed redhead "Who are you?" she asked.

"Rose, I'm the new girl" I said and she nodded

"Go get dressed, the group act goes on in 20 minutes" she said and walked away

I went into the dressing room to see other girls get ready; I quickly grabbed a costume and got dressed. Walking to the mirror and doing my pinup girl makeup

"Apparently she's the new girl, getting a solo today" I heard some woman whisper, "What? A new girl never gets a solo, something's not right here," another one said.

I tried to avoid them and act like I didn't hear anything, the redhead came back and told us to take our places, and I took my position in the middle. My heart was beating out of my chest, I knew I was a fairly good dancer but I'd never done anything like this before. The curtain came up and the spotlight flashed on us as the music began. Being trained to perfect everything had its perks, I easily remembered what moves to make and when. I looked at the crowd and like Hilary said I saw Chuck in his special seat in front of the stage *perfect, right where I want him* I thought. I looked further and saw a recognizable figure on the dark spot next to the Bar in the back. Jesse had a hat pulled low over his eyes so I couldn't see them, and he was smoking a cigar? Jesse didn't smoke.

Nice cover I thought, I wouldn't have recognized him if I wasn't so in love with him. If I didn't know the exact build of his body or the set of his strong square jaw, He looked devastatingly sexy at that moment.

The song ended and the crowd cheered as the curtains came down, I immediately ran to the dressing room. I changed into my solo costume, it was a skimpy policewoman costume, I couldn't help but smile knowing that there was a weird connection there. Since I was working for the CIA.

I walked back to the stage taking my position and a couple of deep breaths. Soon enough the spotlight was on again, I knew I had to do this to a tee in order to get Chuck's attention. For a moment I pretended like there was no one else there, that I was dancing for Jesse only. Keeping up the charade I picked up the dollar bills they gave. I hoped these men didn't make an attempt to touch me because my cranky fiancé was in the room. And they may not wake up with their arms in check tomorrow.

I lingered in front of Chuck trying to give him the most seductive stare I could master. Thankfully the music ended and the crowd cheered, part 1 was complete. I started calculating part 2 of my plan when I went into the dressing room. I didn't miss the three huge bodyguards behind him, but hopefully he'd agree to go alone with me. Still wearing my costume I walked through the club, towards him. He already had two women sitting on his lap, he shooed them away when he saw me approaching. I bent down and whispered in his ear that I wanted to give him a private lap dance; his excitement was evident in his eyes.

"Follow Me," I purred and he got up, I saw his bodyguards shift too "You might want to leave them behind, what we'll be doing is not for a crowd" I purred.

"Don't worry baby I'll send them away and be with you in a moment" he said, I smiled victorious. I took steps back to give them some privacy; they seemed to be arguing. I glanced in Jesse's direction and he tilted his hat up slightly motioning with his fingers for me to come over. Chuck seemed preoccupied with his men so I walked over to him. He laid his cigar on the ashtray and grabbed my waist pulling me closer, his blue gaze holding mine relentlessly. He lifted my leg up a little, I felt his hand slide up my skirt and place what felt like a small pistol in my garter belt. He let me go and pulled his hat back down on his eyes then I felt someone roughly tug at my arm.

"Have you forgotten who you booked slut?" Chuck spat irritated, I stifled a flinch just as I saw Jesse's fists clench. I tore my eyes away from Jesse and walked

away with Chuck following behind, at least with no bodyguards this time. I led him to the room Jesse indicated upstairs of the club. I closed the door behind me as he sat down on a wooden armchair. "What are you going to do to be baby?" he asked and I smiled pulling out handcuffs "You're under arrest" I said.

He smiled as I placed the handcuffs on both sides of his hands, locking him to the chair. *Idiot* I thought as I pushed the button on my mic, signaling Jesse to come.

"What are you waiting for sugar?" he asked and I smiled

"Someone you certainly won't like to see" I said, he gave me a confused look just as Jesse walked in, I enjoyed watching Chuck's eyes widen in shock and fear.

"What the fuck?" he said glancing between Jesse and me. He fidgeted with the cuffs, but I made sure they were locked tight. Jesse gave me a long jacket he was carrying; I slid it on glad to be covered up.

"Chuck, long time no see man, you look like you've seen a ghost. Surely you knew this was coming. You have something that's ours, we came to get it back" Jesse said menacingly pulling out his gun and pointing it to him.

He chuckled without humor "Jesse, somehow I knew you were that guy at the bar, you always did wear your intimidating demeanor like a neon sign" he said.

"But being the perverted fool you are, you ignored that" Jesse said

"I heard you put my good friend Frank behind bars again, bravo" he said sarcastically. Jesse shook his head smiling; I blinked a lot to get my contacts out.

"Oh no I didn't do it. She did," he said pointing at me. Chuck's eyes widened as he looked at me "I don't think you've met my fiancée Lucky" he said as I pulled off my wig running my hands through my own hair.

"Even Jesse Gilbert cannot resist the charms of a beautiful woman, good to know" Chuck smiled deviously "I'm going to love pulling her pretty hair out"

Jesse chuckled "I'd love to see you try" he said grabbing his neck "Give me the chip Chuck" he barked. Chuck laughed sadistically

"You think I carry it around with me? I hid it where you would never find it, and I certainly won't tell you where" he said.

"I was hoping you'd say that" Jesse said pulling out a metallic wristband and locking it around Chuck's wrist. It flashed a red light, I realized what it was and I smiled. No wonder Jesse is so respected as an agent; he was again one step ahead of his opponent.

"Listen up Chuck" he said "You are going to get that chip for me and hand it to me down 6th Street Bridge. Fail to do this in an hour and a half and that thing on your wrist will electrocute you to death" he added and Chuck's eyes widened again.

Jesse pulled out a little remote "Don't try anything stupid because I can still make it electrocute you before then, so it's in your best interests that you play along. No one has to get hurt," he said smiling.

"You son of a bitch!" Chuck spat and Jesse punched him so hard I flinched,

"That's for calling my fiancée a slut," he said looking at me "Take the cuffs off him," he added and I nodded.

I pulled out the key and unlocked the handcuffs around his wrists. Jesse just watched as Chuck quickly got up trying to grab my neck, I caught his arm first twisting it with all my might. He let out a cry of pain as I double kicked him on

the head; he fell down. My heels probably scraped his face a little, he groaned. Jesse laughed "Oh I forgot to mention, she's also a secret agent" he said.

Jesse held out his hand for me and I took it "Tick tock Chuck" he called out to him as we went out of the room.

17. Impasse

Jesse POV

I led Lucky to another exit I saw on the floor plans; we couldn't risk drawing attention by going out through the front or back. We went outside and walked to where I parked my Bugatti.

"I must say that watching the maestro at work is exciting," she said holding my arm; I smiled.

"I could say the same about you" I said remembering how she laid Chuck down effortlessly. I didn't help her on purpose to see what she could do, as always I was blown away. "Nice shot by the way" I added and she giggled.

We got in the car and I sped away, I wanted to take her home first. I didn't want her anywhere near when I met Chuck again; I knew he wouldn't make this easy. But knowing she's safe would give me peace of mind. She may be a well-trained agent but to me she's still my Lucky, I don't think I can stop being overprotective of her. "Why are we going home?" she asked as I turned into the road leading to the castle.

"I'm taking *you* home" I said and her eyes widened

"You want to go meet Chuck without me?" she asked raising her voice.

"Yes" I said patiently, I knew she wouldn't like this. She shook her head

"No, no I'm coming with you Jesse. I'm in this mission too." She said.

"I know that, but Chuck is as devious as Frank. I don't want you to be around if he tries anything stupid" I said and her hand rubbed her forehead.

"Don't do this to me please Jesse" she pleaded, I parked in the driveway of the castle, I turned to her and smiled apologetically. I was going to have to do some serious begging and apologizing when I get back.

"I'm sorry little one, I can't do anything rational when I think you're in danger" I said "You have my heart, keep it safe for me please" I pleaded lifting my hand to stroke her soft cheek, she backed away. I dropped my hand; she only did that when she was furiously angry.

"You know you're going to pay for this right?" she asked and I smiled slightly

"I know," I said "And you know I'm going to make it up to you right?" I asked.

She groaned and got out of the car without giving me a reply, slamming the door. I watched her go through the front door before I sped back to the city.

I parked down 6th Street Bridge and got out of the car, it was 11 pm and according to my timer Chuck had about 20 minutes to show up. I checked my guns; with Lucky safe I was ready to dance with Chuck and his men if needed be. 10 minutes later a black sedan came into view and parked a considerable distance from me. I saw a couple of men walk out and then I saw Frank get out holding some ice to his jaw, I stifled a smile.

He had three of his men lead him in front then stop a couple of feet away from me, they pulled out their guns and I followed suit.

"Chuck for once don't be a knucklehead, you have 9 minutes to give me that chip or you're going to die weather they shoot me or not." I said.

I heard him hiss at them to put their guns down "Good, now throw the chip" I said, he shook his head

"You get this thing off me first" he said and I chuckled

"That's not going to work, if I do that you might run. Besides I have no desire to kill you if you do give me the chip" I said "Right now you need me more than I need you because in 6 minutes that thing will electrocute you, I will kill your men and take the chip anyway. So why not at leased walk away with your life in check?" I asked; he let out an exasperated sound thinking for a moment.

"There's nothing you can do Chuck" I said "3 minutes" I added.

"Fuck you Jesse, I hope you burn the darkest pits of hell" he cursed and threw the chip; I smiled catching it, quickly checking if it was the real one. The thing that pleased me the most is that the information contained in the chip cannot be duplicated. I entered the code and the wristband beeped and unlocked.

Chuck whispered something to his men "Give it a rest Chuck, you lost, you're fortunate I'm even letting you walk away from this. You belong in prison along with your friend Frank" I said, "Try anything stupid and I will have all of your heads, and you know it," I said pointing at Chuck.

"Love and this business do not mix Jesse, I thought you of all people would testify that" he said harshly "Didn't anyone ever tell you its dangerous to have a weakness," he added chuckling darkly.

I smiled unfazed by his little statement; I've been through this more than I even cared to get worked up over their bitter remarks.

"Didn't anyone ever tell you that weakness could kick your ass?" I said opening the door to my car "It was a pleasure Chuck" I added getting in, I drove passed them. They shot at my car but I only laughed at their silly attempts, I bulletproofed all my cars.

I parked in my garage and got out; now for a more difficult mission, facing Lucky's wrath. I chuckled to myself as I entered the lounge; it was past midnight so everyone was asleep by now. I went upstairs, light was still emanating from my room, and I sighed. Somehow I'd hoped she'd fallen asleep, but karma had another idea. Lucky had the mother of all tantrums, which I couldn't help but find cute and sexy at times. But the best thing about her is that she didn't hold grudges. I walked in to see her on the bed reading a book; she looked up and smiled. She got off the bed to hug me; that was a surprise. I didn't think she'd get over her ire this fast.

"I thought you were going to make me pay," I said tightening my arms around her; I lifted her up and carried her back to bed.

"That part is still coming," she said kissing me "I was worried about you" she said

"I told you not to little one" I said, lying her down "I'm always careful, there's no need to worry" I added. She pursed her lips.

"So I'm not allowed to worry about you but you can be overprotective and overbearing?" she asked and I chuckled.

"Exactly" I said turning to the closet, I felt a pillow hit me and I laughed "And you call *me* immature" I added, closing the doors before she could throw another one.

I got out of my clothes and wore my pajamas trousers, I went back out, she glared at me and I stifled a smile "Where were we?" I asked.

"You sleeping on the floor" she said getting under the covers and turning her back on me.

"As you wish love," I said grabbing the pillow she threw and laid my head on it, I stared at the ceiling and waited patiently. I knew Lucky found it hard to sleep when she wasn't in my arms, she told me this a few times.

6 minutes later she groaned and sat up "Get in" she ordered pulling the covers aside for me. "I can't sleep without you and you know that," she said pointing a finger at me as I got beside her. I shook my head innocently at her and she chuckled in spite of herself "Liar" she said laying her head on my chest.

I smiled wrapping my arms around her, "Forgive me little one," I said softly.

She sighed, "You infuriate me Gilbert, but I love you to pieces and it just makes me even more angry" she said quietly.

"You can take shots at me if it makes you feel better" I offered and she giggled

"That won't help either," she said.

"What if I said I loved you to pieces too" I said kissing her hair. She nuzzled her head onto me,

"Thank your guardian angels that those words mean the world to me" she said and I chuckled. "I got another idea of how you could release some of that frustration and it does not involve much talking or hitting," I said, my hand brushing her neck and her shoulder. I gently brushed my knuckles against her nipple over the silk gown, she gasped and arched her back.

"Bring on the handcuffs, I'm your prisoner," I said and she chuckled,

"Hush and love me," she said and I gladly complied.

18. Surprise Visit

Lucky POV

Thanksgiving was amazing, for the first time I had a family to celebrate the holidays with. Last year I didn't even go back home for them, I was too caught up with everything else to even care about the holidays.

I called home to wish them a happy thanksgiving, everyone sounded happy and well. With Jesse taking me to Texas in a week from now, I had asked him if I could take him back home to meet the rest of my family. Besides I haven't told them we were engaged, how better to break the news than in person.

Jesse agreed that we'd go there around the festive holidays; I knew my family would be ecstatic. My abrupt departure left them worried, I knew that seeing me this happy would put those to rest for good.

I also went back to work which felt good, everyone welcomed me back with open arms, I was granted a lengthy leave, which had Jesse written all over it.

Though now everyone treated me a little differently, giving me unnecessary attention, Abby was even worse. But then again she's always been like that.

She couldn't stop talking about my ring or 'rock' as she called it. Or ogling at my BMW everyday, one day she brought a tabloid magazine and laid it on my table.

"You're like a celebrity now" she said excitedly, I looked up from my computer

"What are you talking about?" I asked and she opened the magazine and held up a page in my face. I looked at it a little shocked

The headline read; *"It couple hit the beach in style"*

I remembered when the picture was taken, Jesse decided to take me to Malibu beach before it got too cold and I didn't even know there were any paparazzi there. "No I'm not," I said and she shook her head, sitting down

"Of course you are, you even got offered a modeling job," she pointed out.

"And I turned it down" I said, I had no interest in entering the world of showbiz, I never did. I wanted to live a normal life and be a normal person...well as normal as can be.

"Yeah and I'm still mad at you for that" she muttered and I chuckled "I could've went to high-end fashion shows for free" she added crossing her arms.

"Sorry" I said pulling out her favorite cupcakes I picked up from Starbucks on my way to work.

She squealed, "You're forgiven," she said taking a bite and moaning, I tried to pick up one and she slapped my hand away; I chuckled.

It was Saturday and Jesse got up for work, he was a workaholic; then again I guess he would've been able to take G-Industries to new heights if he wasn't. I decided to visit Carmen; I didn't even want to tell her I was coming over. She seemed pleasantly surprised. She had a house in a posh suburb; it was big considering that she only lived alone. She had a high position in a communications company, she too worked on the weekends sometimes, but this

time she was free. We talked about a mission she just completed 2 days ago, I was happy for her.

"I hope we get to go on a mission together next time" she said and I nodded fervently, Carmen was a great agent; it would be awesome.

"Yeah, but your not wearing that" I teased, referring to the brown jump suit she wore, then I got an idea.

"What? What's wrong with it?" she asked playfully frowning

"Come on" I said pulling her off the sofa "I'm giving you a makeover" I added.

She froze "Oh hell no" she said, but I continued to tug at her arm.

"You should meet Jesse's cousins, they would just love to work on you," I said ignoring her protest. "I love you but you need a makeover and you know it," I added. She glanced at herself and then groaned,

"You owe me big time" she said grabbing her bag and phone off the counter and we headed outside "And I'm driving," she added.

"Agreed" I said getting in the passenger seat, and she drove away towards the city. She parked on Rodeo drive and I led her to Mandy and Ally's boutique.

We walked in and Ally immediately spotted us "Lucky, what a pleasant surprise"

"Hey Ally," I said hugging her "This is my friend Carmen" I gestured with my hand and they shook hands smiling.

"As you can see my friend needs a serious fashion makeover" I teased and Carmen nudged me on the arm as Ally laughed.

"We'd love to be of service" she said "Mandy?" she called out and Mandy came out from the salon "Oh hey Lucky" she said.

"This is Carmen" Ally told her "fashion makeover" she said and Mandy twined her hands looking Carmen from head to toe.

"Great body, terrible fashion sense, nice features, hair needs highlights though. Yeah we can work with her," Mandy said and both Carmen and I laughed,

"They are fashion agents," I whispered to Carmen who chuckled.

I had to encourage Carmen to go with whatever the girls wanted to do with her, she seemed reluctant but she complied. Like Mandy said they worked on her hair and it looked amazing, they also gave her a facial, manicure and pedicure.

The girls raided they're own boutique and what they didn't have they got from other shops. I barely recognized my friend when she came out of the dressing room. She nervously twirled in front of us

"So? What do you think?" she asked, when we all were silent.

"Um wow" I exclaimed, "You look amazing Carmen," I said

"Don't rub it in, but I'm glad you made me do this" she said looking at herself and I smiled. Mandy told one of her staffers to take the bags to our car, Carmen pulled out her card and Mandy rejected it saying any friend of mine got a free makeover, Carmen insisted but they wouldn't budge.

