

A woman with long brown hair and a black top is leaning over a man's bare chest. She is looking down at him with a serious expression. The man is lying down, looking up at her. The background is dark and out of focus.

GUARDING HIS

BABY

She makes him an offer he can't refuse.

ARABELLA RAE

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GUARDING HIS BABY

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GUARDING HIS BABY

About this novel

Janina Fullerton

Heiress Janina “Jenna” Fullerton must have a baby ASAP or get bypassed as the CEO of her father’s company. But she doesn’t even have a boyfriend she could ask to help her. The closest man she has at her disposal is Jared De Lucca, her long-time bodyguard. Dare she ask her hard as nails, gorgeous as sin and perpetually brooding bodyguard to forget protection for a month and make a baby with her?

Jared De Lucca

He’s been wanting her forever. But he’s a professional. He’d sworn to protect her with his life, as her bodyguard, but Janina is asking him to cross the line from being her hired protector to her lover.

What would a beautiful young woman with staggering wealth and high stature in society do with an aging, battle-scarred warrior like him, who has nothing to show for but ugly memories of a once violent life?

But tonight, he doesn’t know what cosmic elements in the universe conspired to make this happen.

She wants his baby. Not just his baby. Him. She wants nobody else to be the father of her child but him.

He knows she’s desperate and he shouldn’t take advantage of her. He took an oath to protect her, even from himself. But God, he’d die to taste heaven in her arms, even just once.



PROLOGUE



The Turning Point

Paris

This mission was getting fucked up by the second.

He came in with five Specialist Warfare Operators, all seasoned in the battlefield. Ten minutes later, two of his comrades were down. Only Bragg, Cameron, and Korgan were covering him now as he attempted to escape with the hostages. They were grossly outnumbered. The Paris SWAT were outside and had surrounded the building, but they'd be overpowered within two minutes and maybe it would be too late when back-up finally got in.

Dying in battle was okay. That was a given. But to die with the people you're trying to save was a Pyrrhic victory. It must not happen!

The AKs went off again, making ominous sounds as the bullets hit the steel container vans piled high, forming a labyrinth within the cavernous warehouse.

Damn terrorists! He'd dealt with them for almost a decade while he was in the service and he knew their lot like the ugly scars on his body.

He pushed Leticia Fullerton behind him and fired back with his F2K automatic rifle in his right hand while his left clamped like a vise around Janina Fullerton's body. Thank God, the little girl was holding on to him for dear life like a baby monkey to its mother because he needed both his hands to reload and shoot back at the fuckers shooting after them.

They didn't want money, which Leticia's husband had in tons. Nathan Fullerton desperately offered a billion dollars for his wife's and daughter's

freedom, but the fuckers wanted Leticia and Janina in exchange for the release of one of their top leaders captured in New York last month. Apparently, they were plotting another 9/11.

Nathan had direct contact with the White House. The terrorists presumed Nathan could influence the president, who was his good friend, to negotiate. But the US government refused to release their high-value prisoner. The FBI proposed an American-led rescue operation. The kidnappers gave Nathan a deadline or he'd start receiving his loved ones' bodies in increments. Nathan was forced to agree to a covert rescue op. Since this case involved international terrorists, the president of the United States gave concession to his friend, Nathan, and made some classified calls overseas. A small team of specialists was assembled within a few hours. Six operators flew into France from several locations in Europe.

So, here he was, recalled from the pit of depression to rescue a billionaire's wife and daughter from the clutches of an extremist cell operating in the heart of Paris.

After two days of intensive surveillance, his team crept quietly into the warehouse. Their mission was to extract the hostages with minimum firepower, so it must be precise and quick.

But some missions just don't go as planned. A lot could happen. Miscalculation. Bad Timing. Or simply bad luck. All of the above was happening today.

The team located Leticia and Janina right away, quickly neutralizing the four men guarding them, but it went downhill from then on. They were expecting six targets. They ended up facing more than a dozen fully armed, do or die motherfuckers who appeared out of nowhere. Did someone leak the operation? He may not live long enough to find out.

"K, I'm going for the front entrance," he rasped on the radio system attached to his face.

"Negative, DL. You'll get hit," Korgan replied.

"We're all toast in a few minutes anyway! We have to go for it!"

"Okay, wait for me. I'll cover you. Just have to— fuck!"

Jared heard a burst of gunfire. He hoped Korgan survived that.

"I'm near the entrance now. I'll cover for you, man," Bragg came in, panting.

"We're coming at 8 o'clock from the right."

“Copy.”

He faced Leticia. “We have to run for the entrance, ma’am. There,” he pointed to a wide opening some twenty meters away. It was a short distance for a sprint, provided they didn’t get hit before they could cross to the safe side. “Run as fast as you can, okay? Don’t look back. It’s our only chance.”

She repeatedly nodded, a ghastly sight from the bruises covering her face and arms. Nathan was going to raise hell when he saw his wife. He could only guess what the fuckers did to the poor woman. He wanted to kill them all, but saving Leticia and her daughter was paramount than his bloodlust.

“Nina?”

The little girl in his arms met his eyes. She looked terrified, but he could feel courage radiating from her tiny body. “It’s going to be alright. You just hold on to me, okay? Hold on real tight.”

She nodded, her big, hazel eyes pulling at him in an indefinable way. “I won’t let go, I promise.”

He felt his chest constrict in tenderness, a rare emotion for him these days and a strange one amid the situation. He chuckled her under the chin. “That’s my brave, *bella*.”

“DL, you ready? I’m in position. Around five fuckers near the entrance,” he heard Bragg say.

“Throw ‘em a candy. I’ll tell you when.”

“Copy.”

“Okay, let’s go, ma’am,” he said to Leticia.

They made a run for the warehouse’s entrance, keeping close to the storage vans.