"How about we settle this over lunch then?" I offered and everyone one at leased agreed to that.

We went to a nice restaurant across the street, we all talked and laughed with each other as we ate. The girls and Carmen seemed to get along very well despite their different interests. I didn't miss the looks the male waiter gave me; it was actually making me feel uncomfortable. Everyone else seemed to notice too because Carmen laughed after he left.

"It must be hard being as pretty as you are," she teased and the girls laughed.

I hung my head "Its actually a little embarrassing" I admitted, and I'm not *that* pretty.

"Yeah well, I'm certain big bro does not appreciate other men sniffing on his territory" Ally said and I nodded suddenly glad he was not here.

"I still think its romantic that he gave you Aunt Jane's ring" Mandy said "So have you set a date yet?" she asked.

"We decided not to rush into getting married," I said and they nodded in understanding. "Yes well you know whom to call when you do," she added.

"Of course, who else would I call?" I said and they laughed.

15 minutes later the girls thanked us for lunch and said their goodbyes,

"I like them hey" Carmen said and I nodded.

"I knew you would" I said smiling "They have that Gilbert charm" I added.

Carmen rolled her eyes "Go see him already" she said chuckling, I looked at her confused "You have 'I miss Jesse' written all over your forehead" she added.

"I don't know I've never visited him at work before" I said reluctantly

"Do you always worry about imposing on people who love you?" she asked, "I mean I had to convince you it was okay to come over whenever you wanted"

She had a point, "Alright, you're coming with me though?" I asked and she nodded.

We drove to the other side of the city, and parked in front of the huge building with G-Industries on top of it.

We walked in through what looked like the main entrance, into a huge work area filled with tables and desks with people working and talking. There weren't many people there as it was a Saturday.

"Jesus, everybody is staring at us," Carmen said as we walked, I tried not to pay them any attention or I'll end up falling.

We walked over to the woman at the back; her table was secluded so we guessed she was the receptionist. We asked her where Jesse's office was and she told us on the 12th floor. This floor had no desks and people; only a few doors here and there, there was another receptionist.

"Jeez how many do they have?" Carmen asked and I shrugged

"I think for every floor," I said and she chuckled.

"Hello" I said to her and she just kept on typing on her computer frantically,

"Yes can I help you?" she asked still staring at her computer.

"Yes, I'm here to see Mr. Gilbert" I said, feeling a little awkward.

"Mr. Gilbert is a very busy man, do you have an appointment?" she asked

"No I..." I replied and she looked up irritated then she suddenly froze.

"Oh, Ms. Strauss correct?" she asked and I nodded "I'll tell him you are here"

"No, just show me his office please" I said and she put the phone down.

"Down the hall to your left, it's the only office there" she said nervously.

I looked at Carmen "Go, I'll wait here" she said and I nodded and walked away.

19. Taking Control

Lucky POV

It was hard to miss the gold plated door sign that said CEO: Jesse Gilbert, I smiled and knocked, there was no reply so I opened the door.

I found him working on his computer; he seemed preoccupied so I surveyed his office. He had probably the hugest desk I've seen in the whole building; it was full but not untidy. It had two single couches and one recliner on the side, complemented by a fancy coffee table. It was pretty amazing even for an office.

He looked up then and his eyes widened a bit; I smiled.

"Surprise" I said walking towards him, he smiled standing up

"Well this is the best surprise I've gotten yet," He said kissing me "To what do I owe the pleasure?"

"Well I was in the neighborhood, I thought I'd stop by and surprise my future hubby" I said and he chuckled.

"Wow" I said looking at the exterior glass wall to the epic view his office had of the city "I've never felt this intimidated by you before" I teased.

"Did my receptionist give you a hard time?" he asked, as I sat on the edge of his desk, he stood in front of me playing with my hair.

"No, she just seemed nervous to see me" I said, he smiled and leaned down to lightly brush his lips across mine, they were barely touching.

"Well you are the boss's fiancée after all," he said and I chuckled

"Look at you blowing your own horn," I teased; I couldn't deny that I found Jesse's arrogance sexy. He carried himself in a way that said the world revolves around me, and it probably did.

"You're welcome to do that too honey" he said kissing me fully; I felt his hand in my hair pulling my head onto him. I wrapped my arms around his waist parting my lips; letting his tongue drive me wild. Then I remembered where we were,

I twisted my lips, pulling them away "Slow down" I breathed.

"How about no" he said, kissing my chin and neck this time around

"Jesse!" bellowed, "One of your employees could walk in any minute," I said and he just continued driving me crazy with his mouth unfazed.

I giggled as he started whispering sweet nothings in my ear, just then his door opened. He made no move to end our embrace so I didn't too

"Cream cappuccino just the way you like..." a woman said walking in before freezing to a halt when she saw me.

She had long bleach blonde hair with dark brown eyes; she was very beautiful and a tad younger than me I guessed.

"Thank you, put it on the table" Jesse said and the woman smiled apologetically and laid the coffee on the table.

"Lucky this is Bianca my PA. Bianca this is my fiancée Lucky" Jesse said not taking his hands off me. I didn't miss the slightly disappointed look she had as Jesse told her who I was, or the infatuated look she gave Jesse.

I put on the best smile I could master and offered her my free hand; she shook it

"It's nice to meet you" she said "Likewise" I replied. She turned to Jesse

"The reps at Jenkins Corp called to say they are ready to meet, he said you should call them back to set it up" she said, and Jesse nodded. She muttered a goodbye and left.

I couldn't help but stare at the door she just went through, a beautiful PA who has feelings for my handsome fiancé was an unsettling scenario.

I felt Jesse's hand tilt my head up to meet his questioning gaze

"So that's Bianca, she's very pretty" I said and he shrugged absently.

"She's a nice girl," he said and I raised my eyebrows

"You think so?" I asked and his brows furrowed in confusion.

"What's that supposed to mean?" he asked then realization lit his blue eyes "I know what you're thinking, don't even go there" he said releasing me to sit on his leather armchair. I turned to him

"What? The girl obviously has serious feelings for you" I said then I saw something pass his expression "You know this?" I asked and he sighed.

"She has expressed some interest in the past but I told her that we could never happen, she knows that," he said.

Not wanting to push him, I just nodded and turned my gaze to the view outside. I wondered how long ago was this exactly because by the looks of things she hasn't gotten over him yet. I wondered if he knew that too.

I felt Jesse's gaze on me but I continued to stare outside, thinking about what this could mean. Maybe I was being jealous or paranoid but there was something that unnerved me about this Bianca woman. Her infatuation with Jesse didn't seem like a normal or healthy one.

"Hey" Jesse said softly, I looked at him and he had his arms extended, I went over to him sitting on his lap. He stroked my cheek gently

"You have nothing to worry about little one, I'm not capable of wanting another woman. When are you going to realize that I only see you?" He asked.

I smiled as his lips lingered on the corner of my mouth. I couldn't deny that the attention and affection Jesse showered me with was a testament to what he was saying. And he was marrying me after all, what more could a girl ask for?

"Although you're cute when you're jealous" he teased and I chuckled

"Oh please you're as jealous as I 'am, I know you wanted to rip that guy's head off at the ball" I said and he threw his head back laughing.

"True" he admitted.

As much as I wanted to stay, I left Carmen waiting alone and Jesse had to go back to work. Giving him one last kiss I went out of his office.

I found Carmen sitting on a couch in the lobby, she got up when she saw me approaching "Why was some blonde crying coming from the office?" she asked.

"What? From Jesse's office?" I asked baffled, and she nodded "That's Bianca Jesse's PA, we just had an awkward meeting" I added.

Carmen's eyes narrowed "Is it?" she asked,

"Yeah, wait but why would she be crying?" I asked as we turned to the hallway leading to the lift. Carmen suddenly stopped me, I looked at her questioningly but she placed her finger on her mouth and then at her ear. She walked closer to the wall and I followed her silently.

"I don't know, it just seems unfair you know. I've had my sights on him ever since I arrived here." A woman said. I peeked to see Bianca and some woman

making coffee on the counter with their backs to us. I looked at Carmen utterly shocked

"But you've seen them in the media for a while now" the other woman replied

"I've seen Jesse with a few of women in the media before, it was never anything this serious. Besides I was sort of hoping they were wrong about them, but seeing them together like that suddenly made it all real" Bianca said sadly.

"I'm sorry girl, what are you going to do?" The woman sympathized

"Right now I have no idea, I can't possibly compete with her..." Bianca said before Carmen pulled me aside.

"So this PA is in love with your fiancé? She's talking about competing with you, what are you going to do about her?" Carmen asked slightly irritated.

"What can I do? I can't change the way she feels about him?" I replied the fury I felt creeping into my voice. Carmen shook her head

"Honey, there are thousands of women who feel that way, but she's his PA. She's the second woman Jesse spends more time with except you, you have to put her in her place. You may trust Jesse but don't make the mistake of trusting her" Carmen said.

She was right, the way Bianca talked about Jesse it seemed as though she was willing to do anything to get him. Willing to try anything to break us up and take him for herself. I was as possessive and territorial as Jesse, and the thought of Bianca making any move towards him made me want to rip her hair out. I nodded as I saw the other woman leave, and Carmen nodded too.

I walked over to the counter grabbing a cup and Carmen followed suit, at first Bianca was shocked to see me then she said a brief hello; I smiled.

"Word of advice" I said, pouring sugar and cream "I'd be very careful when speaking about engaged men, especially if the significant other is in earshot" I said.

Her brown eyes widened in shock "I...I didn't..." she stuttered but I stopped her.

"I don't fault you for having feelings for him Bianca, join the club" I said, fixating my icy gaze on her "But he is mine, hands off him"

She returned the cold look "What? Afraid of a little competition?" she spat.

I chuckled "Sweetie you need to get your eyes checked, did you see the ring on my finger?" I asked and she glanced at it bitterly "There *is* no competition. Game over." I replied.

"Its your choice really" I said "Either I'm going to be your acquaintance or your worst nightmare" I added getting closer to her, towering over her a little.

"Be a good little PA, get him his coffee, compile his schedule, and keep him organized. But cross the line and we're going to have a problem" I said removing a dust patch on her jacket "And trust me you don't want to dance with me, not when it comes to him" I added icily.

The emotion in her eyes was a weird mixture of resentment and fear "I hope we understand each other?" I asked, and she paused then nodded stiffly.

"Good" I said picking up my cup and taking a sip "Be a darling and tell him to come home early today, I have a special treat for him" I said.

Carmen picked up her cup and walked passed Bianca chuckling darkly, for a moment I thought she brushed passed her shoulder. I sighed inwardly, classic Carmen move, she got a kick out of intimidating people.

"One more thing, he is Mr. Gilbert to *you*, I doubt you're on a first name basis with him. Enjoy the rest of your day" I smirked and followed Carmen to the elevators without looking back.

Carmen laughed as we got in the lift "Wow, bravo" she said, "Who knew Barbie could be so fierce" she added. I guess I was a better actor than I thought,

I smiled a little chagrined "I don't know, I kind of feel guilty though," I admitted.

Standing up to Bianca was bittersweet but something just told me that it had to be done. Carmen was right I didn't trust her one bit.

"Don't, you're way too nice for your own good, and women like Bianca take advantage of that." She said solemnly.

"You think she'll back off?" I asked and she smiled again

"She'll be crazy not to, besides you scared her so bad even her false eyelashes were shaking" she said, both of us laughing and toasting our coffee. I dropped Carmen off and went home, really planning a special treat for Jesse. I had a mission, reminding him why he wanted to marry me.

20. Reconnection

Jesse POV

I parked my car in the garage and went into the lounge only to be hit by a mouthwatering smell. But an even more delicious sight was Lucky cooking; she wore my white shirt only; she had its sleeves rolled up and her hair down to her waist. She looked breathtaking.

"Coming home to a gorgeous woman barefoot in the kitchen cooking. I'm the luckiest man on the planet," I said; she smiled.

"I'm guessing Bianca didn't give you the message huh?" she asked and I looked at her confused. Bianca said nothing to me.

"What message?" I asked walking towards her. She shrugged

"Nothing" she said standing on her tiptoes to kiss me, I lifted her off the ground and she giggled "Hungry?" she asked turning back to the stove; I wrapped my arms around her waist.

"Famished" I replied kissing her nape "But I don't think for food" I purred, "Tell me your not wearing anything underneath the shirt," I added.

She chuckled "I'm wearing nothing underneath" she replied and I moaned.

"What are you cooking?" I asked

"Veg and mushroom stir-fry with roast chicken" she said and I inhaled deeply

"My favorite" I said. "I know." she replied smiling.

"Between me and the food, which is more tempting?" she asked, and I chuckled

"It's a tie," I said, unbuttoning the shirt "Although I'd rather have you instead"

She stopped me. "Slow down tiger. Didn't your mom teach you to eat your vegetables before desserts?" she asked playfully.

I threw my head back laughing "Hell, I don't think she meant it this way" I said and she laughed too "You're not really expecting me not to touch you when you parade around looking like that, do you?" I asked raising an eyebrow.

"Out, go change" she said pushing me out of the kitchen, I frowned but she waved her hand. I went upstairs, showered and changed clothes.

I couldn't help but think about what Lucky said about Bianca giving me a message. And if it had anything to do with Bianca's foul mood after she left.

I went back downstairs "Dinner is served," she said giving me a plate full of delicious food; I sat on the couch. She sat across from me, crossing her legs; purposefully giving me a magnificent view of them.

I gave her a hard look but she just smiled innocently "Aren't you hungry?" I asked and she shook her head just staring at me.

"I've cleared my schedule for a couple of days, we can leave for Texas now" I said and she nodded "What are you not telling me about this trip?" she asked.

I smiled "You'll understand when we get there" I offered and she pursed her lips.

I then remembered what I wanted to ask her "Did you and Bianca talk?" I asked

Something flashed in her eyes "Yeah, why do you ask?" she said.

I shrugged "She seemed to be in an unpleasant mood today" I said,

She sighed "Okay, I sort of warned her off of you" she admitted. She held up her hands when I raised my eyebrows at her.

"I overheard her talking about you and...I just don't trust her Jesse, something about her rubs me off the wrong way" she said, shivering absently.

I shook my head; I couldn't believe she still felt the need to do that. I had no interest in Bianca, I never did. Secondly, didn't she know how much I loved her? I don't think I see other women at all anymore; and its not just because none of them hold a candle to her.

"I told you that you had nothing to worry about" I said and her eyes narrowed

"That's unfair you know" she said, "You can do things like threatening men off of me, but I can't do the same?" she asked, I eyed her.

"That's different" I defended, she raised her chin "How so?" she challenged

"I'm a big boy, I can handle myself and Bianca," I said.

"That you are," she said thickly her green eyes registering desire; I grinned.

"Where is everyone?" I asked noting the empty foyer.

"Some have gone out for the night, others decided to give us a little privacy," she said smiling. She picked up my empty plate and put it in the kitchen sink. I watched her intently as she walked back to me.

"Dessert?" she asked as she climbed on top of me, her thighs on both sides of my legs. I smiled, breathing her scent in "Hell yes." I purred. Much to my surprise she unlocked my arms around her waist, grabbing my face with both her hands. She kissed me fervently; her taking the lead fascinated me. Normally I played

that role and I loved it. But if she wanted the power this time, then I would try to give it to her.

She lifted my shirt off and resumed kissing me, running her soft hands all over me. Her kisses moved to my neck and shoulder.

If she wanted to torture me, it was working. I was beyond aroused and keeping my hands off her was an excruciating task. I wanted to give her a little dominance but unfortunately I'm selfish on that aspect. I wanted to have my way with that precious body of hers. My hands involuntarily contracted on her thighs and I quietly groaned.

"You're killing me little one." I said and she lifted her head and smiled apologetically. I then realized that I might have offended her; I shook my head.

"That felt good." I said truthfully "But its not enough." She added looking down.

She was a jewel; she wanted to please me, despite her minor inexperience. But pleasuring her was *my* greatest pleasure. I cupped her face with my hands

"I want to touch you, I want to slide that shirt out of my way." I said thickly.

She smiled with understanding and dropped her arms; I kissed her, unbuttoning the shirt.

Everyone bid us farewell and Jeffery drove us to the airport, Lucky rested her head on my shoulder.

"Why decide to take me to Texas now?" she asked

"Well I want you to know what you're getting yourself into by marrying me" I teased, although I meant it. She paused a little

"Are you trying to scare me off? Because that's never going to happen," she said

I smiled "Good to know" I said.

We boarded my Jet, for a 2-hour and a half flight to Austin. I told Lucky a little bit about my hometown of Wimberley she seemed excited to visit it.

We landed at the airport and got to the X5 I rented, I grimaced after finishing loading our luggage.

"They didn't have sports cars," I said and she laughed

"Thank goodness" she replied, I frowned as I started the car. It was an hour drive from Austin to Wimberley, but if I had one of my cars I would've made it 30 minutes.

Soon enough we passed the black board welcoming us to the town, driving through these familiar streets seemed surreal. I haven't been here for almost 5 years but it has felt like a century.

For a very long time now I've completely shut out my entire past, and what it meant to me. Everything about this town held memories I could never forget, even in times I wished I could. I would sometimes come here and visit childhood friends and my parent's gravesite but even that I started doing less frequently.

Somehow there was a sense of finality about this trip, this time around; I didn't know if I would ever come back here again. But it was time to put some things to rest and make peace with others. I was finally ready for some sense of closure, because I was about to start a life with Lucky and I wanted to do that on a clean slate.

We stopped at a hotel and checked in, the attendants brought our luggage and then left. Lucky sat on the bed looking out the window; I scrutinized her.

"This is a really nice town, beautiful too," she said meeting my gaze.

"I think so too, but I'd be biased" I said walking up to her and sat next to her

"Are you too tired? I wanted to show you something," I said and she smiled.

"No, where are we going?" she asked, I held out my hand slightly grinning

"You'll see," I said and she took it; I led her out of the suite.

21. Hometown Glory

Lucky POV

I watched Jesse closely as he drove across town, I still couldn't believe I was in his hometown. I could see how much the place meant to him and I was glad I got to see this side of him.

He turned into what looked like a private tarmac pathway; there were no houses here, only the beautiful country landscape.

There was a building from afar but as we got closer, I saw that it was a house; well a mansion compared to the houses I've seen so far.

It was a two-storied modern house but it was conservative and suited the landscape well. Jesse parked in its driveway and got out to get the door for me.

I absently let him help me out, I couldn't stop staring at the house; it seemed as though nobody lived in it for a very long time. Although it looked very well managed, even the lawn looked perfectly trimmed.

Jesse leaned against the SUV and folded his arms, looking at the house with an unreadable expression. I looked at him now

"This was my parent's house, they built it from scratch when they moved here. This is *home*." He said, still looking at it.

There was nothing I could say because my throat suddenly tightened, I understood now the real reason why he brought me here. This was his home but it was also a place where a horrific tragedy took place. Even though this was difficult for him, he wanted me to know him...all of him.

I leaned against the car too, resting my head on his shoulder and he wrapped his arm around my waist.

"It's been well over 5 years since I last came here, there's no use for this house, no one lives here. But I still can't find it in me to sell it" he said quietly.

"You don't have to, this house is a part of you," I said softly

"No I do, and it's not a part of me. It's just part of my past" he said "Come" he added taking my hand and leading me to the house. We got in through the back door and into the kitchen; it was very stylish and open, every inch of the house was. I could see where Jesse got his taste.

He also told me his childhood stories and memories as he gave me a tour of the house, I smiled sometimes trying to visualize everything myself.

I could easily see little Jesse playing in the backyard, or jumping around in the foyer. Maria and Jane in the kitchen, Peter and Jesse playing games in his room.

Somehow all of these stories and memories seemed a part of me too, like I experienced them too.

"Everything is exactly as I remembered it, not a thing out of place," he said as we got to the lounge. He smiled to himself

"I used to love playing with my toys right there" he pointed in front of the TV set "My mother would always get mad whenever I did not put them away" he added chuckling. His expression turned solemn

"That little boy had everything any child could hope for and need, he had a family and he was loved," he said, and my eyes locked with his.

"I was sitting right there when those men ambushed us" he said his eyes narrowing to the place. "I couldn't comprehend why random men would come and kill such innocent people," he added shifting his gaze back to me.

"I was just a child back then, I only found out the truth late in my teens from my uncle Ben" he said. I listened in silence, trying to put myself in his shoes, trying to feel his emotions as though they were mine too.

"My dad was a CIA secret agent, my mom knew this; but when he found out she was pregnant with me he left the agency and moved here. Building a whole new life for us here." He said, I stared at him wide-eyed but he continued. "My dad was in the middle of exposing multi-million dollar drug smuggling ops, but he dropped it and left. The head honchoes still saw my dad as a threat, so they decided to *get rid of him*" He added blankly.

I took a sharp breath, everything crushing down on me. Suddenly everything made sense "That's another reason why you became an agent too," I whispered sure of myself.

He nodded "I felt beholden to my father and his memory. But I've grown to love this agency and my job"

"And your mom, that's why you pushed me away. You didn't want me to end up like her," I added sure again.

Jane knew Peter was an agent but she still took a chance with him, she probably would still be alive today if she didn't fall in love with him. And why Jesse did what he did, he wanted to protect me from suffering a similar fate to his mother.

He nodded again

"I never thought I'd find myself in my father's position, he was not able to let my mother go. He loved her and I know he would've given anything for her to live instead" he said, his blue gaze bore into mine "But I knew my mom would've rather she died along with him" he added.

I nodded reverently; I knew exactly how Jane felt. I would rather die too than have to live without Jesse. Losing him that way would just be unbearable. I knew what it felt like when I thought I did, and back then I was just only coming to terms with my own feelings for him. But right now knowing how much I loved him...needed him, that feeling and grief would destroy me.

He brushed away a tear that escaped the corner of my eye "You wouldn't mind being in my mother's position too, would you?" he asked his tone slightly disapproving. I nodded again meeting his gaze

"I relinquished control over my fate when I fell in love with you Jesse, I would follow you anywhere. Even if its six-feet under." I said with conviction.

He shook his head resting his chin on top of my head "You think this is what your father would've wanted for you?" he whispered.

My dad is the one who told me to have no regrets and follow my heart. I would've spent my whole life wondering what could've been between Jesse and I. Worst of all if the CIA went through with erasing my memory, I would've never known the great love and affection we both shared. And for me the subconscious pain would be too much; I would always have an emptiness I could never comprehend. My mind would forget but my heart wouldn't, it would always ache for someone I didn't know. I nuzzled my head onto his chest

"My dad would've wanted me to be happy regardless, and I 'am" I whispered back. After a long pause he released me and moved to the middle of the room

"I sat right here crying for my parents" he said, he crouched down and absently touched the floor "There was nothing I could do to save them" he whispered.

I walked over to him, he didn't look up as I approached; he just kept staring at the floor. Remembering things I could never picture, feeling pain I could never fathom, no matter how hard I tried.

I saw that Jesse never properly mourned his parents' death, he had to grow up too fast and learn to stand on his own when he was just a mere child. That's what probably made him the man he was today, he always seemed formidable to me. But seeing him in this vulnerable state made me love him even more, it made me feel as though he needed me too. I watched him mourn silently and tearlessly; I for one couldn't stop tears from rolling down my face. I kneeled beside him and put my arms around him; much to my surprise he came into me, letting me embrace him.

"What will I ever do without you little one," he said letting out a strained chuckle

I smiled slightly "You never have to find out" I said. "That little boy may have been loved but this man is too" I said nodding to myself. I would humbly take the loving and cherishing from here onwards.

22. Visitor

Jesse POV

We've been here for almost a week, having Lucky here with me has made this whole experience wonderful and comforting.

I enjoyed sharing all these different experiences and memories with her as I took her around town.

"Wow, where are we?" she asked admiring the scenery, I smiled

"Cypress creek, my dad and I used to love canoeing here" I said, she smiled and stood at the end of the riverbank, she sat down and I sat down next to her.

"Tell me how your parents met," she said looking at me,

"My mom was waiting tables at a diner in Vancouver, my dad was there on business. Apparently some guy got too physical with her and he came to the rescue, I guess the rest was history" I murmured.

"Did she get to meet the rest of your family?" she asked and I shrugged

"Knowing how my family was my dad kept her as far away from them as possible, they knew about their relationship. But they all passed it as infatuation, something my father would get over. According to my uncle sparks flew in the family when they announced their engagement" I said shifting my gaze to the water. Lucky continued to eye me.

"Your family didn't approve of her?" she asked knowingly

I nodded "My mother came from a poor background and according to them people like her didn't mix with people like my dad. To them my father could've done much better" I said shaking my head in disgust.

To most members of my family anything that wasn't money, power or status related was regarded as insignificant. I may have lived that way for almost all my life but I never had such shallow and narrow beliefs.

Lucky chuckled without humor playing with the ring on her finger "From what I hear your mother was amazing, if they didn't like her then I'm pretty sure they're going to want to shoot me then" she teased but I could see that it bothered her somehow.

"They don't have to like you little one, their blessings or opinions don't mean anything to me" I said brushing my lips to her forehead.

She didn't need to worry about my family, if I had my way she'd never have to meet any one of them. Hell, they didn't even like me and I was their own flesh and blood.

"Where did you love to go as a kid?" she asked and I chuckled remembering

"My mother use to love taking me to a flea market on the other side of town, she loved being among the town folks despite her status in the town. She married into a rich family but she never wore a chip on her shoulder about it. She was just Jane, a woman who married the man she loved, nothing more nothing less" I said. Much like Lucky too.

Both their beauty and kindheartedness came from the inside; it could never be bought or faked. Maybe that's another thing that drew me to her, that she possessed similar qualities to those of my mother.

"I remember there was this lady who sold the best ice cream sundae I've ever tasted in my life, I think I was addicted to it as a child" I said and she burst out laughing and I chuckled.

She and I continued talking and losing track of time, I almost forgot what I wanted to do today. I stood up and helped her up too; she gave me a puzzled look. "Where are we going?" she asked.

"I wanted to visit my parent's graveside, I wanted you to come with me" I said, she was taken aback for a moment then she nodded.

"Besides we have a visitor," I said, remembering the call I got this the morning.

She raised her eyebrows at me and I put my finger on my lips, she groaned

"Oh come on Jesse, you're killing me here" she complained but I just rolled my eyes at her. We walked to the car,

I couldn't stop thinking about the proposition Lucky gave me about spending Christmas with her family. She seemed excited and adamant that it would be wonderful; I didn't doubt that if they all were anything like Joslyn and Jenna. Though I was still apprehensive weather or if they would really accept me into their family. I might not care about my own family's approval, but I certainly do care about hers. Honestly if they all knew what I put Lucky through this past year, they would kill me the second I walked in.

"Do you think your family would approve of us getting married?" I asked and she looked at me shocked then laughed.

"Is that a trick question?" she asked chuckling, I glanced at her for a moment

"Be serious please," I said and she stifled her laugh.

"You have it easy, my family already loves you" she said "I'm pretty sure mom and Jenna dished about you when they got back, you charmed their socks off"

I chuckled at her exaggeration; Joslyn practically told me she'd cut my head off if I hurt her daughter.

"I don't know; they didn't seem sold on us." I added and she sighed

"I love it when you get nervous, it hardly ever happens" she added I gave her a knowing look.

"Okay look, all I'm saying is you have nothing to worry about. Do you know that my mom already refers to you as her son in law? And she doesn't even know about our engagement. That's how *sold* they all are, you'll see what I'm talking about" she said.

I gave her a confused look "What does that mean?" I asked

"They will be all over you like bees on honey, my cousin Nicky is probably going to want to steal you away from me" she teased chuckling.

"Ha ha" I said turning into the road leading to the town's cemetery

"Are you getting second thoughts about going?" she asked her tone a little solemn, I immediately shook my head.

"And of course I get nervous, I was always nervous around you at first" I said chuckling as her eyebrows shot up "I thought I was losing my touch" I added.

"Seriously?" she asked and I nodded smiling. I felt like a lovesick teenage boy around her, it was honestly embarrassing. I was glad once I learned she reciprocated my feelings, it was something I never had to worry about before. Women always seemed to stick to me like glue, but not this one.

"Wow" she chuckled "Did I like hurt your ego or something?" she teased

I laughed "A little" I admitted

She flashed me a brilliant smile "Aw Jesse Gilbert is human ladies and gentlemen" she chimed putting her hands together.

"Well you know exactly how 'human' I 'am, don't you love?" I teased back,

She blushed but didn't drop her gaze "I do" she replied quietly. It was adorable how she couldn't help but blush whenever we discussed intimacy. Even though she wasn't a virgin anymore I hope she never loses that trait it was refreshing. "And don't worry about losing your touch, it is very...potent," She added.

I chuckled "And you don't have to worry about hurting my ego, you know how to stroke it just as well" I said and she chuckled too.

We parked outside of the entrance just as I saw a black Mercedes approach from afar. *Right on time* I thought smiling to myself.

"Who's that?" Lucky asked watching the sedan park a yard away from us

"Our visitor" I said.

23. Savior

Lucky POV

Jesse helped me out of the car and held my hand as we walked towards the fancy black car. Its door opened and a man came out, probably in his early sixties, he had natural blonde hair and he looked very familiar.

Then I remembered from the family portraits in the castle that this was Jesse's uncle Ben, just then he let go of my hand to hug the smiling man.

"Jesse, its so good to see you again nephew" Ben said and Jesse chuckled

"You too uncle Ben, you look good" Jesse replied, turning to me "Lucky this is my uncle Ben, and uncle this is my fiancée Lucky" he introduced us and I suddenly couldn't find my voice. If I thought meeting his daughters was scary then meeting him was terrifying.

Jesse spoke highly of him and I was incredibly intimidated. He practically raised Jesse, what if he didn't think I was good enough for him?

"Its good to finally meet you, I've heard great things" I blurted out, *nice one* I thought sourly. He nodded cordially as he shook my hand

"As have I, Jesse here couldn't stop talking about you so I thought I'd come meet the future Mrs. Gilbert in person" he said and I blushed sparing Jesse a disapproving look for having bored his uncle with stories about me, he just shrugged smiling.

The three of us talked and I began to relax a little, enjoying the conversation. Ben seemed a lot like his daughters in a weird sort of way, he was also very open and charming.

"Meet us inside" Jesse said to Ben and he nodded and went to his car. Jesse took my hand and we entered the cemetery.

"My uncle insisted that my parents be buried here, he knew how much they loved this place," he said and I looked up at him

"They were close huh?" I asked and he nodded.

"My uncle Ben was the only one who'd come and visit from time to time, the rest just resented them, they only came here for the funeral" he said blankly.

It was difficult to understand the dynamics of the Gilbert clan, I had a close-knit extended family, and we did everything together. Even with problems here and there, we always stuck together.

We stopped in front of two tombstones that wrote Peter and Jane's names and beautiful epitaphs. Jesse looked on silently

Ben approached us from behind holding flowers; he smiled and gave them to Jesse. He patted him on the back and backed away, I kissed his cheek and went over to stand by Ben giving Jesse a moment alone.

We were both silent watching Jesse "Those are lilies, they were his mother's favorite flowers," he said answering my unspoken question.

I nodded "He seems peaceful" I said and he nodded too

"That's something I thought I'd never see and I have you to thank for that" he said surprising me, I looked at him baffled.

"I've watched Jesse grow into a man, he did everything with finesse; ever the perfectionist. But he broke my heart because I knew that drive came from a dark place. I'd hoped that one day he would learn to live and love, because of you he has. I know that if his parents were here they would thank you too," he said sincerely. I listened intently pausing a little; I shook my head.

"I've also had my share of pain and loss Mr. Gilbert, I was broken before and your nephew mended me, I should be thanking *you*" I replied. It was true, Jesse opened up a whole new world to me. A world filled with love and happiness, a world I thought didn't exist for me. His love repaired my heart to the point of no return and in the process tattooed his name on it. I would like to think that I was able to do the same for him; that I was able to mend him too.

"Then I'm glad you two found each other," he said smiling "I heard you became an agent for him, that's commendable" he said reverently.

"I love him and I would do anything for him" I said quietly turning my gaze back to Jesse, who crouched down and laid the flowers "I did it because being without him was never an option" I said and he scrutinized me this time.

He chuckled uneasily "You sound so much like Jane right now its actually frightening" he said "And you're as beautiful as she was" he added.

"I cannot be compared to his mother" I replied, I couldn't be placed on a pedestal like that, it would be too much of a high standard to meet. I was only just me, and I wasn't amazing or anything like Jane was.

"No, you cannot because you are Lucky. You're in a league of your own," he said teasingly and I slightly grinned at him.

"You're about to marry into the most dysfunctional family you'll ever know and Jesse's a piece of work" he smiled but his tone was serious "But stick with him, he's got a big heart that has a lot of love to give" he said.

I nodded fervently "I know" I whispered low to myself

"Go to him" he said referring to Jesse; I looked at him apprehensively. It seemed wrong for me to interrupt such a moment.

Ben smiled again "You won't be intruding" he said guessing my hesitation "Trust me, he wants to share this with you" He added.

I nodded and walked towards him, I crouched down too and rested my one arm on his shoulder, and he looked up and smiled.

"I'm glad you're here," he whispered and I grinned

"Me too" I replied quietly, I looked at the headstones and said a silent prayer of my own. That wherever Peter and Jane are, they give me the wisdom to be the best wife I can be for their son.

We gave Ben a moment too, and then we went out. He shook hands with me. "It was a pleasure meeting you Lucky, I hope to see you again very soon" he said and I smiled.

"You too Mr. Gilbert" I said, he turned and headed for his car, Jesse walked him there. I leaned against the SUV watching Ben and Jesse say their goodbyes and then Ben got in the car. He drove away and Jesse walked back to me. I extended my arms and he hugged me, lifting me off the ground. I wrapped my arms and legs around him, burying my head in his neck. He leaned against the car with me still in his arms.