“Stop, stop here. Alright, girls, cover your ears and close your eyes,” he said, panting, his eyes scanning their surroundings. He could hear men shouting. More gunfire. Korgan was still alive covering for them, by the looks of it. He hoped Cameron was still around, but Cam hadn’t made a sound on the radio for a while now, which was a bad sign.

“Now, Bragg! Throw it!” he said.

“Done!” Bragg replied.

Jared counted to three, covering his own ears. The mouth of the warehouse exploded, but it was not a deadly explosion. They were too close.

Bragg threw a flash grenade just to stun and disorient the enemy.

“Let’s go, go, go!” Jared urged Leticia.

They broke into a run. “Keep running!” He sprayed bullets at the fuckers near the entrance still reeling from the deafening explosion. He downed three. Bragg took care of the other two.

But AK’s were shooting at them from behind.

It was mayhem in slow motion.

Blood pounded in his ears as he was taken back in time...

Bullets rained all over them, and they didn’t know where they were coming from. It was a blitzkrieg. The enemy had surrounded them in their natural habitat, the desert. He was firing in all directions, shouting for Jamie to get down. But Jamie was not listening. He was shooting back from his M-16, howling like a madman, lost in the maelstrom of violence quickly drowning their sanity. His other men lay scattered on the ground, all bloody. An IED blew their truck to bits. Limbs flew. Blood splattered everywhere. But they were still fighting. Fighting to their last breath. The insurgents were closing in, intent on finishing all of them. He had to get his men out of there, the ones who were still alive, at least. And Jamie. He couldn’t let Jamie die...

His past morphed into his present.

Leticia stumbled. He stopped to pull her back to her feet. The gunmetal scent of blood assaulted his nostrils. Leticia’s blood. Jamie’s blood...his men’s blood.

“Ma’am, stand up! Stand up, please!”

“Just go! Leave me!” she gasped, holding her stomach. Her dress was instantly drenched in crimson.

Pushing the automatic rifle hanging from his chest to his back, he hauled her up by the waist and dragged her while Janina held on tighter around his neck, her little legs gripping his waist. He was a big man and stronger than most, but carrying an almost dead weight and a girl wearing a Kevlar vest while evading bullets was a herculean task.

God, help me. Please, help me save them!

He didn’t even know them, but he felt closer to Leticia and Janina than anyone else in those moments. “Hang in there, ma’am. Just a little bit more. Please, hang in there.”

He could hear the sirens. Hope. Just a few meters away.

Bullets rang out again. This time, he felt them rip through his body. He fell to the ground on his knees. Growling savagely, he let go of Leticia and fired back. “Mothafuckahhhh!!!”

He tried to lift Leticia again.

“Officer, leave me...please! Save my daughter... Save her! Janina...I love you...” Leticia was chasing her breath.

Janina, who’d been quiet all along, started crying. “Mommy! Mommy!”

He looked helplessly at Leticia lying on the ground, her life force rapidly leaving her body, and his heart was breaking for the little girl in his arms. Leticia’s eyes were wet, begging him. “It’s alright...go...please, go... save my daughter...tell my husband I love him.”

He thought he was dead inside after Jamie died, but this moment proved it otherwise. It was a judgment call that even the most hardened man would have a hard time making, but there was no time to waste.

He stood up and opened fire, reloaded and fired. Then he gunned for the entrance, holding Janina tightly. It was wide open. Anyone passing through was a clear target. But it was the only way out, and he was past counting the odds.

Bullets chased him, hitting him again and again. But he was still standing. Still alive. His adrenaline was in full gear. He hoped he could make it outside before his maker shut down his vision for good.

Oh God, just let me take this little girl to safety then you can take me. Give me this one last chance to save someone.

Janina was wearing his Kevlar, but he covered her with his arms, shielding her, making sure no bullet will touch her skin.

He cleared the entrance. Flashing lights.

He ran harder, using all his might.

Until his legs failed him.



ONE



The Heiress

New York

JANINA STARED AT HER reflection in the full-length mirror. She donned a power suit for this meeting. It was the day she'd been waiting for.

Today, she would take control of her father's entire estate, and that included ascending to the CEO position at the Fullerton Group, the company her father founded thirty years ago which was now a conglomerate, and one of the biggest in America. Though technically, she was the sole heir of Nathan Fullerton and his will was read when he turned very ill three months ago, there was a codicil that will be read today before she could take the CEO position. But she knew it was nothing she couldn't handle. She hadn't spent the last year working her ass off day in day out to be sidetracked by a trivial matter like this.

Today was also her birthday, her twenty-first birthday to be exact. Later, she'd throw a party to celebrate; not her birthday but her new position at Fullerton Group, her rightful place.

Satisfied with her appearance, she went out of her bedroom and took the winding staircase. Descending on these steps was a ritual for her every morning. It calmed her and prepared her for her tasks for the day. Working in a cutthroat environment dominated by chauvinists and misogynists was daunting, but she was learning how to deal with the lot of them.

She held her breath when she was halfway down. She knew he'd be there waiting for her before she even saw him.

Jared De Lucca.

He stood up from an armchair at the foot of the stairs. His dark brown eyes met hers. Her heartbeat accelerated at the mere sight of him. She slowed down her descent so that she won't trip in her 4-inch pumps.

God, it was getting worse lately. She wanted him. Her bodyguard. The one man she trusted with her very own life every day and every night of her existence.

She was only a little girl when Jared entered her father's employ, and she grew up having him as her shadow. She was her father's only child, and Nathan Fullerton was paranoid about her safety after that kidnapping that resulted in the death of her mother. It was ages ago, but every time she'd think about that day, she'd thank the heavens for this man. He took bullets for her that day. He almost died.

"Jared," she politely greeted him with a small smile.

"Janina," he replied in his baritone voice, his eyes unreadable. What she'd give to see a smile on that handsome face. It had been ages since he last smiled at her. The kind of smile that he used to give her when she was younger. It used to light up his entire face. They vanished when she hit college. She didn't know what happened, but she missed the old Jared so much.