How Jesse was able to carry me as if I was weightless still baffles me. We silently stayed in that embrace for a moment, just enjoying being in each other's arms. It was sweet and heart melting, it also made me feel vulnerable and for once I didn't care. Coming back here after so long must've been hard for him; I wanted him to know I was here for him. Apart we are broken but together we are whole, we complete each other.

I kissed his neck "I love you, but let me down before you drop me" I said even though I knew he wouldn't. The man could probably carry me with just one arm. He chuckled rolling his eyes but he set me down.

"Where to from here?" I asked and he smiled

"Let's go home," he said opening the door for me and I smiled back getting in.

We arrived back at the estate late in the evening; I noticed that a lot of people weren't here. Maria and Angie came out to greet us

"Hey, how was the trip?" Angie asked hugging us.

"It was amazing, I got to meet Jesse's uncle Ben," I said looking around then I settled my gaze on Jesse.

"Where is everyone?" I asked

"Most of them have gone home for the holidays," he said and I nodded. We talked about Wimberley for a while but I was too tired, I wanted to go to sleep. Jesse remained downstairs talking to Maria while I unpacked. I got a hot shower and got in my pajamas, just then Jesse walked in.

"Does everyone normally leave in the holidays?" I asked when we laid in bed together; he nodded. "And who did you spend them with?"

"Other times with Maria and my cousins, but mostly I spent them alone. They weren't of importance to me before. I'd work like it was just a normal day," he said.

I paused for a moment, thinking back. I didn't even put up decorations in my apartment last year. It's very easy to just ignore such things when they don't carry any meaning to you.

“Well your with me now, and there will be no working on Christmas” I said and he chuckled.

24. Second Meeting

Lucky POV

With the holidays fast approaching more people started to leave. Jason left for Florida. Angela went to go spend them with her grandmother in Ohio, and Maria went back home to Mexico. Before she left she told me that she normally did not leave Jesse in the holidays, but this time around she knows he’s in good hands. I smiled at her faith in me and hugged her goodbye.

Ally and Mandy also flew to New York to go spend Christmas with Ben; they couldn’t stop gushing about the winter fashion shows they will attend there. I strongly protested when they promised to get me some ‘things’ but knowing them, it was in vain. Carmen also went back home to San Francisco; I met with her before she left.

Jesse and I had the whole castle to ourselves and we decided to use that and go absolutely crazy. It was the season to be jolly and that’s exactly what we did. We spent most of our time in the game room having pure fun.

We played every single silly game we could think of, from hide and seek to playing video games on the flat screen.

We couldn’t help making love in places we certainly wouldn’t have if there were anyone else here. We also went to Santa Monica pier and rode the craziest rides we could find, I felt like a kid again and it felt amazing.

Our flight to Minnesota was both exciting and scary. Exciting that I got to take Jesse to my hometown to meet my family, and scary that this was my first ever visit since I left last year. Some of my relatives could not understand why I chose to leave so suddenly, but hopefully after meeting Jesse; they would understand. I left to seek him out, to seek a better and happier life for myself, even though I didn’t know it before.

I knew my family would like Jesse; he could charm a rock into liking him. But what I was nervous about was weather or not Jesse would like my family. I knew that his relationship with his own was shaky while mine was close-knit. Hopefully he would fit in with this crazy bunch.

We landed at Willmar airport; Jesse and I got out to see the copilot loading our luggage into a silver Mercedes sedan. Jesse smiled observing it

“The C63 AMG, not bad at all.” He said. I shook my head at him, a car like that would definitely draw some attention in a small town.

"I'm driving," I said and he chuckled opening the driver seat for me

"Be my guest," he said climbing into the passenger side. I started the car and headed down the road leading to Raymond.

I couldn't help but think of the last time I drove down this road, I couldn't get away fast enough. It was hard to believe that I was the same person that left here early last year, how can a whole person's life change in such a short space of time?

I felt Jesse's gaze on my face "How are you feeling?" he asked as I met his gaze.

"Somewhere between excited and nervous" I stated "Being back here is bringing back a lot of memories, not all of them good" I added, chuckling uneasily.

"Have any regrets?" he asked, his face still solemn. I shook my head

"None what so ever, If I didn't leave I wouldn't have meet you" I said and he smiled. He lifted his hand and I backed away

"You better not touch me while I'm driving or were going crash" I teased and he laughed. Unfortunately I'm yet to perfect my multi tasking skills.

We arrived in Raymond and I drove towards the familiar hotel, the most fanciest in town. When I saw a teenager I used to dream about staying there.

The hotel was only 10 minutes away from my house; I wrapped my arms around Jesse when we were done settling in.

"Welcome to Raymond, ready to meet the family?" I teased and he took a deep breath "Yes" he said.

I laughed at his exaggerated nervousness; my family was not even half as intimidating as his.

"This is it," I said as I parked in front of my house, it was a one story, well-proportioned house. It was 4 days until Christmas, and the roof was already covered in snow. Jesse and I held hands as we walked up to the front porch and knocked on the door. I could hardly contain my excitement as Jenna opened the door and squealed in excitement hugging us both.

"Come on in you guys" she said stepping aside, Jesse was helping me out of my jacket when Justin came running towards me "Lucky!" he squealed, I picked him up hugging him. He was a sweet 6-year-old boy of my Aunt Eileen.

"Ah look at you, you're almost as big as me now" I teased as I set him down, he giggled. He looked at Jesse as I introduced them,

Jesse crouched down to Justin and talked with him a little. Jesse had a tenderness that let me know that he would be great with kids, but watching him interact and laugh with one was surreal.

I made sure that I hid my ring in my pocket; I wanted to properly surprise them all with the news. Just then mom her eldest sister aunt Eileen came out, and greeted us. My little brother George also came to greet us, he was in his teens now and very much obnoxious. I gave him a 'behave' look and he just smiled

"Its good to see you too sis" he said and I slapped the back of his head playfully.

We sat in the lounge and talked, I answered here and there. But mostly I let Jesse work his magic on them; I wondered how he really felt because he seemed at ease. I noticed that someone was missing from this bunch.

"Where is Nicky?" I asked looking around down the passage

"She and your uncle Josh will be here soon" Mom said and I nodded, Nicky was Eileen's first born and Josh was her husband. He was the closest thing I had to a father when my dad died, he and his family was very supportive of mine.

10 minutes later the front door opened and they walked in.

"Peaches!" Nicky exclaimed coming to hug me, I hated the nickname she gave me but in time it grew on me. I squeezed her tight

"Nik its so good to see you" I said and hugged uncle Josh too. I introduced them to Jesse; Josh shook hands with him and greeted him cordially.

Nicky however gaped at him for a second then snapped out of it "Wow, you're even hotter in person" she said and there was still-silence in the room. Knowing Nicky's blunt and forward personality I was the only one how was unfazed by her statement; in fact I was expecting it. I shook my head smiling

"Will you ever stop?" I asked and she chuckled.

"No" she said and I laughed, as the tension eased "Gosh I've missed you Nik" I said as everyone resumed talking amongst themselves.

Me, mom, Jenna, Eileen and Nicky were fixing dinner in the kitchen while Jesse was in the garage with uncle Josh and George.

We talked and laughed with each other, I realized just how much I've missed all of them.

"What happened between you and Jesse after we left?" Jenna asked when mom and Eileen left "You guys seem even more intense than the last time, if that's even possible" she said eyeing me. I shrugged hoping my face didn't show my shock.

Jesse and I hardly touched or talked since we got here, how could she see the intensity of our relationship? I couldn't deny that Jesse and I have been intense from the very beginning. But we tried to conceal that when they came to LA, we knew it wouldn't seem normal to them.

I didn't tell them about our break-up and almost tragic encounter with Frank either, I wasn't planning on telling them too.

"Well he took me to Isle Lucky and Bermuda, we really connected there" I said, that was not a lie. Nicky sighed

"I still can't believe he named an island after you, how is it?" she asked

"Its paradise" I said smiling. Jenna didn't seem convinced, she knew me too well and I never had to hide anything from her before.

"Yeah well, anywhere would be paradise with that hot piece of ass," she said

"Would you stop, jeez Nik," I bellowed but she just lifted her shoulders innocently.

I sat next to Jesse and Jenna as we had dinner, watching the love of my life interact with my family was a delightful sight. The fears I had of him fitting in were thrown out the window; I could breathe a sigh of relief as both sides seemed accepting of one another.

After dinner we all helped set up Christmas decorations, I smiled as I watched Jesse pick up Justin so he could place the star on top of the tree. I still did not know what to give Jesse for Christmas; the man had everything. Then I got a fantastic idea, I bet no one ever gave him this one.

I knew it was time to let the bombshell of our engagement out; I grabbed Jesse and told everyone to sit down. They all complied looking at us questioningly.

He looked down at me and nodded "We have an announcement to make" I said taking a deep breath "Jesse and I are engaged" I added.

Everyone collectively gasped as I took out the big diamond ring and put it back on my finger. I looked around the shocked faces of my family; the only one who wasn't surprised was Jenna. She looked like she was nodding to herself; she definitely guessed this.

Jesse took my left hand, kissed it and turned to my family "I love her, and your blessing would mean a lot to both of us" he said fervently and I smiled.

Mom hugged us both and congratulated us, everyone followed suit. Nicky and Jenna both ogled at the ring and asked if we've set a date yet.

The three of us sat on the couch and talked then I suddenly realized that Jesse and uncle Josh were missing.

"They've gone outside" mom said when she saw me looking around; I nodded.

I hoped my uncle wasn't grilling Jesse; he didn't need a lesson on how to treat me. He already treats me like a queen.

25. The Talk

Jesse POV

Josh and me walked down the neighborhood, he seemed like a nice guy as he told me about this family and its history. But I knew that's not the real reason why he wanted to speak to me.

"Jesse you must've guessed why I wanted to speak to you" he said and I nodded.

"I feel beholden to my good friend James and his family."

"You want to make sure I don't hurt his daughter," I said and he slightly smiled.

"You seem like an honest and honorable guy Jesse. That puts me a little at ease," he said, as we headed back to the house.

"James loved Lucky very much, wherever he is he's probably itching to be in my position," he added chuckling. His expression turned solemn

"I've watched Lucky grow up, she's got a lot of heart and soul. I've never seen her look at someone the way she looks at you, not even James," he said.

I listened carefully, was he saying Lucky loved me more than her own father? I found that hard to believe. She loved him deeply, if she didn't lose him, she wouldn't have come to LA in the first place and I wouldn't have met her.

Besides I never tried to push her father's memory out of her, I gladly received what she offered, and which in my eyes will still be more than I deserved. I for one would never give her up, not even to have my parents back.

"She loves with everything she has, and when she loses that it can tear her apart. I've seen it happen with her dad, but neither she or James had any control over it" he said "I don't want to see her hurt over something that could've been controlled, do you understand what I'm saying?" he asked and I nodded again.

"I love your niece Josh, more than you'll ever know. I would never intentionally hurt her," I said with conviction.

He nodded and shook my hand "I believe you and with that I truly wish you two the best" he added smiling. I smiled too glad I was able to convince him; he and I talked some more as we went back to the house. We walked back in placing our jackets back on the hanger; I sat back next to Lucky. She smiled and put her arm around my waist, she shivered looking at me, "Gosh, you're freezing" she said rubbing my shoulders. She shot her uncle a scowl but he just smiled shrugging,

I chuckled "I'm fine" I said, I didn't even feel the cold when I was outside. I was too preoccupied with what Josh was saying to even notice.

Losing track of time we realized we should get going, we stood up saying our goodbyes. We got in the car and drove back to the hotel.

The next 2 days Lucky took me around the town, it was her turn now to tell me about all the places she loved and grew up in. Unlike me she spent her whole life here and she clearly loved this place.

I sat on the park bench and watched her playfully walk on the edge of the frozen pavement. She smiled looking up, loving the snow on her face. She's never looked more beautiful to me; I smiled scrutinizing her every move. She had an innocent essence, a pureness that seemed to bewitch me. I wondered how she must've been like as a little girl. She said she wanted children, I hoped one of them would be a baby girl who looked exactly like her. Warm green eyes, long shiny black hair, not to mention her mother's heart and spirit.

"I was thinking on a wedding theme color," she said looking at me now.

I rose my eyebrow at her "What happened to having a long engagement" I teased, she playfully pouted.

"Oh shut up, a girl can still fantasize about her wedding day" she replied.

I stifled a chuckle "What did you have in mind?" I asked

"Blue" she replied her eyes miles away, I stood up and walked towards her

"Humph and what about what I want?" I asked, I didn't care much about the wedding itself, the only part I cared about was saying I do to her. The rest can be up to her.

"It doesn't matter" she replied, sticking out her tongue at me

I chuckled "Ouch, my feelings are hurt" I teased and she laughed. She twirled around with one foot and lost her balance, I leaned forward and grabbed her waist to lift her off the curb before she could fall.

"Oops" she said and I shook my head at her as I laid her down on the level ground, but kept my arms around her.

"You'd be so broken if I wasn't there to catch you all the time" I said kissing her nose, she wrinkled it smiling.

"Then thank goodness you are," she said. I pulled down her beanie over her eyes, she laughed and pulled at my scarf. She suddenly let go gasping and pulled her beanie off her eyes

"Mom asked me to get some things for her and I totally forgot" she moaned. She grabbed my hand and pulled me along with her "Come on"

We went to the closest department store; she went to sales lady so I decided to look around the store. The store had great stuff, despite its small size; I found really good golf clubs, I also saw a PSP and immediately thought of little Justin. It was okay to get him a Christmas present right?

I saw a pair of fluffy slippers; I smiled thinking how cute Lucky would look in those. I grabbed one each pair and went to find her, I found her at the far back of the store with her back to me

"Blue or brown?" I asked and she turned, the look on her face surprised me, then I saw that she was standing with some other guy. I quickly surveyed the mood; it was very awkward, like I just interrupted something.

She smiled uneasily "Blue" she said, her eyes were full of apprehension. Like she wanted to get away from here. I remembered this look back when Tanya wanted to talk to her; she silently wanted me to save her.

"Hi" I said extending my hand to the guy, he nodded "Hey" he said shaking it.

"Um this is my fiancé Jesse" she gestured with her hand "Jesse this is Travis"

Everything made sense then, this was the idiot that cheated on her. Somehow I felt sorry for the poor bastard, losing Lucky over something so trivial must've hurt, whether he cared for her or not.

"Ex boyfriend" he clarified, and I nodded curtly

"I'm aware" I replied. By the look of surprise and anxiety that suddenly passed his expression, he thought Lucky didn't tell me about him.

"Well congratulations" he said blankly

"Thank you" I replied in the same tone and turned to Lucky "You got everything you need?" I asked and she nodded.

I held her hand "It was nice meeting you Travis" I said, letting him know that his time with her was up. He nodded and we turned

"See you around Lucky" he said hopefully, *I'm going to kill this guy* I thought. Couldn't he see that she wanted nothing more to do with him?

Lucky did not reply or look back, we went over to pay for our things and walk towards the car silently. I watched her closely as she stared outside her window,

"Are you okay?" I asked she still looked perplexed; she turned her gaze to me.

"Yeah I'm fine," she said "Its just some of the things he said..." she added then her eyes widened like she said something she didn't want to.

"What did he say?" I asked unable to keep the irritation out of my voice, she remained silent for a while.

"Lucky?" I probed impatiently and she shook her head at me

"Can you let it go, please?" she said defensively, I knew exactly what the bastard wanted and to think he had the audacity of even thinking it made me want to rearrange his face. "Fine then, he'll tell me," I said reaching for the door handle.

She tugged at my arm "Jesse stop it!" she said bellowed, her eyes pleading with me.

"He's not worth it, besides it doesn't matter what he said. I'm just a little surprised by the whole situation; I never thought I'd have to see him again. And I certainly did not think you'd ever meet him." She said; I touched her cheek letting her know that it was all right.

"Yeah, because you know I would jump at the chance to punch his face in" I teased; she smiled touching the back of my hand.

"I know" she said softly, I kissed her forehead and started the car.

26. Tell Tales

Lucky POV

Jesse parked in front of my house "Go on, I have some errands to run" he said, I shot him a knowing look and he rolled his eyes "No, I'm not going after him"

I smiled "Hurry back, its Christmas eve" I said and he nodded.

"You wont have time to miss me," he said, I highly doubted that. I climbed out of the car and waved him off, somehow I was glad to have time to put the finishing touches on his present. I walked to the house.

"No way, he has some balls hey" Nicky said shocked, she, Jenna and I were sitting in the lounge together "How did your man take it?"

"I refused to tell him but by the look on his face, he pretty much guessed it" I said.

"I hope he kicked his ass" Jenna said frowning.

"He almost did but I stopped him" I said shivering; Jesse could literally kill Travis with his bare hands. Fortunately for Travis, Jesse doesn't want to upset me.

"Well he should've, I would've helped him" she replied "Its not like you two can pick up where you left off, one; he's the one who cheated, two; you're freaking engaged" she said.

I dismissed it, not wanting to talk about Travis' silly and childish antics, you'd think the guy would've grown up by now. I just only hoped he stayed away, Jesse can be very intolerant.

"I can't believe Jesse gave you his mother's ring, how romantic is that?" Nicky said and Jenna nodded.