"May I?" He gestured for her briefcase. Always a gentleman.

She handed it to him. Their fingers brushed. Electricity ignited from that simple touch. Her body was heating up so early in the morning. His freshly-showered scent was picked up by her nose, and she inhaled deeply as her body reacted to these simple stimuli he was unknowingly exuding.

"Shall we?" he inquired.

"Yes. To the office. You know what day this is."

"Yes," he simply said and turned away.

She waited for him to pause and greet her 'happy birthday', but she was disappointed. He used to be the first one to greet her, and always with a little gift.

He walked ahead of her, and she filled her sight with Jared De Lucca. He was very tall and built like he could break a tree trunk with his bare hands. She knew his body was magnificent under his clothes. She'd been a voyeur lately, spying on him from her third-floor bedroom as he swam in the pool when it got too hot this summer. He was ripped all over; his muscles were so defined even from a distance. But he got them all covered daily in dark,

formal suits. What she'd give to see him bare up close, scrutinize every inch of him. The mere thought made her inner muscles clench in a sweet ache.

The Phantom was already parked in the driveway. He opened the stretch limo's door for her.

She got in. He climbed in with her, and they sat side by side.

The limo started to ease out of the driveway of the Fullerton mansion, her home alone in the last three months of her life. Well, she wasn't really alone. She had Jared with her all the time, everywhere she went, but he maintained a professional distance between them, never failing in his duties, never crossing his boundaries, but she knew he was the only person she could count on in anything.

Being the only child of financier and industrialist Nathan Fullerton had its pros and cons. For one, her social circle was extensive, but her father had always inculcated in her to trust no one, except Jared. As a result, she had developed a built-in radar for opportunists as they were swarming her everywhere she went, ready to bite a chunk off her if they got the chance.

The intercom dinged. "Where to, sir?" the chauffeur's voice interrupted her musing.

Jared pushed a button and spoke. "The Fullerton Tower."

There was an affirmative reply from Marshall, the chauffeur. Another vehicle with three more bodyguards would be tailing them.

Yes, it was not simple being the daughter of a billionaire who was also a kingmaker. Her father had made enemies by financially backing up several presidential candidates, including the one currently sitting at the White House. The thing with having big friends in very high places was you also inherit their enemies. Then there was the fact that her father had never recovered from that tragedy years ago. Hence, the bodyguards perpetually shadowing her.

Jared's faint marine-scented aftershave continued to titillate her senses inside the limo. What was it with Jared that both excited and comforted her? While it was true that she was at her safest with him, she also felt that she was somehow in danger in his presence. It was a contradicting feeling that had been bothering her lately, but it wasn't a threatening kind of danger. It was something else.

You're in danger of ruining your panties today, as usual.

She sighed. She had to address this problem soon. She couldn't have this kind of confusion eating at her as she went on with her new

responsibilities as the CEO of Fullerton Group.

She would call a board meeting immediately after the reading of her father's codicil. This last-minute provision mildly irritated her. What could this be? Why didn't her father just include everything in his first will?

"What do you think is this codicil, Jared?" she asked the only person she could confide in on matters like this.

He may be her bodyguard but Jared knew all the Fullerton business, personal and otherwise. Her father had allowed Jared these privileges. Jared was like family, and yet he wasn't. Their relationship couldn't be described in one word. It ran deeper than that. And yet she couldn't define it these days.

"Whatever it is, I'm sure it will be for your own good, Nina," he replied quietly.

He always called her by that nickname, which secretly pleased her. That was the only thing that remained from the old days despite his aloofness now. Nobody but her parents called her Nina. She preferred her friends and colleagues to call her Jenna because it sounded more mature, but with Jared, she'd always feel like a little girl, the princess he'd protect from the big bad wolves. There was no doubt he'd slay dragons for her. She saw it happen first hand.

"I'm a bit worried," she continued.

"Don't be. Everything will be alright."

She smiled. That was his favorite line. Her comfort words, too. "You always say that."

"What?"

"That everything will be alright."

"It's true."

She turned to look at him. It was really weird. They seldom talked these days but when they did, she'd immediately feel his strength quietly lifting her spirit. "What if it's not? Will you make it alright?"

He didn't reply for a few beats. Then he looked at her, too. "You know I always do my best, Nina," he said gently, but his eyes were suddenly intense.

She felt her insides flutter even more. Wicked sensations swirled and funneled into her core, manifesting in the tell-tale dampness between her legs. Oh God, why were these feelings bombarding her this morning of all days? She would be facing Fullerton Group's top executives later.

Nevertheless, she smiled, feeling reassured, knowing he was always there when she needed him.

Then he surprised her by handing her a small pink box. “Happy birthday, Nina.”

She wanted to jump in joy.

“Oh, Jared!”

She opened her birthday present. A Juliet Rose brooch. He knew it was her favorite flower.

She couldn’t help it. She leaned over and hugged him. She felt him freeze but she didn’t care. She needed to touch him. Feel him.

She was going to be a CEO today, but this was definitely the highest point of her day.

“Thank you, Jared. I love it.”



Janina passed by the hospital on her way to the office. That had been her routine the past months.

“Hi, Dad,” she greeted her father, kissing his sallow cheek, fighting her tears. Nathan had lost so much weight. He looked frail, a far cry from the powerful man who had lorded over Wall Street for more than two decades.

“You know what day this is, right? Yes, my birthday! My twenty-first birthday. You know what that means, Dad.”

Her father remained still as death on the bed. This room full of sophisticated medical equipment had been her father’s home for some time now. Nathan collapsed three months ago and went into a coma. He’d never woken up since. She found out he had a rare kind of brain tumor, and he’d been hiding it from her for months while he sought treatment. But there was no cure. It was inoperable.

But she wasn’t losing hope. She couldn’t lose hope even for a second. As long as he was still breathing, even with the aid of machines, there was always a miracle.