"What's the most memorable thing he said to you when he proposed?" Jenna asked and I smiled. They were never going to leave me alone until I *dished* about Jesse and I. *Ugh why not* I thought. We used to do this a lot when we were

younger, they would always tell about their boyfriends, but I never did with Travis. There was nothing to tell.

"He said that I'm his whole life, that the sun rises and sets with me," I said remembering that beautiful night. Jenna and Nicky collectively sighed

"Okay we are just dying to know how he is in the sack, you know," Nicky said and Jenna laughed. I gaped at both of them and shook my head,

"No way, jeez I'm not discussing my sex life with you two" I said sternly.

"Oh come on, why the hell not? No one has to know. It will be like our own little sisterly secret" Nicky insisted and I eyed her reluctantly.

"Okay, I'll make it easier for you. On a scale of 10?" she asked, and I hung my head in defeat, a scale of ten was too little for Jesse.

I sighed, trying not to blush as images of us in bed together suddenly flooded my mind "He's a 20" I murmured truthfully; I couldn't take anything away from him. His lovemaking blew me away, all. The. Time.

Jenna whistled under her breath and Nicky just stared at me open mouthed

"Whoa, he's that good?" Jenna asked and I nodded,

"He's that great" I said truthfully again and Nicky chuckled.

"Wow, I'm so jealous right now," she said and we all laughed.

"Don't you go stealing him now" I playfully joked and she shook her head

"Oh no sweetie, I know when I'm beaten. I wouldn't have stood a chance anyway," she said and I smiled.

Come Christmas day everyone was in high spirits, Justin came in the house already demanding to open his presents. We prepared Christmas lunch while Jesse and Josh watched football to the TV.

Uncle Josh told us different tales, as we had lunch in the dining room. Some of these stories I had no idea where he learnt about them. Justin and George seemed more enthralled by them.

We went into the lounge and everyone watched on as everyone opened presents individually. Jesse grabbed a box and gave it to Justin, his eyes widened as he took the box "For me?" he asked and Jesse nodded smiling.

Justin tore at the cover and gasped, "You got me a PSP?" he asked shocked

"Yup and it's the new Vita" Jesse said and everyone covered their ears as Justin screamed in delight.

"What do you say Justin?" Eileen asked and Justin hugged Jesse

"Thanks Jesse" he said. "You're welcome buddy" Jesse replied brushing his hair.

Jesse also gave George a present, they hugged too but what shocked me the most was that George called Jesse 'bro'. *Ah already* I thought smiling. Jesse charmed them more than I thought.

He sat back down next to me as others continued opening more presents "You had to stop yourself from getting everyone a present huh?" I asked and he nodded. "Yeah, would that have been weird?" he asked and I chuckled

"Totally" I confirmed and he laughed too.

"But you know what isn't?" I asked, grabbing his present "Me giving *you* one" I said holding it in front of him.

He smiled in spite of himself, "You didn't," he said

"I did" I said sitting back next to him "Open it" I insisted and everyone looked at us. Jesse slowly complied and took out the scrapbook I compiled,

opening it. I filled it with photos I've been taking over this past year of Jesse and I. Some of them were taken by Angie and Maria without either of us knowing. I had time to print them and paste them in there, scribbling down a couple of messages for him. He smiled paging through it

"Remember this one?" he asked and I looked at the photo Angie took when Jesse threw me in the pool, I laughed.

"I still can't believe you did that," I said playfully hitting him; he chuckled.

"My birthday party" I said as he passed through it, up until Isle Lucky, Bermuda and Wimberley.

"To my future husband, there are plenty more adventures where that came from, are you game?" he said reading the message on the last page of the book aloud. He smiled and kissed my forehead "Absolutely" he replied back.

"What do you think?" I asked smiling back

"I love it, thank you little one," he said. Jenna grabbed the book and started going through it with Nicky.

"I have something for you too" he said smiling; I looked at him in confusion as he took off his jacket and lifted his shirt off.

"That's definitely a present right there" I heard Nicky whispered to Jenna.

Seeing the confusion on my face he chuckled and turned his back on me, I gasped at what I saw. He had a tattoo on his whole right upper back, a tattoo of me!

There was no mistaking my own face tattooed on his back, for a moment I blinked thinking my eyes were deceiving me. But when I looked again it was still there. "You didn't" I choked out, utterly shocked.

"I did," he said chuckling as everyone else surveyed the tattoo, George and everyone else was in total awe of it. Nicky traced the tattoo with her finger

"Wow, that's peaches alright," she said, her hand lingered on Jesse's back more. I saw that she only just wanted an excuse to touch him "That's enough" I said playfully slapping her hand away. She let out a low giggle.

There was a sentence below the tattoo in a language I didn't know "What does this mean?" I asked.

"It's in Spanish, it means my life and my love," he said turning towards me. My hand went to my mouth, I was somewhere between completely shocked and utterly touched to the point where I wanted to cry.

"I'm going to kill you for permanently marking yourself with my ugly face" I said, unable to keep the tears from spilling down my face. He chuckled hugging me

"This is the most romantic and craziest thing anyone has ever done for me"

I sat there for a moment surveying it, so this was the 'errand' he had to run. He knew I wouldn't have let him do it if I knew, as much as I hated to admit; the gesture melted my insides.

He wiped my tears and smiled "I'm guessing you like it?" he asked, still tongue-tied I just nodded. I grabbed his shirt

"Put your shirt back on" I said *before you make my sisters hyperventilate* I thought, and they quietly chuckled behind me.

He chuckled too and complied.

Jesse and I decided to stay in Raymond until the New Year; we absolutely loved it here and also loved spending time with my family.

I also wanted to find out if mom knew anything about my necklace and the power it has. I doubted grandma would tell her, but either way it was worth a shot. Jesse took Justin and George to the town's video arcade; Nicky and Jenna went shopping. I saw my chance when we were in the kitchen drinking coffee together.

"Mom I wanted to ask you something" I started not sure how to approach this. If she didn't know anything about it, I could end up looking like I was crazy.

"Of course honey," she said, I took a deep breath

"Mom how much do you know about my necklace?" I asked and for a fraction of a second she looked surprised then she controlled her expression.

"I know enough, why do you ask?" she said uncomfortably, like me mom was always a terrible liar, that's how I knew she knew about it.

"Just tell me the truth mom, I know that you know what I'm talking about" I pointed out and she sighed nodding.

"That necklace has been in my family for generations, my ancestors greatly believed in magic and that it comes from within. That if manifested we can wield it. How they were able to capture that in a necklace, is still a mystery to us" she said, I took a moment absorbing the information.

"Why did grandma give it to me though? Why did it skip a generation?" I asked.

She smiled "Not everyone has the heart and soul to wield magic honey, you do and that's why your grandma passed the power onto you" she said.

"Wait but grandma was still alive when she gave it to me, how come she didn't die?" I asked confused.

"When it is time to pass on the power, the necklace unbinds itself from your life and onto the predecessor. It was brown when your grandma wore it." She said.

I raised my eyebrows "It matches the eye color of the person wearing it?"

She nodded chuckling "Haven't you heard the phrase; eyes are the window to the soul?" I chuckled too.

"Will my predecessor have to be *my* child specifically?" I asked and she shook her head. "It could be either George, Jenna or even Nicky's child, it will depend," she said.

"How will I know who to give it to?" I asked.

"You will know and feel it in your heart, it's just a mere necklace without the right person." She said. I nodded in understanding, that's why it refused to come off when Frank wanted me to. It wasn't time for me to take it off; my predecessor had not arrived yet.

"How come I wasn't told any of this sooner?" I asked puzzled

"You are only told when you come into your powers, its not something that can be rushed or changed by mere knowledge or awareness. It is heavily guided by your will, a few went through their whole lives without knowing or wielding their powers." She said eyeing me carefully. "When did you first use them?"

I wasn't sure how much to tell my mom "Jesse was in danger" I said simply.

She nodded in understanding "It was your will to protect him that completed the process" she said, "Pass the cream hun"

I moved the cream to her using my powers, she smiled "You've been working on them huh?" she asked and I nodded smiling too. Her expression turned solemn

"You'll have to be careful though. The power contained in your necklace is unfathomable and potentially dangerous even to yourself," she said.

"You cannot use your powers under the influence of emotions such as fury, greed or vengeance. Those emotions can consume you, and make controlling your own power almost impossible." She added.

Having experienced what she said, it was easier to understand, I was beyond furious when I used my powers on Frank and it nearly killed me.

"How will that happen?" I asked

"Your powers will overwhelm you, thus turning your eyes crimson red or charcoal black." She said shuddering.

I nodded stifling a shudder of my own from remembering Jesse's face when he told me this "Thanks for telling me mom" I said, "I'll be careful," I added.

Reassured she smiled and got up to hug me, I didn't want to tell her about this near death experience. She would freak out forever.

27. Resolutions

Jesse POV

We spent a beautiful New Year's with Lucky's family; I grew fonder of each and everyone of them the more time I spent with them. We prepared to fly back to LA tomorrow, but I would certainly miss Raymond.

For the first time I had high hopes for the coming year, for the whole future.

One of them was marrying Lucky; I don't think I could wait making her my wife any longer.

I drove to the town park after dropping Justin off at Josh's house. I went looking for Lucky at her house but Joslyn told me that she left with a friend; she mentioned the park. I parked my car and looked around for her but I couldn't see her, after a couple of tries I spotted her talking to Travis.

He doesn't give up, does he? I thought irritably, I wanted to talk to him once and for all. Make sure he leaves Lucky alone for good.

I got out of the car and approached them, I knew Lucky didn't like me talking to him either, but I had to do this.

"Can I cut in?" I said standing behind her, she jumped a little at the sound of my voice; something she hasn't done before. She turned to me and smiled uneasily.

"Good you're here, lets go," she said grabbing my arm "Goodbye Travis" she said sternly. She looked at me when I refused to move

"Go on, I just want to have a few words with Travis" I said. She bit her bottom lip looking at me with pleading eyes. I smiled reassuringly and kissed her forehead.

She reluctantly walked away, I leaned against the street lamp; I waited for her to get in the car before I looked at Travis.

"I don't know you Travis and you don't know me, but I hope we can be honest and civil with each other," I said. Despite my irritation with him, I promised Lucky I wouldn't start any trouble with him over her. But I wanted to clear a couple of things with him first; I could be diplomatic even in stressful situations. He nodded.

"What exactly do you want from my fiancée?" I asked calmly

"I want her back." He said fervently "I made a stupid mistake, I love her; losing her made me realize that" he said. I paused for a moment, its clear that Travis cared about Lucky, which made me slightly uneasy.

"I'm going to try to be as unbiased as I can" I said, "You may have made a mistake, and everyone deserves a second chance. The fact remains that its not your call or mine weather you get it or not, its hers." I added.

"You betrayed and hurt her when she needed you, but she has moved on now, moved on with me" I said.

"What if she hasn't moved on, if she changes her mind and wants to be with me instead, would you stand in her way?" he asked. I shifted my gaze back to Lucky; she was watching us closely. I realized just how sad our situation was.

We were both crazy about the woman in the car, but only one of us could have her. I paused for a minute

"No" I said truthfully, as much as it would kill me, I wouldn't stand in the way of her happiness. "But she made me promise to never let her go, and I intend on keeping that promise."

I looked at him "I 'am the one she wants and loves, which is why she's marrying me. End of story." I said, his eyes narrowed

"How can you be so sure that you're what's best for her?" he asked.

"I'm not" I replied simply "But she has made her decision and I'm not going to stand in the way of that. And neither will you" I said.

"She could be marrying you just for the money you know" he said bitterly

I gritted my teeth, I couldn't believe he disrespected Lucky like that. She is the only woman I've met who doesn't care about my wealth and power.

"If she wasn't looking right now, I would beat you to a pulp" I spat "After all these years you still don't know her, do you?" I quietly barked disgusted.

He looked down chagrined "I have more love for her in my little finger than you ever did in your entire body. So until she comes running into your arms, I suggest you leave her be. Do you understand me?" I asked fiercely.

He looked up at me with his jaw clenched and he nodded stiffly

"Goodbye Travis" I said with finality and walked towards the car. I got in and Lucky didn't say anything, she just looked outside her window. I started the car and drove back to our hotel; the sun had already set when we arrived there. Lucky hasn't said a word to me and I didn't break the silence either. I couldn't be sure if she was mad at me or not because her face didn't express anger. She just looked uncertain, like she was having an inner battle with herself.

I silently followed her to our suite, for a moment I considered if Travis was right; that she wasn't over him. She told me that she didn't love him, but what if seeing him again made her realize that she still had feelings for him?

You'd think a man like me shouldn't be worried about keeping a woman. But Lucky is different; the only thing keeping her here is that she's in love with me. If that were to change she would easily walk away. Unlike other women, money, power, good looks would not make her stay, they meant little to her.

I don't know what I would do if she left me for another man. I told Travis I wouldn't stand in the way if she chose him, but would I really step aside just like that? Let her go without a fight?

I followed her inside, she turned to me; she was about to speak when I crushed my lips to hers, kissing them fervently. If she had doubts about us, I would help her make up her mind. After a moment of shock she responded to me, wrapping her arms around my neck and running her fingers through my hair. She pulled away gasping as she removed my jacket and shirt. I kissed her neck as I quickly removed her layers of clothing and carried her to bed.

I made love to her with abandon, like I would never do it again. I muffled her faint screams and moans with kisses. Unlike my bedroom this suite didn't have thick walls, so people close enough might hear us. And I knew that it would embarrass her. We've laid low on our lovemaking since we arrived here, but from the looks of things we cannot go too long without loving each other.

After making love again and again in a couple of steamy positions I've showed her over the past months, she dropped to the pillows.

She spent a few minutes gasping for air, I heard her breathing slowly return to normal "Where did that come from?" she asked incredulously.

I kissed her bare shoulder "From a jealous fiancé" I said truthfully, I haven't admitted to being jealous to Lucky before. Even when I was, but now it just seemed fitting.

"Aw Jesse, I don't know what Travis told you but there's no need to be. I would still love and marry you even if you didn't give me mind-blowing sex," she teased nuzzling onto my chest. I chuckled

"I was about to apologize for being so distant, it wasn't my intension at all, and I thought maybe you were angry with me." She added.

I looked at her baffled "Why would you think that?" I asked.

"Well I left with my ex boyfriend without telling you, that must've looked bad..." She said and I shook my head to stop her.

"I wasn't angry with you little one, I was trying to figure you out." I said turning my gaze to the ceiling "You two looked a little intense, I thought you were having second thoughts," I said and she sat up looking at me like I was insane.

"About us? Never." She said "I only went for a walk with him just so I could set the record straight. I just finally made peace with him, with Tanya, with everything you know. How typical of Travis to take that the wrong way" she added shaking her head.

She laid soft kisses on my chest "They are my past, and you are my future." She smiled "And the future has never looked this certain and beautiful." She added.

I smiled too, laying her on her back again.

I called my pilot to get the jet ready as we drove to Lucky's house to say our goodbyes to them.

I hugged everyone and shook hands with George and Josh, Justin was even more sad to see me leave, he and I have formed a bond over the past two weeks.

"Aw honey, Jesse will be back every soon okay?" Lucky comforted him; he looked at me "Really?" he asked.

"Of course buddy, then we'll have a rematch of our game." I said and he smiled

"Yay, you're on" he said and I smiled messing with his brown hair, he giggled and ran away only to be caught by Eileen.

I stood up and Lucky looked at me playfully frowning "I'm actually jealous, he likes you better than he ever liked me. And I'm his 'favorite'." She said.

I chuckled "Well you're everyone's favorite, so you win by default" I offered and she laughed, as Joslyn came up to us.

"I hope to receive a wedding invitation very soon," she said hugging both of us

"Of course mom." Lucky replied smiling.

"Who's going to be the maid of honor between the two of us?" Nicky asked

"Um...I'll have to think about that one," she said quickly and everyone laughed.

Everyone walked us out and waved at us as we drove away,

"It's been a great two weeks" she said as I drove back to Willmar airport, I had memorized the road myself.

"It has" I agreed reverently, I couldn't help but think that's how my family should've been like, how they should be like.

"Ugh you couldn't let me drive even for a second, could you?" she asked and I chuckled "No, you drive too damn slow." I said.

"Well you drive like a possessed maniac" she spat; glad I had the car on automatic I reached over and started tickling her with my free hand.

She screamed and laughed, trying to get my hand away "Damn it Jesse, watch the road. Okay, okay I'm sorry" she said and I laughed letting her go.

"God, I'd swear you're a child," she said folding her arms.

I laughed and she ended up joining me.

I parked on the tarmac close to the jet; they loaded our luggage and we took off.

We landed in LAX, I loved Raymond but it felt good to be back in LA; I considered it my home now more than ever. Like a few times in the past we were unfortunate to come across the paparazzi again. This time they asked about the wedding date and who will be designing my dress.

There are hungry kids out there and they are worried about the designer of my dress? This is why I have no respect for showbiz what so ever. I was happy to see Jason waiting for us with a car.

When we arrived at the castle, I was excited to see that almost everyone was back, but most of all Angie and Maria; I missed them terribly.

Jesse and Jason ditched us as we took turns telling each other about our individual trips.

28. Uncertainty

Lucky POV

I went back to work a couple of days later and so did Jesse; he has been busy ever since we got back.