“You’re so unfair, you know, missing my birthday today. Why don’t you wake up now, Dad? C’mon, you’ve been sleeping in this ugly room for far too long. Don’t you miss your bed at home?”

She took his hand and kissed it. She was surprised it wasn't as cold as before.

"I miss you so much, Dad. Please, come back to me. I'm so lonely. I feel so alone. Well, there's Jared, but I might as well be living with a ghost these days. I don't know what's up with him but sometimes I think he hates me. But of course, I can't find any reason why? I'm nothing but nice to him. Though I'm feeling strange toward him lately..." her voice trailed off, blushing. She glanced at Jared outside the ICU. He seemed preoccupied with his phone but standing there like a sentinel.

"Yeah, he's really getting on my nerves with his indifference lately. Though he gave me a cute brooch today for my birthday and I love it. His sweet mood lasted exactly five minutes and now he's back to being a robot." She sighed and pressed her father's hand to her cheek. "I wonder what's in that codicil. What are you up, hmm?"

She stared at her father, willing him to open his eyes. But of course, he didn't. She hoped he could hear her, at least.

She touched his forehead reverently. "I love you, Dad. I'll see you tomorrow," she whispered.

She quietly stood up and left the ICU.



TWO



The Codicil

“WHAT?! IS THIS A JOKE, Mr. Jennings?!” Janina wasn’t able to contain her shock and anger.

“I’m afraid not, Jenna.”

“But...But this is absolutely insane! My father would never do this to me!”

“I’m afraid he did.”

She stared at the old man, speechless. Mr. Jennings had been her father’s lawyer since she could remember, and was in charge of facilitating her father’s will. Mr. Jennings was close to her father, and she also loved the dear old man, but this revelation turned her well-laid plans upside down.

She slapped her hand on top of the conference table angrily. “This is ludicrous! Tell me, Mr. Jennings, what do I make of this?!”

“I’m sorry, Jenna, but the codicil is very clear. It’s irrevocable.”

She stood up. “I will have it revoked. Do something. My father is incapacitated at the moment, so this gives me the right to decide for him. I’m of age now. I’m his only heir. I’m telling you to have it revoked!”

“Please, sit down, Jenna,” the lawyer said politely.

She felt embarrassed for losing her temper in front of the lawyer who had been loyal to her father for decades.

“I’m sorry, Mr. Jennings, but this is just a big shock to me...” She put

her hand to her forehead, trying to calm herself.

“It’s alright. Listen. Your father made this codicil airtight. You comply with it, or you will wait another five years to take control. This codicil also contains an extension.”

There was more?! “And what is it?” she asked with simmering fury. She loved her father to pieces, but this was just unacceptable. Totally unfair!

“If you fail to comply within the specified time here which is a maximum of six months, your father has designated Donovan to be the CEO for the next five years. You will succeed him after that. Mr. Charles Wilcox will sit on your behalf on the board.”

“Donovan?!” she exploded when she heard the man’s name. Donovan’s father, Lucius Burton was the next biggest shareholder of the Fullerton Group. Lucius currently sat as the acting CEO while the board waited for development on Nathan’s condition, but Lucius’ health had been failing lately, too. Donovan, like her, was a vice-president in the corporation and she hated his guts. The guy was the epitome of misogyny.

“Five years! But what’s wrong with right now? I’m quite ready to take over and you know it!”

“Yes, I know you’re ready, but I’m not your father, and this,” Mr. Jennings touched the surface of the folder that contained the codicil, “is his last will. Nothing follows.”

She shook her head, blindsided. She was so sure that she would sit as the CEO and Chairman of the Board of Fullerton Group today. But it was not to be.

She wanted to burst into tears in frustration, but she wouldn’t show that to Mr. Jennings. It was a display of weakness, and she’d be damned if she’d let anybody catch her looking rattled, or worse, defeated. But she was raging inside.

Why, Dad?! I thought you loved me?! Why?!”



The moment Janina was done with Mr. Jennings, she called a quick executive meeting, making sure Donovan was there. He was smirking like he knew something. Was it possible that Donovan knew about the codicil? She trusted Mr. Jennings, but after today, she was more wary of everyone on the

board. However, she had to show them she was capable and unshakable. Men played dirty corporate politics and she didn't want them to think she was having second thoughts about leading them.

She delivered a brief but emphatic speech. "Gentlemen, I was sure I'd be your new CEO today, but there's a bit of a glitch in the grand order of things. But nothing I can't handle. Rest assured, though, I will be leading this corporation soon. Meanwhile, I'd be taking a short break from work. When I get back, I'd like to hear financial reports from all subsidiaries, so work on that while I'm gone."

"Why the break?" Donovan asked.

She gave him a practiced phony smile. "To prepare myself more for my new responsibilities, of course. But don't worry, you'll be seeing me sooner than you think."

As she got out of the conference room, she was already sure what she would do.



Jared instantly knew she was upset, even from thirty meters away.

Over the years, he had developed a sixth sense when it came to Janina. Ever since he'd saved her from the kidnappers, he had become an integral fixture in this little girl's life. But she was no longer a little girl but a beautiful young woman.

Jared had devoted a decade of his life to Janina now. It wasn't his intention. It just came to be. Those crucial moments when she'd clung to him, her little arms holding on to him for dear life as he ran from the warehouse amid a rain of bullets, his body bleeding—their heartbeats had been one, their breaths, intertwined. Forever it seemed.

Leticia Fullerton perished in that rescue attempt, and he had never forgiven himself for not being able to save her. As a penance, he vowed to keep Leticia's daughter safe always.

Nathan had been devastated when Leticia died and had asked him to be Janina's full-time bodyguard. Little did Nathan know that Jared couldn't make himself leave, even if he wanted to. It wasn't the exorbitant salary Nathan had offered to him that made him stay. Janina became his new

purpose in life after swimming in a sea of despair for months after Jamie's death, not knowing what to do next.

Many years had passed since that tragedy, and here he was, still paranoid whenever he'd sense she was in some trouble. She'd give out signals that he'd catch on immediately. Like now. She was walking with confidence alongside a few of her male executives who were all hanging on to her every word, but he knew she was upset. He could almost smell her anxiety, and he was reacting to it, his adrenaline picking up.

He saw her say goodbye to her employees and proceeded toward the waiting limo. He readily opened the door for her.

"Jared!" she cried out his name the moment he'd closed the door and settled beside her.

"What is it?" Her face now showed what she felt inside. He liked it that she had a strong facade in front of everyone else, but with him, she was just a little girl seeking his protection.

"I can't believe Dad would do this! Oh, how could he?!"

"Calm down, Nina."

She sighed and slumped back in her seat. "I didn't get the CEO position."

"Why?"

"Dad has a codicil. And if I don't comply, I will have to wait another five years before I become CEO."

Jared knew this was something huge. Nathan would not do this to his daughter if he had no valid reason. Nathan loved his daughter more than his own life. Jared was witness to that all these years.

"Okay, what's the codicil about?"

She suddenly turned to him, her eyes frantic. "Jared, promise me you'll help me. I have no one else to go to for this. Only you."

He swallowed. Suddenly, his heart was slamming in his rib cage. What the hell could this codicil be that had her looking so desperate?

"Tell me."

"You must promise me first."

"Nina..."

"You said you'll always protect me. Well, I need your protection now."

Badly.”

That was like reminding him of his sacred covenant. “You know I’ll protect you with my life, Janina.”

She looked relieved. “The codicil stated that I must produce an heir or I’ll lose the position to Donovan Burton.”

Even he was not prepared for that shocker. *What the hell, Nathan?!*

“I can’t lose this chance, Jared. I have a feeling they’re planning something that will prevent me from assuming control and if I let them, they will! I can’t wait on the sidelines for another five years!”

He almost didn’t want to ask but was compelled to by duty. “So… what are you saying, Nina?”

“You must do it.”

He looked at her blankly. He knew what she meant, but he refused to believe she was actually asking him. Him?!

“What…?”

“You must get me pregnant.”

Saying it out loud felt like a bomb exploded between them. She must be joking.

Right?!

But her eyes bore only resolve and determination. She had made up her mind before she even told him.

“No,” he said flatly.

“You can’t say no. You promised me.”

He leaned back in his seat, avoiding her eyes.

The thought of impregnating her rushed like a flood of arousal in his groin he was instantly hard like he’d never been before.

Jesus!

“Jared—”

“No!” he snarled at her.

She jumped back at his harsh voice. He’d never raised his voice with her, ever. She looked hurt. He didn’t intend to shout at her but what the fuck…?!

He pushed the button and barked at Marshall to take them home.

“Jared—“

“Not another word, Nina.”

She sank back in her seat dejectedly.

He sat stiffly in his own seat. Actually, stiff was an understatement.

In recent years, he had made a monumental effort in curtailing his desire for Janina, and he had been successful so far. But she shattered all that with just one sentence. “*Get me pregnant.*”

He was having the mother of all hard-ons from that alone, and he had to clench his fists to keep himself from grabbing her, sitting her on his lap and make her wish his fucking command. Right here in the limo in the middle of busy Manhattan.

God, help him!



THREE



The Proposition

JANINA HAD BEEN restlessly pacing in her bedroom for hours now, thinking.

Okay, so maybe she'd shocked him. She wanted to break it to Jared gently, but she got carried away the moment they were alone in the limo. She wanted to tell him right away, assured of the fact that he would help her.

She was wrong. His emphatic rejection floored her. Now she was at a loss.

She had options. Find a reliable, discreet fertility clinic and have an IV fertilization. But that scared her, and if she wanted a child, which she had to want sooner than later, the father should at least be someone she knew very well. She didn't know anybody as well as Jared.

It had to be Jared.

She was hurt by his rejection, embarrassed too. She knew she was attractive. Fashion magazines had called her classic beauty. Sure, she didn't dress too sexy or revealed too much skin as she preferred elegantly understated clothes, but she never lacked for male admiration. There was the fact that she was sexually inexperienced. But then again she didn't ask him to have sex. She asked him outright to make her pregnant. There was a huge difference.

You could seduce him.

She bit her lower lip. She didn't know a thing about seducing a man. All these years she was hell-bent on finishing her studies the soonest, and

there was just no room left for men and relationships.

She'd been accelerated twice in high school, so she went to college at age sixteen. She graduated with a degree in Business at age twenty and had been working as a vice-president at Fullerton Group for a year now while taking her master's degree. She didn't want the board to doubt she was capable of succeeding her father one day soon despite her young age.

She'd never had a relationship. She seldom socialized for the sake of finding a potential boyfriend. She preferred to be in the company of people who could teach her how to run a huge corporation, and they were married mostly and old. Then there was Jared who was with her almost 24/7 that he became an extension of herself. There was no other person she trusted more than Jared. She was sure her father would approve of him, too.

But Jared didn't want her.

No. This was not the time to hesitate or doubt herself. She had a mission to accomplish within a few months or Donovan will be sitting on her throne soon. Over her dead body!

She meant to talk to Jared again tomorrow when he'd cooled down, but she just couldn't sleep tonight with this uncertainty in her head. She had to have his answer now.

She went to the bathroom and checked her appearance. Then she dialed his number. She was relieved he picked up right away.

"Jared, I need you to come upstairs."

"Why?"

Whenever she'd wanted his presence in the past, he'd never asked her why. He'd just be there in a blink. Now he was asking her why in this impatient tone. She curbed her irritation. "I need to talk to you."

"We can do it tomorrow. Sleep for now. It's late."

"It's only nine PM. I want us to talk now."

"Don't be stubborn, Janina."

He sounded like he was admonishing a petulant child which spiked up her ire. "I'm ordering you to come upstairs now."