He came home later than usual one evening, I sat with him on the couch; he looked displeased about something. I looked at him questioningly

"I have a business trip to New York in two days." He said,

"Oh" I said, understanding his mood now "So soon?" I asked.

He nodded "Unfortunately I have to go, the guys from Jenkins Corp have agreed to meet us there and sign the deal. My presence is needed." He said.

"How long will you be gone?" I asked, trying to keep the sadness out of my voice. Now I knew how he felt like when I had to go to training, leaving is better than being left.

"3 days minimum, we still have a couple of things to sort out in person before we can make it official." He said scrutinizing me; I just nodded.

"I hate leaving you little one," he said resting his forehead on mine, damn it. I was trying to be strong and if he carried on like this I was going to end up cracking.

"I know, and I'm going to miss you like crazy. But you have to go and I understand that." I said, hoping my voice didn't betray me. Hell, would I always be like this when Jesse goes on one of these trips? If so then I was in trouble.

He gave me a slight smile kissing me, and then I remembered something

"Will Bianca be going with you?" I asked and he paused.

"Yes, she always accompanies me on these trips." He said eyeing me. I frowned but nodded, of course she does; she's his PA, *you're being ridiculous* I thought to myself. So what if she goes with him? Like he said, they've gone on these trips together before and nothing happened then, what makes this time any different?

Even as I tried to reason with myself, the thought still upset me.

Jesse gave me a knowing look and smiled gently "I don't stray little one, I'm a well-mannered dog, you have me on a leash wherever I go" he said.

I smiled at his efforts to make me feel better, "Nice analogy" I said, it was more than I deserved. And dealing with my insecurities was probably starting to wear on him too. Gosh, I was already acting like the jealous housewife and I'm not even married to him yet.

I shook my head sadly, for some reason I started crying, he wiped my tears away completely baffled. *He must just run while he still has a chance* I thought.

"Good luck with me Jesse, you're going to need it." I said sadly, he smiled in understanding and a little relief "Thanks" he teased. I chuckled shakily

"I love you Melissa, I don't mind reassuring you of that everyday." He added fervently. I wiped the fresh tears away and gave him an apologetic look "Sorry, I swear I won't always be like this." I said chagrined; I didn't know why my emotions were all over the place tonight.

"I know" He said, "You're stubborn, strong-willed and independent, I like knowing you need me." He added stroking my cheek.

"I always need you," I whispered pointing out the obvious, feeling like a little child. Didn't he know I breathed him?

"Then I'm here," he said embracing me; I smiled trying not to cry at his tenderness. This man was unbelievable

"You're amazing you know that?" I asked hiccupping; he chuckled letting me go.

"So I've heard," he said grabbing my hand and kissing it, "Let's go to bed"

I let him lead me upstairs feeling like the luckiest woman on earth.

After saying goodbye to Jesse, I immediately went back into the house and called Carmen, I was going to need a distraction for the next couple of days and she was perfect for the job.

I smiled as I opened the front door for her, hugging her; I felt slightly better now that she was here.

"I got here as fast as I could, what's the emergency?" she asked, I rolled my eyes at her exaggeration; I told her it wasn't urgent.

"Jesse went to New York, business trip." I said and understanding crossed her eyes "Oh" she said, then she laid her hand on my forehead and pulse "Are you okay, you still breathing?" she asked playfully.

I chuckled slapping her hand away "You're such an idiot" I teased, she sat down on the couch laughing hysterically.

I sat next to her laughing too "I need you distract me, plus the fact that he's going with Bianca you'll probably need to bleach my brain." I said.

She abruptly stopped laughing "What?" she asked; wearing the same expression I had that night I asked Jesse about it.

"Apparently they go on these trips together all the time" I said shaking my head "I just didn't take it well when he told me." I added still embarrassed by my reaction.

"What did you do?" she asked, her eyes narrowing.

"I don't know why but I just started crying for no reason. But I think I was just embarrassed about being so insecure and needy with him." I said sadly "Poor guy, he probably thought I was losing my mind."

Carmen shook her head "What if that's not the reason why, you said you could feel when something bad was going to happen right?" she asked.

I froze then chuckled uneasily "It doesn't work that way Carmen" I said, normally I would get an unnatural cold shiver down my spine. But that night I just cried pointlessly, did it have a meaning I wasn't aware of?

She shrugged and dismissed it with her hand "I was just guessing, I must be wrong. I didn't mean to freak you out, forget I said anything." She said. I just nodded, shoving the thought out of my mind.

Like Carmen promised, she and I did, every little insignificant thing we could think of. For 2 days straight she just exhausted me with anything and everything.

I appreciated her efforts, but I would always come back to an empty bedroom and I'd be depressed all over again. I had trouble falling asleep without Jesse, and the bed felt even bigger and colder without him in it.

I avoided calling him, using time difference as an excuse but I knew better. I wanted him to call me first; I didn't want to impose. He should be able to take care of business without worrying if I was still in one peace or not.

I chuckled to myself as I went into the closet and wore one of his shirts, I must've lost my mind for real then.

I sat on the couch of the balcony and inhaled the lovely and familiar scent on the collar. *How on earth did you cope without me?* I thought to myself.

I couldn't survive a month like this, ever. Then again Jesse probably didn't need me to hold his hand everyday to feel better. I watched the sun set,

The sound of my phone ringing startled me; I picked it up

"Hello" I said

"Hey little one, I feel neglected." Came a deep teasing voice

"Jesse" I breamed.

29. Justification

Jesse POV

Either I was being paranoid or Bianca seemed nervous in the flight to New York, I didn't ask or probe for information so I just dismissed it. I had to focus on business if I was going to have a chance at surviving this weekend. I already missed Lucky terribly; she and I have been flying all over the country in this jet. It didn't feel right that she was not here.

"Oh you also have a gala event on the upper west side tomorrow evening." Bianca said bringing me out of my thoughts. I shook my head

"Cancel that one, and give my invitation away." I said; I wasn't in a party mood at all. She nodded typing on her laptop "Did you want me to book a different hotel?" she asked eyeing me carefully.

"I hate hotels, I'll stay at my apartment." I reminded her, she bit her red lip

"Your apartment is being renovated remember?" she said nervously, I didn't understand her apprehension.

"Its this weekend?" I asked, I was sure I had her book it for another time, I must've forgotten. She nodded

"But I already booked you a suite at the Mark hotel, the same one I'm staying at. I figured it would be easier if I were close by..." She blabbed on. I silenced her with my hand "Its fine Bianca" I said.

In an hour we landed at JFK airport, a limo waited to take us to Manhattan.

After checking in the hotel, I went straight to my suite. Glad to see that Bianca booked a presidential suite. I was too tired to go anywhere so I took a shower and got into my pajamas. I stood by the large window overlooking

Central Park and checked my phone. It was weird that Lucky didn't try to contact me *relax; it's only been a day* I thought to myself.

She'll call me when she wants to, until then I should focus on business; I chuckled in spite of myself. Easier said than done, I already felt like a homesick puppy. I guess the dog analogy was more correct than I thought; I shook my head and went to bed.

The following day I left to go meet uncle Ben who flew in from his seaside estate in the Hamptons.

We met at a restaurant to talk about our game plan for when we met the Jenkins brothers tomorrow. Uncle Ben and I, along with G-Industries' best lawyers and financial directors discussed the deal and how it can be profitable for both companies. We wanted this deal bad and there was no room for error. We even inquired from our branch in the UK and Japan, my Aunt Rebecca and my obnoxious cousin Daniel all seemed adamant to close it. Unfortunately when it involved big deals like this we had to inform the rest of the family.

After the meeting everyone said their goodbyes and left, uncle Ben and I ordered coffee and talked.

"How is aunt Helen?" I asked, my uncle's wife Helen was a sweet woman; she played the mother figure in my life very well. He smiled

"She's well, she sends her apologies for not being able to come." He said. I smiled waving my hand dismissively "That's alright, send her my love." I said, "Maybe after this deal has blown over I'll fly up to visit." I added.

He nodded "Bring Lucky too, she'd love to meet her" he said, "How is she by the way?" He asked taking another sip.

I nodded too "She's fine, I'm sure she'd love that too." I said, His eyes narrowed.

"I thought you'd bring her with you." He pointed out "You miss her."

I chuckled sheepishly "She has her job, besides when she's around I can't get any work done." I said frowning a little. Uncle Ben laughed out loud and I joined him.

Later that evening I got impatient and decided to call Lucky; I pulled out my phone and dialed her number.

"Hello" she said, I smiled, hearing her soft voice was comforting,

"Hey little one, I feel neglected." I teased.

"Jesse" she exclaimed obviously excited "Neglected, why?"

"Why haven't you called me? I was starting to think you don't miss me," I said keeping the teasing in my voice. She paused a little

"I miss you like I breathe...I didn't want to disturb you, I know you're busy and..." she went on and I shook my head

"Lucky" I said to stop her "You're my fiancée, I'm never too busy for you." I added. "And you're forgetting one thing love"

She chuckled delightfully "What's that?" she asked.

"I miss you too," I said "How are you?" I asked

"I'm fine," she said sounding like she was trying to convince herself than me.

"Right" I said sarcastically and she sighed,

"Okay maybe not, gosh how did you cope doing this for a whole month?" She asked and I chuckled.

"I didn't," I said truthfully, thinking for a moment "Hell, you're coming with me next time, your job and my work be damned." I said "I'll drag you with me if you refuse" I added seriously. I really would.

She laughed, "That won't be necessary. How's the deal coming?" she asked

"Good, we meet tomorrow." I said, "Oh uncle Ben sends his regards"

"That's sweet, tell him I said hi." She said then I heard a voice in the background "Uh I have to go" she added.

"What did I say about feeling neglected?" I teased and she giggled

"You're a big boy, you'll survive." She said mockingly.

I chuckled "Goodnight little one" I said.

"Bye, I love you." She said and then the line went dead, I threw the phone onto the bed "I love you too" I whispered to nobody.

Bianca and I were driven to G-Industries' NY headquarters; she and I went through some finishing touches and according to her everything was in place. We walked in and some of the employees reverently bowed their heads at us as we passed. We immediately went to the executive floor; the usher opened the boardroom door as we approached. I walked in to find everyone already seated, the chatter abruptly ended and everyone stood up. I shook hands with Connor and Freddy Jenkins and nodded in the direction of my uncle. I went over to the head of the huge conference table and Bianca stood on my right,

"Greetings gentlemen, if everyone is in lets proceed." I said and sat down, everyone followed suit.

The meeting dragged on for 2 hours straight, negotiating, agreeing and disagreeing on certain terms. I was relieved when both parties finally reached an agreement; both lawyers of each party approved the contract. Connor and I signed and shook hands. I thanked everyone and called the meeting to an end.

"I truly hope this will be a long and fruitful partnership between G-Industries and Jenkins Corp, it has been a pleasure." He said and I nodded.

"We hope so too, the pleasure was all mine Mr. Jenkins. We'll keep in touch." I replied, he nodded and his representatives stood up and exited the boardroom. Once they all left the boardroom erupted with cheers, uncle Ben stood up and called the room to order.

"We've put in blood, sweat and tears into securing this deal. And I'm proud of every last one of you." He said

"For your hard work, drinks are on me tonight." He said smiling and everyone applauded again.

"Thank you all, now get out of here and get back to work." He said and they laughed, everyone stood up and went out of the boardroom.

I stood up to hug him "You did it my boy" he said

I shook my head "We did it" I clarified "Just minor details are left now"

He nodded. "I'll let the rest know of our success, are you going to head out?" he asked and I nodded, my work in New York was done, there was no reason for me to remain behind.

"Go well, we'll talk later." He said patting me on the shoulder.

"Thank you uncle Ben." I said grabbing my briefcase and went out too, I found Bianca waiting for me in the reception.

"Call my pilot and tell him to get the jet ready for tomorrow morning." I said

"Tomorrow?" she asked shocked.

"Yes, our job here is done. Unless you want to remain in the city, I won't mind. I owe you a vacation after all." I said smiling slightly.

"I'll have to think about that." She replied smiling back and I nodded.

In the evening I finished packing, when I heard a knock on my door. I opened it to find Bianca standing there; she smiled and greeted me.

"Sorry for disturbing you, but I was hoping if you could help me with the TV set in my suite? It doesn't seem to work." She asked nervously.

"Did you try calling the lobby?" I asked

"Um yeah, they said they'll send someone but it's been an hour now and you're the only person I know here." She said.

I guess a couple of minutes won't hurt "Sure I'll take a look at it." I said, closing the door behind me, and followed her to her suite.

"Thank you so much for the help" she said as I walked in the lounge area "It's in my bedroom" she pointed to the door in the passage "Can I get you anything?"

"Juice, thanks." I said and walked to the room she pointed, I found the TV in front of her bed. I started surveying it, but found nothing physically wrong with it; she only had it on AV. I rolled my eyes changing it.

She walked in with a glass and handed it to me "you fixed it" she said

"It wasn't broken, you just had to change it from AV to TV" I said feeling like I was teaching a child the letters of the alphabet.

"Oh" she said sitting on the bed "Sit with me." she said patting the space next to her, I looked at her reluctantly.

"I better get going." I said and she frowned,

"Come on, just for a couple of minutes." She insisted. I didn't know what Bianca was up to but I didn't want to be rude, so I nodded and sat next to her.

She made small talk with me as I drank the juice, it had a weird taste compared to the average apple juice but I didn't put much thought into it. She took the glass out of my hand and much to my surprise; she started kissing me.

Over my disgust and utter irritation I tried to gently push her away from me

"Damn it Bianca, how many times must I tell you that I'm not interested in you?" I said angrily.

Unfazed by my statement she took off her shirt "Don't you want me Jesse?" she asked trying to take off my shirt too.

I pushed her hands away "No, I'm engaged, get that through your thick skull" I said, I stood up only to stagger back to the bed feeling woozy all of a sudden. I touched my head; it felt like I had very strong sleeping pills in my system. Then I remembered the juice she gave me, I looked at her accusingly.

"What did you put in my drink?" I asked, not even hearing myself, she just smiled victoriously as I felt consciousness slipping away. I didn't get an answer soon enough because everything went blank.

30. Premonition

Lucky POV

"What about that one?" Angie asked, and I raised my eyebrows at her

"Too much" I said and she chuckled nodding. She and I sat in the lounge looking at wedding sites on my laptop. I didn't official start planning my wedding because Jesse and I haven't set a date yet. I'm the one who suggested that we wait yet I was the most impatient.

Mandy and Ally were just as impatient as I was as they already started showing me gowns and selling me on designers.

"I don't get what you're waiting for you know." Angie said, "I know you're just dying to be Mrs. Gilbert" she added nudging me on the shoulder, I chuckled then my head snapped to the side.

"What?" Angie asked and I shook my head, I thought I heard a car on the driveway; I must be wrong then.

Just then the front door opened and much to my surprise and delight; Jesse walked in.

"Jesse? No way" I said standing up to go hug him; he was home early

"Hey little one" he said smiling and kissed my forehead "Hello Angela" he added to Angie, who smiled and nodded "Welcome back" she said.

"You're home early," I said and Angie left to give us some privacy

"I wanted to surprise you," he said. He grabbed my hand sitting on the single couch and pulling me onto his lap, he stroked my hair. *I've missed you so much* I thought helplessly.

"Mission accomplished" I said, "How was the trip?" I asked,

He paused "It was a success" he said and I nodded resting my head on his shoulder, he seemed a little offish but maybe my mind was playing tricks on me.

I inhaled his intoxicating scent; gently stoking the hair on his nape "You seem a little tense." I remarked and he chuckled.

"I'm just tired little one" he replied; now it made sense.

"Aw my poor man, you work too much." I said and he smiled

"Don't I ever" he said and I lifted my head to look at him

"You know what you need?" I asked, "A nice long hot shower, and masseuse Lucky. I'm a miracle worker." I said stretching my fingers.

He chuckled "I'm sure" he said, I smiled and grabbed his hand taking him upstairs. Overjoyed that he was finally home.

I got back home from work earlier than usual; my boss called it a 'one time only' treat. I chuckled inwardly. I went into the bathroom for a quick shower.

After dressing I noticed the letter Abby gave me in my handbag; it had my name on the envelope. I didn't know anyone who would use my work address to send me a letter. I walked over to the bed and grabbed it tearing it open; there were three pictures and a note inside. I looked at the pictures and gasped at what I saw. The first one was Jesse and Bianca kissing and the others were of them in bed together. My hand went to my mouth, suddenly feeling nauseous.

Jesse...my Jesse slept with another woman? With Bianca, Even as I saw it for myself I still couldn't believe it.

"My God" I whispered shakily, tears coming down my face. Out of all the ways he could've possibly broken my heart, infidelity was the worst of them. I picked up the note off the ground and read it

Don't count your chickens before they hatch sweetie, the game is just only beginning, B.

I tried playing the fierce fiancée with Bianca but she'd found my weakest spot; the joke was on me, in the end she had the last laugh. I couldn't beat her at her own game because I couldn't be devious or conniving like her. It just wasn't in my nature, I was too nice and trusting for my own good; and that always got me a broken heart. With trembling hands I reached for my phone and dialed the only number I could in my state.

"Carmen?" I asked my voice shaking

"Lucky? What's wrong?" she asked in a high pitched and frantic voice.

"I need you to wait for me outside the estate, make sure no one sees you. Please." I begged, "I have to go."

I hung up while she was trying to ask me what was going on. I couldn't talk to her right now; I had to get answers of my own. I sat on the bed trying to breathe properly, I couldn't fall apart now; I had to get an explanation first. Even as the proof lay in front of me, I was still wishing this were a sick joke. What I knew for sure was that I couldn't stay here after he looks me in the eye and confirms this nightmare. I wiped my face, grabbed the pictures and walked out of our bedroom, probably for good.

I numbly sat on the couch waiting patiently for him, even as I heard his car park in the garage I was just frozen in a numb state. I didn't look up as he entered the room "To me the sun rises and sets with you little one, and that's my whole life right there." I said blankly, repeating his own words to him. Words that meant the world to me but words that were meaningless now. He walked towards me and when I met his questioning gaze he froze.

I pulled out the pictures and threw them on the table, I watched his eyes slightly widen as he looked at them.

"Tell me you didn't," I whispered, unable to stop tears from falling again

"Lucky..." he said and I stood up, putting some distance between us.

"Tell me you didn't!" I shrieked, the numbness fading away and the gut-wrenching pain surfacing again. "Tell me my eyes are lying to me"

"Please let me explain, this is not what it looks like." He said, his blue gaze pleading. "Then what is it? Because it looks like you slept with Bianca..." I choked out, the thought making me sick.

He walked up to me "Lucky I did not touch her, I swear to God. I don't know how she..."

"You don't know how you got in bed with her? Kissing her?" I said, "A woman you said I didn't have to worry about, how could you?"

"I didn't drink that night, but I can't seem to remember any of this. All I know is that she asked me to help her with her TV set, she tried to kiss me but I pushed her away." He said.

None of what he was saying adds up, but then again Jesse could manipulate a statue into moving.

"Are you lying to me right now?" I whispered desperately

He grabbed my hand "No I'm telling you the truth, I love you Lucky, I would never betray you like this." He said.

"You could've fooled me" I snatched my hand away, I chuckled darkly "How am I supposed to believe you when you've waited 2 weeks to 'tell me the truth'." I added. "Were you ever going to tell me about this?" I asked.

He paused looking at me and I dropped my gaze; that was the confirmation I feared. If he told the truth, if he really didn't sleep with her, why would he feel the need to keep it from me?

I felt my knees go weak and I knew I had to run, run away as fast as I could.

"I can't do this" I whispered shakily going passed him

"No Lucky" he said, his arms wrapping around my waist and lifting me off the ground, turning me back to him in an instant. He tightly held me to him like if he let go I would disappear, I tried to break away from his hold but I couldn't.

As a secret agent I've been trained to take down the enemy in any situation, I've been trained to get out of any confinement or prison. But in this moment I was not an agent, I was just Lucky. This was not a prison; these were Jesse's arms. He was not the enemy, he was the man I loved to the point of insanity, and against him...I was powerless.

I let out a faint sob, defeated. I laid my forehead on his chest, dropping my arms; giving up trying to fight him off. "Just let me go Jesse," I whispered.

"I cant" he said in a strained voice "Please don't ask me to."

"You have to, you can't keep me here against my will and you know it" I said.

"Don't leave little one, I'm begging you." He said, *don't make this harder for me please* I thought shaking my head.

"I'm your fiancée, you could've told me everything the minute you walked in, but you didn't. That in itself contradicts everything." I said and he froze "Let me go"

After a few seconds I felt his arms slowly unlock around me, I took steps back.

"Just like that, you're leaving me?" he asked, his eyes pained. I flinched but didn't respond; I couldn't make my lips move to reply him. I focused to build a shield between us, his gaze shifted to my necklace; I'm guessing it glowed.

"What are you doing?" he asked alarmed, walking towards me only to be stopped by an invisible barrier, I watched him try to break through it.

"Damn it Lucky! I did not sleep with her. Don't you trust me?" he shouted.

"I did, with everything I had," I whispered touching the ring on my finger. His eyes darkened as they registered what I was trying to do "Don't," he pleaded quietly. Fresh tears came down my face as I closed my eyes *I'm sorry Jane, I love your son but I can't do this* I thought. I opened them and took off the ring; it felt as though I was tearing out my finger. I used my powers to place it on the coffee table, I looked back to Jesse "Please don't follow me, and don't try to contact me," I said. There was an unreadable emotion in his blue eyes as I took one long look at him.

I had a minute before the shield faded away, so I turned and ran out the lounge and out of the estate. I ran as fast as my powers could carry me, glad that this was a private road. Not able to go any further I stopped on the side of the road, I immediately dropped to my knees sobbing violently. Carmen's car came

around the corner and abruptly stopped, her door opened and she came running towards me "Lucky?" she screamed.

She reached me and knelt down next to me "Honey what happened?" she asked.

"Jesse and Bianca..." I choked out unable to say it aloud; Carmen reached for my left hand and seeing that my ring was missing remorse and realization lit her dark eyes. She took me into her arms, rocking me back and forth as I cried.

After a long moment I got up and climbed in the car with her and explained what happened. She looked confused and skeptical.

"It doesn't make sense." She said low to herself "How are you feeling?" she asked after a long pause, at least I stopped crying.

"Like someone just stabbed me with a knife in the chest" I said, "Why does it hurt so much?" I asked bewildered. I've been through this with Travis before, but never had I felt even a fraction of the pain I was in now, it incapacitated me.

"Because you love him." She said quietly and I flinched, she gave me an apologetic look but I just shook my head.

"I'm not taking you to your apartment, you'll stay with me," she said and I was about to protest but she stopped me "And it's not negotiable" she said smiling slightly, I tried to smile back but it was only a grimace. Without another word she started the car and drove away.

31. Allies

Jesse POV

There was no amount of pain in my lifetime that could compare to watching Lucky bolt out of my front door. I called after her trying to fight through this barrier she created, seconds later it vanished but so did she. I threw a huge glass vase against the wall in frustration and turned for my garage.

"Stop!" Maria's voice came through; I turned to see her come down the staircase with a blank expression. "Let her go"

I raised my eyebrows at her as I picked up Lucky's ring of the coffee table "Did you not see that? She left me, I can't just let her go." I mildly shouted at her.

Her expression softened "I know, but she's hurting right now, she needs time" she said and I ran my hand through my hair.

"I would never do something like this to her Maria" I said and she nodded

"I know." She said, "You love her too much" she added then her eyes darkened just as she slapped me across the face. Bewildered I looked at her

"That's for not telling her about it from the beginning. Things could've turned out a lot differently" she said irritated.

"Touché" I said and she put her hand on my shoulder

"You're just as confused as she is, I understand that. But find some answers first, that's the only way you can get her back." She said her eyes narrowing. They shifted to the ring in my hand and back to me, they were remorseful. I nodded and she turned and went back upstairs.

I sat in my study with my face in my hands. The room was peaceful and quiet, oblivious to my inner turmoil. I didn't even know where Lucky was, whom she was with, and if she was okay. But then again I knew the answer to the last one, She has never looked at me like that, even when I broke up with her.

She really believed I cheated on her, I couldn't deny that my not telling her did not help matters. I didn't want to upset her besides, what would I tell her?

I woke up in Bianca's suite that morning completely confused as to how I got there, Bianca was nowhere to be found. I tried to remember what happened the night before but I was completely blank, though I was fully clothed from the waist down. With a wave of relief I knew I didn't sleep with her, I would never in my right mind. What didn't add up was how I got in her bed in the first place because I was certain I didn't drink anything alcoholic. Then I remembered that I came to help her with her TV set then she drugged me, but why would she do that?

I tried getting a hold of her but I couldn't, when I checked out the receptionist told me that she checked out hours earlier.

I flew back to LA alone and confused as to what to do, weather to tell Lucky or not. I was sure that I didn't sleep with Bianca, but would Lucky understand?

I too was unsure about the whole situation and the only person who had answers disappeared.

I grew more suspicious when she didn't even show up to work for two weeks.

When I saw the pictures she sent Lucky I finally understood why she did what she did. Bianca has always wanted me but I underestimated the lengths she'd go to get what she wants. She knew I would never sleep with her so she decided to drug me and send the pictures to Lucky, making me look like a cheating bastard.

She also knew that I would never leave Lucky for her, so the best alternative was getting Lucky to leave me instead. *Getting rid of the competition* I thought in disgust.

Now her vindictive and manipulative actions had turned my world upside down, and I didn't take well to people who messed with me. She crossed the line when she decided to mess with the one thing no one dared to, and for that she would pay dearly. I groaned and reached for my phone

"Kevin buddy, I need your help." I said after he answered

"Of course man, you don't sound too good." He remarked

"I'm not." I said truthfully "I want you to help me track down someone"

Kevin whistled under his breath "What did they do?"

"Lucky" that's all I could say, then I started explaining what I wanted him to do. And whom I wanted him to find. Kevin was the best tracker out of the two of us; he had the latest tracking software and gadgets.

"I'll send you more info I think could help you find her." I said "And Kevin, find her as soon as you can." I said; patience was never my strongest traits.

"You're not a patient man, I know." He teased chuckling, I slightly grinned "I'll get on it my friend, and oh go easy on her" he said.

"Thanks buddy" I said and hung up, I couldn't promise that.

I hung my head; it was too bad that I couldn't track down Lucky, even if I did, she didn't want anything to do with me. She didn't even take anything with her; well anything / gave her, she just left. My head snapped up

She wore the bracelet I gave her on her birthday last year; she didn't take it off. I installed a tracking device and a mic on that bracelet. I went over to my desk switching on my holographic computer, synching the tracker on Lucky's bracelet. A red light appeared and I let out a breath of relief at where she was, she was still in LA and at a street she once mentioned Carmen bought a house in.

I hacked into the CIA database and searched for Carmen's personal details, I don't know what I was thinking when I dialed her numbers.

"Hello" she answered after 2 rings

"Hello Carmen its Jesse, please don't hang up." I said and there was a silence

"You shouldn't be calling me," she said quietly.

"I know and I'm sorry, but I know Lucky is with you and I just wanted to make sure she's okay." I said, "How is she?" I asked,

"She's heartbroken, what do you think?" she hissed.

"You don't know me Carmen but I love her, I would never be unfaithful to her." I said fervently. She paused

"I believe you," she said and my eyes widened in shock "But that doesn't matter, don't ask me to convince her to get back with you." She added.

"I wasn't trying to." I said truthfully and there was another pause,

"I can only do so much for her" She said sadly "She needs *you*, but find a way to fix this without my help, I need to be in her corner right now" she said in a low voice.

"I understand." I said, "Thank you." I added and she hung up.

I sat back on my armchair chuckling darkly; I was the one that needed her.

Lucky didn't believe me, but Maria and Carmen did, how could that be? Then again she'd been cheated on before; I opened up old wounds.

"Jesse" Her voice came through out of nowhere, I sat up straight; looking around the room. Was I hallucinating?

"Jesse, I know you can hear me," she said again then I realized that the mic had been activated "I found the tracker in my bracelet; I'm an agent too remember?"

I smiled blankly; *you're good little one* I thought. I cursed out loud that I couldn't reply her and she knew that.

"I'm going to destroy this device, I meant what I said. Leave Carmen alone too, please." She said. There was a long pause then the mic deactivated, a minute later the red light vanished off the screen.

"I meant what I said too." I whispered to nobody, she used the words I said to her when I proposed like they were a curse. One thing was for sure was that I had to get her back, how? I really didn't care. If she wanted me to grovel for the next decade I would. I sighed and got up, getting out of my study.

32. Fate

Lucky POV

It's been well over a week since I've been living with Carmen, I knew I was depressing her and it made me feel bad. I suggested that I go back to my apartment but she wasn't having it.

I moped around her guest bedroom, and tried not to cry myself to sleep every night. I also ate chocolate more than usual; I must be really depressed then.

I told my boss I was sick; I couldn't go to work, I wasn't any good in this state. He just agreed and told me to take all the time I needed. I knew I was getting special treatment because I was the Billionaire's fiancée. Somewhere between being Jesse's girlfriend and fiancée, I gave up Lucky. Giving up Lucky also meant giving up control over my life, my fate...God, even the way people treated me.

My life revolved around him and I didn't mind, I still don't. But I can't stay like this forever, I had to get on with my life and the only way to do that was to get back control.

Carmen called to say she'd be working late tonight, so I got dressed in a tank top and tight jeans; I put on my leather jacket and boots and went to Carmen's garage. I told her housekeeper to tell her I'm fine if she came back before me. I grabbed her motorcycle and sped towards the estate, if Carmen was here, she would've stopped me and told me I was crazy. Maybe I was.

I parked just outside of the estate; I dashed in; not wanting the guards to know I'm here. I got in through the hidden basement door, on the side of the castle.

Once inside I walked towards Jesse's study, he's normally there around this time of the evening. I was surprised to see the castle was almost empty I didn't need to sneak around. I walked in his study to find him standing by his large window with his back to me.

"Came to wish me a happy birthday?" he asked but he didn't turn around, it was impossible to catch Jesse off guard, it's like he knew when I was near. Today was Jesse's birthday and it was truly heartless of me to do this today of all days.

When I didn't reply he turned to look at me, I cursed inwardly; my heart has been dead for a week. And now at the mere sight of Jesse it was beating out of my chest.

"Where is everyone?" I asked stopping a couple of feet away from him

"They've gone out." He said, and he remained behind?

"It was your party," I whispered to myself and he slightly grinned, nodding.

"I'm not good company." He teased but humor didn't touch his eyes "I've missed you little one." He said walking towards me.

I shook my head "Don't call me that," I hissed stopping him with my hand "I did not change my mind." I said then something passed in his eyes.

"Does Carmen know you're here? What are you really doing here Lucky?" he asked suspiciously.

"No she doesn't. I've come to fight you." I said taking a fighting position, he raised his eyebrows at me, shocked and then he controlled his expression, knowing what I meant.

"I'm not going to fight you Lucky," he said like the thought repulsed him.

"Why? You had no problem breaking my heart." I spat and his eyes darkened.

He paused then he walked up to me "Take your best shot" he said, if he thought I wasn't serious he was sadly mistaken. I punched him and he just simply took it. Every attack I made he didn't even try to block any of them. I pushed him and screamed in fury "Fight me back!" I shrieked.

"What are you trying to prove?" he asked raising his own voice.

"I'm trying to take back my life, my fate...my heart, and I can't," I screamed at him "You have them and I want them back."

His eyes bore into mine "I could never take them away from you even if I tried" he said softly "You want a fight? Very well. I win; you come back" he said.

"And if I win?" I asked and his eyes narrowed.

"I will never bother you ever again," he said and I couldn't be sure if he meant it.

He took a fighting position and motioned me to attack, even as a well-trained agent I still couldn't touch Jesse. It was only a few times that my hits got him; he for one didn't physically attack me, he just used my own attacks against me. Wearing me out, which infuriated me. I tried to kick him but he quickly grabbed my leg pushing it around and he crouched down knocking my other one. Making me fall to the ground; I groaned.

The one time he lets me fall I thought bitterly, I hit the floor with my fists in frustrating defeat. He knelt down beside me and smiled apologetically offering me his hand, but I just looked at it.

"You're an amazing agent when you're focused, this is why we're not supposed to fall in love. You can't fight the one you love and win." He said softly.

I couldn't accept that, I got up on my own. I don't know what I was thinking when I dashed and got the gun he stashed in his study. Too quickly, I had it in my hand and pointed it to his head.

"I *have* to win." I said, and he froze then his expression relaxed,

"Are you going to shoot me?" he asked quietly.

"Are you calling my bluff?" I asked cocking the gun; he smiled gently

"No" he said "But you're not a killer, even if you were; you would shoot a man that betrayed you, but deep down inside you know I 'am not that man" he added softly.

He hit the nail on the head; I was hurting because he cheated but somewhere in me, there was still hope that he didn't. That he and I could still be.

I cursed myself as tears streamed down my face, I couldn't pull the trigger. I couldn't kill the man I loved; it would be like tearing out my own heart. This mission was bound to fail from the very beginning; I couldn't take back those things. I willingly gave them away.

In a snap Jesse took the gun out of my hand and threw it to the back of the room, I turned to run out but he grabbed my arm.

"Don't go." He said, wrapping his arms around me, for once I didn't fight him off. It was pointless because I wanted to feel the warmth of his embrace. I've been so cold and empty without it.

"Come back to me little one." He pleaded and I sobbed on his chest silently

"You still want me back; after this? You could charge me with attempted murder you know" I said, and I felt his chest shake with laughter.

"Now how would that look to the police?" he teased, I tried to chuckle but it came out a gasp.

"I love you Jesse," I said, even through the pain saying that was as easy as it always was "But I can't just come back here and be with you like nothing ever happened." I added sadly.

"I know" he said letting me go and cupping my face with both his hands "But I'm going to fight for you Lucky, I'm not letting you go." He said.

Fresh tears came down my face "Why?" I asked

He smiled "I told you, I'm not going to live without you." He said kissing my forehead; he let go before I could involuntarily touch him. I turned and walked away, stopping on the doorway. I turned to look at him and tried to smile

"Happy birthday." I said, he slightly grinned and nodded.