"Go to sleep. I'll see you tomorrow."

"Jared, if you don't come up right now, I'll go down to your room!"

She heard him cuss and cut the call.

She smiled and waited.



What was the little witch up to now?

Jared thought of standing her up, but he knew Janina. She would storm down the mansion screaming his name.

She was in one of those moods where she was determined to get her way. Dammit, he was dying to give her what she wanted. But after that, what? What will happen to them?

He was fine being her bodyguard.

Liar.

Alright, he'd be beyond fine being her lover. But even if his little Nina had been headlining all of his fantasies for years now, he really wouldn't know what to do with her if they crossed that line.

He'd never touched a woman since he first found himself jacking off to Janina's image one lonely night. That was when she turned sixteen. At first, he was almost overcome with guilt and shame. He'd felt like a perverted monster for defiling her in his mind. But he'd learned to accept his human frailties where Janina was concerned. She was his weakness, his Achilles' Heel. He would die for her. Consequently, he lived for her.

All these years he had relegated himself to achieving sexual release through his hands as he fucked her in all ways possible in his imagination. He couldn't bring himself to sully her precious memories by assuaging his lust in some random body so that he could get off. Janina didn't have to know this. He'd made sure he never gave her any indication that he felt this way about her.

His phone rang again. Her name flashed on the screen.

Grabbing his gun from the side table, he left his room.



There was a knock on the door.

Janina's heart slammed hard into her chest. Her tummy's fluttering

became intense.

Shit. Calm down. Be formal. You have to convince him of the merits of this arrangement. “Come in!”

Jared entered the room and closed it.

Janina swallowed, her throat going dry.

He stood there in a pair of faded denim pants and a black sleeveless shirt that showed off his massive arms corded with hard muscles. He seemed to look taller and bigger inside her bedroom, in which he was seldom in.

A hell of a man.

The father of my baby.

Yes.

“What is it, Janina?” he demanded impatiently.

Boy, he was mad. She couldn’t blame him. But he won’t stay mad for long. She knew him too well. He won’t be able to deny her; she’d make sure of that.

“Jared...please, let’s sit down and talk.” She gestured to the seating area in the ante-room.

“No. Say what you want to say. This won’t take long, right?” He put something on the console table near him. His gun.

By the firm set of his jaw and his shuttered expression, she knew he was still determined to turn her down.

“Jared, if I can’t be CEO now, I’d lose the opportunity to Donovan, and once he’s in, I know he would do everything to remain there. He has ideas for FG which I don’t agree with, but he has charisma with the board. He can persuade them to go with him because he has more experience in corporate matters than me. I don’t want my father’s legacy to be handled by the wrong hands, Jared. I don’t know why Dad drafted that codicil. This actually threw me off the loop. But I don’t have time to think about his reasons. I have to think of FG and my time’s ticking.”

He just stared at her.

“The codicil is irrevocable. I have to comply, or Donovan will reign over the company for the next five years. I’d lose influence on the board completely by then and it would be very hard for them to trust me after Donovan and they might reject my succession. I know his ways. He’s crafty. He’s been trying to undermine me at every turn the past year. You know this,

right?”

He still didn't answer.

“Please, Jared. I have no one else I could ask to help me with this. You're the only one I trust. I know you would understand.”

He continued to gaze at her, his face, stoic. She was desperate now. “I will have it your way, any way. Just...just help me...help me have a baby. I don't know what else to do, Jared. And I don't want a baby from a stranger or some anonymous donor. I want my child to at least know his father.”

Silence.

“I know you might not find me attractive enough for you to...” Her cheeks heated up when his eyes smoldered. “I will pay you. Name your price ___“

Her words were cut off when he suddenly moved. She nervously swallowed as he walked toward her like a giant panther, his gait light for such a big man.

He stopped until only a few feet separated them.



FOUR



The Bargain

SHE WANTED HIS BABY. Not just his baby. Him. She wanted nobody else to be the father of her child but him.

Jared couldn't believe what was happening.

What would a beautiful young woman, with staggering wealth and high stature in society do with an aging, battle-scarred warrior like him who had nothing to show for but ugly memories of a once violent life? But tonight, he didn't know what cosmic elements in the universe had conspired to make this happen.

He must be the luckiest son of a bitch this side of the globe.

"Please, say something," Janina said in a small voice, looking really anxious.

He could feel the blood pounding in his heart, in his gut, in his balls, filling his shaft to bursting. Fuck, he didn't realize how long he'd been wanting her until this moment. But he didn't want to fuck it up. He wanted to be sure she knew what she was doing.

"You have to be very sure about this, Janina. After we cross the line, there's no turning back."

Her pink tongue darted out to wet her lips, sending shockwaves to his cock. "I'm very sure."

He wondered how it would feel for that little tongue to glide on his skin. "I'm older than you by two decades. Do you realize that?"

“Yes. Is that a problem with you?”

He almost heaved a sigh of relief. That had bothered him for sure, but knowing it didn't matter to her made him want to do cartwheels in the room. “I'm more than old enough to be your father.”

“No. You're the perfect age to be my lover.”

He felt precum ooze out of him. Damn the way she was looking at him. She might be young enough to be his daughter, but she sure wasn't giving him a fatherly look. She was looking at him like a woman anticipating a hot, wild ride.

His hand moved to touch a strand of her long, copper-blond hair. This was the first time he'd deliberately touched her with sexual desire coursing through his body. He was almost afraid to do so. This was Janina, his little princess. He'd been taking care of her for so long, making sure no harm ever came to her again. And now...God, she was asking him to touch her. To take her. To make her pregnant.

He had accepted long ago that she was a beautiful dream that will just stay inside him for as long as he lived, a lonely man's innermost longings of heaven. But heaven had opened up for him.

He couldn't believe it, but she was in front of him, waiting for him, begging him. She knew him too well. She knew he couldn't deny her. And he didn't want to.

God, he couldn't turn away from this miracle.

“I'm not a boy, Janina. I'm a man. I'm too old for you, in fact, and I've done a lot of ugly shit in life. So you must be sure this is really what you want, that I am really what you want because I'm not going to a clinic and jack off in some lonely cubicle so they can have my sperm fertilize your egg in some stupid test tube. That's not me. If you want my baby, I'm going to deliver it to your womb my way. That means I'm gonna be inside you. I'm gonna fuck you hard, again and again, fill you with as much cum you need until you get pregnant. Can you handle that? ”

He only meant to intimidate her with his vulgar words, giving her the last chance to back out from this insanity she was proposing. But she sealed his fate. Her hands came up to touch his chest. “I'm down with that.”

Holy fuck.

“So when do you want us to start...making this *bambino*?”

“Tonight.”

“Now?”

“I wanna get pregnant the soonest, and it’s the beginning of the month, and I might be fertile next week.” She was speaking in a rush. “I want us to be uhm, doing it a lot next week but...”

“But?”

“You know...I’ve never been with a man, right?”

He almost shot his load right then. Of course, he knew this. He was her guard dog for years and he sure as hell made sure no horndog would get to her until she was fucking ready. But the truth was, he’d probably never be ready for the day when Janina would get sexually active. How many times had he thanked her obsession with her father’s company because that had consumed her undivided attention all these years? Men had never interested her. Yet.

He’s interested in you now.

He wanted to drop to his knees in gratitude. *I’m not worthy. Lord, I know I’m not, but you made this happen. Then I’ll take this gift. I’ll take her!*

“Yes, I know you’re still a virgin, *cara mia*,” he gently said, his chest bursting with pride knowing he’d be the first man to teach her the joys of sex, after all.

She blushed and averted her eyes, looking at her fingers splayed over his chest, fidgeting with his shirt. With her faintest, unpracticed touch, his arousal was getting fired up even more.

“They say it would hurt the first time...and I want to do away with that now than later so we can do it often next week, you know, to make sure I do get pregnant this month.”

God, help me.

His desire was a pounding need in his gut now.

She lifted her lids to look at him again. “Is that okay with you?”

He grabbed her by the waist and pulled her roughly toward him.

She gasped in surprise. Then her body melted in surrender.

He kissed her lips, claiming her sweet nectar for the first time.



FIVE



The Discovery

JARED GROANED AS HE tasted her sweetness.

In his solitary nights, in the darkness of his room, he'd pleased himself to the thoughts of her sweet lips. But tasting her lips for real, they were better than he'd ever imagined. He framed her face in his palms and plundered her deeper. Christ, she was delicious. Intoxicatingly so.

At the back of his mind, he knew he must slow down. This was her first time. She was pure. This was her first kiss.

Fuck, he was behaving like an animal, ravishing her chaste lips. He pulled away. "I'm sorry, *cara*. I know you haven't been kissed."

She licked her lips as if tasting him. "Hmmm...." She smiled at him dreamily. "Yummy."

His eyebrows drew together. "Or have you been kissing boys behind my back in high school?"

She giggled. He shook her shoulders a little.

"No. No one in high school."

"In college?" he demanded. He felt doubly possessive of her now.

"Yes."

"Who?!"

"Jared, chrissakes, are you jealous of a peck on the lips?"

He grunted and traced his thumb over her lips. "Just a peck? Are you

sure?”

“Yes. Just a peck. Nothing like your kisses.”

He was worried now if she liked his kisses or not. “Would you like a peck first and slowly progress to—” he stopped. What a lame thing to ask. Christ, no woman had ever made him insecure in the sack. He’d nailed a lot of pussies in the past, but with Janina, he felt like a virgin all over again.

“No, silly. Your kisses are fine. I want more, Jared. Kiss me more.”

“The things I wanna do to your lips might shock you, *cara mia*.”

“Show me.”

He claimed her lips again, gentler this time. She sighed and eagerly opened her mouth, slithering her tongue against the seam of his lips. He growled, all thoughts of slow, chaste kisses deserting him. He shoved his tongue into her mouth, as far as he could go.

She sagged against his body, and he caught her weight. He lifted her in his arms and walked into the inner chamber of her room. Her four-poster bed loomed and with every step that he took, his cock swelled, anticipating. That bed will be witness to the heavenly things he would do to this sweet little babe.

His lips never left hers as he deposited her on the bed, coming down to crouch above her. She opened her legs and welcomed him into her embrace. It was the most natural thing in the world, and he couldn’t believe it was so easy for them to transition into lovers.

“Oh, Jared,” she sighed into his lips.

Her body was soft as she cushioned his weight, the mound between her legs warm as he humped her with the ridge of his cock through the roughness of his jeans. He dared not release his monster. Not yet. It might frighten the shit out of her. He was even afraid to look at it himself, feeling how swollen he was. He had never felt so hard like this, as if his balls were on fire.

He knelt between her legs to look at her. The illumination in her room was perfect, making her skin golden and so smooth he ached to touch her all over, discover every inch of her body slowly so that he won’t miss a single precious detail. But she was undulating under him, begging to be taken.

He lifted the hem of her nightdress and pulled it up her torso, divesting it from her body in one go. She lay naked under him now except for her white panties, and he wanted to weep in awe, in joy, in gratitude. It was strange, feeling so aroused and emotional at the same time. He was rarely a

slave of his emotions, but Janina was the reason he woke up every morning and why he still looked forward to the future.

She lay still as he stared at her. Her arms came up to cover her tits, her fucking perfect tits that he'd fantasized about a million times.

"No, *cara*. I wanna look at you."

She lowered her arms again to her sides. He cupped the twin globes with his hands, inhaling sharply at the firmness and fullness of them, and the softness, too.

"Do they look okay?" she asked in this breathy girlish voice that had his cock twitching painfully.

If he weren't so fucking hard, he'd have laughed. Was she fucking kidding him? Her boobs were perfect Cs, all natural, and so fucking beautiful he wanted to worship them. And he did.