I woke up feeling something coming up my throat; *not again* I thought, getting up and running to the bathroom. After vomiting I went to the shower and basin brushing my teeth, I groaned. I've been sick like this for a couple of days now, not even Carmen's soup for stomach flu helped. Even more bizarre was that I was 3 days late on my period; that's never happened before. I chuckled uneasily. With all these symptoms you'd swear I was...I gasped dropping my brush in the basin.

Pregnant? That would explain a lot, the sudden emotional outbursts, craving chocolate all the time. And now morning sickness, this wasn't stomach flu; I was pregnant with Jesse's child. On numb legs I sat on the bed, as obvious as it looked I still couldn't bring myself to believe it. I tried to think back.

Jesse didn't use protection when we made love, but I took contraceptives. I took them even before we met, to regulate my periods, surely they should've prevented me from getting pregnant. Then it hit me; I absently stopped taking them regularly when we got back from Wimberley.

I jumped up and got dressed, I had to test this; it was the only way I could be sure. Carmen had already left for work, somehow I was glad. I wasn't going to tell her about my suspicion yet; I didn't even want to think about the implications if my suspicion was true.

I walked to a local store, and bought 4 different home pregnancy tests; I didn't even care about the look the woman behind the counter gave me. I went back to the house and took the tests; I slumped to the bathroom floor as all the tests showed a positive result.

My hand went to my abdomen and the other wiped a tear that escaped the corner of my eye. I've had fantasies of being pregnant with Jesse's child and now that I was, I didn't even now what to do.

I was a mess, how was I supposed to carry a child whose father I couldn't even talk to? I love him. But I couldn't get the sick thought of him sleeping with Bianca out of my mind.

I wanted to be with him more than anything, but could I really compromise trust? He said he would fight for me. Part of me wanted him to, but could I really put him cheating on me aside?

Now there's an unborn baby, *Jesse's little boy* I thought smiling slightly. Everything I did and any decision I made affected him now, it was not just me anymore.

And would I tell Jesse? What would he do? I knew he would never let me run off with his child, and he would want to be a part of its life. Would bitter heartbreak make me deny him that? I doubted anyone dared deny Jesse anything.

One thing I knew for sure was that I was having this baby, with or without its father. I loved, cared and held this baby many times in my dreams before; I wasn't letting him go over this. I got up off the floor.

In the evening Carmen was telling me about her day over dinner

"How's that stomach flu today?" she asked and I shook my head.

"It's not stomach flu, I'm pregnant" I said simply, Carmen froze and her eyes widened, I waited for her to recover.

"Wow" she said, "When did you find out?"

"I took a home test this morning," I said shaking my head sadly "I can't believe I missed all the signs."

"You've got a lot on your mind my friend, don't be so hard on yourself." She said her eyes narrowing "What are you going to do now?"

"Am I a bad person for saying I have no idea?" I asked and she shook her head.

"And Jesse, are you going to tell him?" she asked and I paused "Lucky?" she probed when I didn't answer her.

"I don't know okay? This is my baby," I said defensively

"It's his baby too, he has a right to know." She insisted exasperated.

"Don't you think I know that?" I said raising my voice "You don't understand Carmen, I've wanted this baby from day one. Now I can't even think about its father without breaking down."

Carmen looked at me with calm patience; I looked down

"Sorry" I murmured, I was being unfair to her. She shook her head smiling

"Pregnant woman hormones" she teased and I tried to smile back. "I was not trying to pressure you into doing anything. I just thought..."

"It's okay Carmen" I said stopping her "You're a great friend, I don't know what I'd do without you." I said and she smiled. I didn't tell her that I overheard her talking to Jesse on the phone that other night. I didn't want to make her feel bad about it, she did nothing wrong. I knew she was worried about me running with the baby, I couldn't say that idea didn't cross my mind once. But running would be cruel to both the baby and Jesse, they both deserved to be in each other's lives. I couldn't stand in the way of that, no matter what my reasons were.

She and I talked some more but she didn't mention Jesse again.

33. Revenge

Jesse POV

Jeffery drove through the streets of San Diego towards a diner, Kevin was able to pin point Bianca's location accurately. He was also able to find out some personal information about her and of her whereabouts since New York. She was in Wyoming visiting her sick mother.

Jeffrey pulled up and I got out of the car, cursing my formal appearance, Kevin called me at work and I immediately called Jeffery to take me here. I walked in the diner looking for a familiar face. I spotted Bianca sitting in a booth alone; I walked up to her and sat across from her. I watched her eyes widen in shock as a waitress approached us

"Two cappuccino's" I said. The waitress took note and walked away; I turned to look at Bianca who was still shell shocked.

"Hello Bianca, you look like you've seen a ghost." I said smiling "Were you planning on hiding forever?" I asked.

She dropped her eyes "No, I was just..."

"You just thought you could get away with messing up my personal life." I said icily "You crossed the line little girl."

"I'm sorry, I didn't mean for any trouble." She said quickly, her voice shaking

"I don't want your apology, I want answers." I said "New York, start from the beginning. Tell me everything."

She nodded and started explaining how and why she did what she did, I listened with quiet patience until she mentioned a name that shocked me. I stopped her with my hand

"How does Michelle fit in all of this?" I asked, taken off guard.

"She came to me and proposed this idea, she said that I was the only one that could pull it off since I work so close with you. She said that if we worked together she would help me get rid of Lucky." She said.

I guess I shouldn't be surprised, Michelle is the one that planted this manipulative seed in Bianca's head. She used Bianca as a scapegoat because she didn't want to get her hands dirty. What I didn't understand is why she would want to help Bianca, she wanted me for herself; she always has.

"What was in it for her?" I asked and her eyes narrowed.

"She said that she had some unfinished business with Lucky, I guess she wanted revenge or something," she said.

I shook my head "Michelle wants me for herself, if you succeeded you would be easier competition, stealing me away from you would be much easier than from Lucky." I said watching her eyes widen as she caught what I meant. "Michelle doesn't have a kind and unselfish bone in her body." I added.

Tears came down her face "She wanted me to take the heat instead." She whispered to herself.

"Exactly." I said looking over her head "Luckily for you I'm a fair guy, so heat will come to the both of you." I said.

She looked up at me with frightened eyes "What do you want from me?"

"You and Michelle are going to help me clean up the mess you've created" I said "Fail to do that and there will be hell to pay," I added coldly.

Some burly guy whose been watching us closely stood up and walked towards us

"Is there a problem here?" he asked and I smiled sadly.

"No, the lady here just found out her mother died, tragic accident in Wyoming" I said sadly and Bianca cried harder.

"Oh, my sincere condolences ma'am" he said and Bianca nodded, he tilted his hat and walked away. Bianca looked at me with pleading eyes

"Please don't hurt my mother." She said and I held up my hand.

"Relax Bianca, no one has to get hurt. As long as you do exactly as I say, do you understand me?" I asked and she nodded.

"We're leaving for LA now, we're going to pay our good friend Michelle a visit." I said standing up. Bianca stood up to and I followed her out of the diner and into the waiting car.

I sat at the local restaurant in LA as I waited for Michelle; she was surprised when I called her to meet me. Bianca sat in the car from across the road.

5 minutes later Michelle showed up smiling widely as she took a seat next to me

"Jesse, this is a surprise." She said. "To what do I owe the pleasure?"

"Michelle, I thought you meant it when you said you were never coming back." I said "But then again honesty was never one of your traits."

She looked at me confused then I motioned towards the car for Bianca to join us, she got out and walked towards us. Michelle's eyes widened

"You couldn't keep your mouth shut could you?" Michelle hissed at Bianca

"For what? When you've planned to stab me in the back anyway" Bianca replied in the same cold tone.

"Silence the both of you," I said "You'll listen to me now"

"Because of your lying tactics my fiancée thinks I cheated on her, she needs to hear the truth, and how better than from the horse's mouth. Jeffery will take you to her, and you will tell her everything you did. Do not make the mistake of lying again. Apologize to her for all the pain you've caused, she'll decide what to do with that." I said.

Michelle threw her arms up, "So now we're supposed to go kiss queen Lucky's feet?" she spat and I smirked.

"Exactly." I said, "Once that is done, I'm giving you 2 hours to pack your things and leave the state of California, for good." I added coldly.

Michelle's eyes widened and Bianca put her face in her hands

"What?" Michelle shrieked "Hell you can't make us leave"

I shot her a cold look "Can't I?" I asked "Michelle you of all people should know what I'm capable of when angered. I'm letting you off easy, I'm actually giving you a chance to run." I said and she flinched.

"You both shouldn't be so fortunate after the damaged you've caused, next time you'll know your place and who not to mess with. Go." I said.

Michelle glared at me then got up heading for the car; Bianca remained behind

"I 'am truly sorry about all of this." She said weeping again.

"Apology accepted" I said blankly "You may have been manipulated, but you played a hand in this and for that you'll have to face the consequences. You're fired, but if you carry out my requests I won't blacklist you." I said, she nodded then got up too.

I watched Jeffery drive them away and 10 minutes later Maria pulled up my Martin. I went over to her and she climbed into the passenger seat.

"I still think you were too easy on them," She said frowning "My poor Lucky was devastated because of them."

"I think so too. But I know her; despite everything they've done she wouldn't want me to punish them." I said and she nodded.

Lucky had a fury like no other but she would never spite anyone, whereas with me; I didn't get angry, I just got even.

I drove downtown where I would meet Jeffery, an hour and a half later his black sedan pulled up in front of me. I got out of my car and went to his back window, it rolled down and I looked at Bianca and Michelle.

"I trust that you both played your part" I said, I wouldn't be so generous if I were to learn that they screwed me over again.

"We told her the truth, she was mad but I think she believed us." Bianca said

"Um mad is an understatement, she said she'll have our heads if we don't stay away from her and you. You're both crazy, you deserve each other." Michelle spat. I smiled, that sounded like my Lucky

"Thank you." I said and leaned in "Jeff will take you to LAX, have a nice trip. I don't ever want to hear or see either one of you here again. Or your heads are not the only things I'll have." I said menacingly.

I knocked the hood of the car twice and it drove away, I got back in my car and started it. Maria looked at me

"It's done?" she asked and I nodded "So what now?" she asked

"We wait." I said driving back home. Lucky knew the truth but she could still choose not to come back to me.

34. Fly

Lucky POV

I had to stop myself from scratching Bianca and Michelle's eyes out. I couldn't believe how sick and vindictive people could be. But worst of all I couldn't believe I fell right into their little plan, I should've known better.

Carmen comfortingly stroked my hair as I silently sobbed on her lap

"It's okay sweetie, they played us all." She said and I shook my head

"Still, Jesse loves me and he's been nothing but amazing to me, I should've believed him; what kind of a fiancée am I?" I said.

"You believed what you saw and you were hurt, no one can blame you for that." She replied. But she still believed him; why couldn't I?

Then again when it came to Jesse I couldn't think or act rationally.

"He told me he'd never cheat on me. He was sweet and understanding, he put up with my silly insecurities. But I couldn't believe him when he needed me to." I said sadly.

Because of that I ended up hurting him and breaking my promise, my promise to stick with him no matter what.

"I'd be surprised if he didn't leave me, and file a restraining order against me" I said shaking my head.

Carmen looked at me dumbfounded "Why would he file a restraining order?"

I bit my lip, I never told Carmen about my visit "I went to see him the night you were working late; I got a little crazy." I said chagrined. I honestly don't know what got into me that night. Hormones and mood swings can't possible make a person that crazy.

"Oh my God, do I even want to know?" she asked and I shook my head,

"That bad?" she probed and I nodded; She sighed.

"What am I going to do Carmen?" I asked sitting up, I felt lost.

"Go see him and this time don't go crazy," she teased and I grimaced. Her expression turned solemn "The first step is to tell him your pregnant, I believe the rest will work itself out." She said.

I sighed, "I wish I had your optimism," I said. His baby had a place in his life, but my place was not so certain.

She chuckled in disbelief "I will pray for you my friend, that one day you finally see how much that man loves you." She said.

For once I laughed with her, she was right. Why else would Jesse put up with me?

"Come on, I'll make you hot chocolate." She said and I smiled

"God, I'm going be fat." I said frowning a little, but I couldn't control these stupid cravings.

"It'll serve you right." She laughed as I pushed her back.

I finally gathered up enough courage to see Jesse, Carmen parked on the driveway of the castle and turned to me.

"You can do this girl, go on." She said smiling; I nodded and got out.

I waved her off as she drove away; I took a deep breath and entered the front door. I found Angie in the kitchen and she gasped when she saw me.

She hugged me "Please tell me you're staying." She said.

"We'll have to see." I said and she nodded. She told me where Jesse was and flashed me an encouraging smile. I went out to the backyard and found him playing golf with Jason.

My heart was racing as I walked on the golf course and towards him. Jason's eyes widened as he saw me approaching, and Jesse turned around. I stopped a few feet away from him; Jason nodded towards me and walked away. I turned my reluctant gaze to Jesse, who watched me with calm eyes. I smiled and walked past him towards the flagpole, I lifted it and looked at him. He watched me with curious eyes

"Hole in one." I called out to him; he smiled and took his swinging stance. He glanced at the hole and hit the ball. I watched it gradually roll towards me and into the hole. I smiled and applauded him, *is there anything you can't do?* I thought as I picked up the ball.

I walked towards him and handed it to him, he continued to watch me silently; I guess he wanted me to speak first.

"You have every right to kick me out and tell me you never want to see me again." I said looking into his beautiful eyes. I wouldn't even put up a fight; I would just leave. He gave a nonchalant grin

"Now why would I do that?" he said and I looked down. Why did he do that? Why couldn't he shout at me, and tell me I didn't deserve him? It would make me feel a little better I guess. He lifted my face with his finger

"Don't look so culpable little one, you did nothing wrong." He said softly

I shook my head "I just feel so stupid and I should've listened..."

"Nonsense" he said taking me into his arms "I should've told you the truth before this got out of hand, I'm sorry."

"But I should've believed you, I should've known you'd never hurt me like that." I said, clinging onto him for dear life. For God's sake, the man had a tattoo of me on his back, just to show how much he loved me.

"True." He teased and I let out a faint chuckle, he stroked my cheek "There hundreds of people like Bianca and Michelle out there. There are malicious people who are going to try to tear us apart Lucky. All I ask is that you trust in my love, there's nothing I wouldn't do for you little one." He said softly.

I nodded "It's been hell without you Jesse, I'm not going back there again." I said

"Good" he said, "Because long engagement be damned, I'm marrying you next month." He said and I looked up at him shocked.

"That's crazy, its 2 weeks from now" I said incredulously.

"Why wait? Besides I want to make sure you can't legally leave me." he teased, but humor didn't touch his eyes. I looked down; my departure hurt him more than I thought, I sighed.

"I can never leave you again, we have a stronger tie than love and marriage now" I said meeting his questioning gaze "I'm pregnant."

The love Jesse and I shared ran deep and now that there was a child in the equation we were inseparable now, weather we like it or not.

I watched his eyes widen for a moment then his expression turned to complete elation "My God Lucky, when did you know?" he asked smiling as he cupped my face in his hands.

"A couple of days ago." I said then frowned slightly "I forgot to take my contraceptives properly." I muttered.

He laughed "And I knocked you up immediately" he said "I guess I got another hole in one." He teased and I chuckled.

I screamed as he suddenly scooped me in his arms, twirling me around excitedly.

He sat me down and kissed me "Thank you for making me a father." He said.

I smiled my insides melting "Thank you for making me a mother, I've always wanted kids but having yours is a dream come true." I whispered.

He kissed my forehead and gently laid his hand on my abdomen "How far are you?" he asked.

"I'm not sure cause I haven't been to a doctor yet but I think I'm five weeks." I said and he smirked.

"Raymond." He said, "I guess I'm very potent." He added and I laughed.

"I'm definitely marrying you next month then." He said.

"You can't be serious Jesse, I want to marry you but I can't possibly plan a wedding in two weeks!" I said panicked.

He rolled his eyes "We have people for that little one, Linda planned your party in four days." He said and my mouth fell open. My party looked like it took months to plan it. He was right; with his influence he could get everything with the snap of his finger.

"I want to plan my own wedding Jesse." I said and he nodded smiling

"And you can, you just can't do all of it yourself besides you don't want to upset my cousins, do you?" he asked raising an eyebrow. I moaned

Ally and Mandy weren't even going to allow me to do anything at all; my guess is that they've already started planning it behind my back.

Jesse chuckled "I'm glad they are also at our disposal, I don't want you straining yourself love. Its not good for the baby." He said.

I frowned "Oh no, overprotective father alert. My poor baby" I said and he threw his head back laughing.

"You know me well." He teased, picking me up again. I laughed with him.

I kissed his neck as he carried me off the golf course *I love you and your baby* I thought, feeling happier than ever, if that's even possible.

* * *

Note from author:

Thank you so much for reading this book, I hope you've enjoyed the series this far just as I've enjoyed writing it. I'm not sure if I'm going to continue it but keep watching. Thanks for all the support, it means a lot to me.

Mahlatse Mokone.

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