He swooped down on them, rubbing his face all over them. He groaned. This was only in his dreams before. He inhaled her sweet, clean scent. "You have the most beautiful tits, baby. You have no idea how I've wanted to see them. Touch them like this." He wiggled her tits, lifting them. The sight of his big hands wrapped on her delicate flesh nearly made him spill.

He licked the fleshy globes, not leaving any skin untasted. Her nipples were coral in shade and so fucking pretty he wanted to chew on these little bits all night. His tongue danced around them, avoiding the crowns. She whimpered, lifting her chest to rub harder on his face. He captured one nipple in his mouth and sucked hard, applying a rhythmic motion. Her fingers clawed at his shirt.

He rubbed against her center. He wanted her so wet, so she won't feel so much pain when he finally entered her. He felt more swollen than he'd ever been before, and he was afraid he'd hurt her with his size.

He suckled her nipples alternately, noisily. All his sexual experiences faded into oblivion a long time ago and only Janina's vivid images remained. So having her, touching her for real now, he felt like a schoolboy having his first woman. And yet, he knew what he wanted to do to make her body sing and fly. He was no fumbling boy. He'd imagined how to pleasure her a million times before.

Her nipples were hard and wet with his saliva, a deeper shade of color now from his voracious suckling. He wanted to know how wet her pussy had become for him.

He knelt on the mattress and ran his palms along the smooth length of her legs. She was small, her bone structure almost delicate, but he knew his baby was way tougher than she looked.

He lifted her legs to rest on her sides, exposing her pussy to his eyes. His mouth watered and his cock lurched. Her mound looked like a small patch of heaven that he would soon discover. He framed his hands around that delectable triangle. Her soft flesh yielded to his fingers. He ran his big thumbs at the center and found her panties to be already soaked. "Baby doll, you're so wet. Is this for me?"

She keened.

He buried his face in her V, inhaling the musky scent of her arousal. It went straight to his head and arrowed down to his cock. He was already addicted to her scent.

He located her clit with his fingers and rubbed her there.

"Oh, oh God, Jared!" she cried out, her pelvis rolling in tandem with his fingers' movements. So responsive despite her innocence.

"How do you feel, my Nina?"

"Uhhmm, I don't know...I've been wet like this for some time now. Every time I look at you...or think about you...I get so wet."

Shit, this was going to end him.

"Since when did you start thinking about me and getting wet for me, baby?" He plucked at her clit through her wet panties, torturing himself and her further. He wanted her mad with pleasure before he'd take her.

"I don't know for sure. A long time. Years."

Had he been so blind? Yes, he could see now. She'd always looked at him like this. Like she wanted him. Really wanted him. He didn't know when it started. He deliberately ignored it. He was afraid to give meaning to her actions. He didn't want to be disappointed when she'd finally find some young man her age and fall in love and marry the fucker. The thought had always tormented him, that she would someday be lost to him. But now, the thought that she'd been wanting him too, had been wet for him...God, it seemed too good to be true.

But she was writhing under him as he petted her. This was the truth right before his very eyes.

He pulled her panties off of her, baring her sweet treasure. Her untouched pussy.

Even if he were already dripping precum in his pants and about to blow like a bomb, he paused to stare at her pussy.

The most beautiful pussy he'd ever seen.

She was smooth, completely shaven. Her lips were two luscious strips of heaven framing her fat, little clit. The most beautiful clit ever created. It stared at him, begging for attention.

"Is it...is it alright?"

He met her eyes. She looked worried. His heart melted even more, and his cock grew even harder if it was still possible. "You have the most beautiful pussy in my world, baby doll."

"You've seen many, I suppose?" she said, her tone, accusing.

He smiled, loving her possessive tone. If she only knew. She owned him, body and soul. "I'd forgotten everything I'd seen since I started jacking off to the image of your pussy five years ago."

Her eyes widened. It was adorable that she could still blush when her pussy was a foot from his face. "Jared!"

"You were not the only one getting wet to the thoughts of us getting together, baby. I shot a lot of cum in your honor. But now, they won't be wasted like before. They will all go in here." He swiped his tongue on her slit.

Her hips jerked, and she gasped his name.

"Nice?"

She nodded wordlessly, her face having this expression of awe as if she'd discovered a new toy in the form of his tongue. Oh yeah, he'd show her how a tongue could play with her little pearl.

"Do that again, please."

His cock was one violently pounding muscle of suspended pleasure now, but he won't miss this for the world.

"You've never pleased yourself like this before, baby?"

"Jared, no! Come on, I can't lick my own kitty."

He chuckled against her pussy. "You never got curious enough to play with this juicy cooch?"

"No! Hush!"

"Not even when you started getting wet imagining my cock inside you?"

“I didn’t....I was shy...”

“I’m glad, baby. I’m glad I will be the first to give you an orgasm. Now watch as I give it to you.”

He opened her pussy lips and exposed the inner crevices. She was so lush, glistening with her cream. Her hole was so small he was afraid not even his pinkie could fit in there. Fuck, how can he fit his monster of a cock inside this virgin hole?

He licked her, tasting her. He groaned. At last, he was eating her for real. And fuck, this was the most delicious pussy. This was how innocence tasted. Clean. Pure. Unique. Addicting.

“Oh God, that feels sooo...”

“Good? Tell me how good this feels, sugar.”

“So goooood! So so goooood!”

He was slobbering all over her, losing his finesse, wanting to have as much of her taste in his mouth before he lost his mind. He rimmed her little opening. More of her juices flowed onto his tongue, and he swallowed them all. His thumb rubbed her clit in a rhythmic, circular motion as he tongue-fucked her, trying to loosen her a bit for his penetration.

She was moaning incoherently, her hands roaming on his head, her hips, rotating. God, the sounds she made. He wanted to hear that every day of his life.

He went back to attack her clit, applying all the tricks he knew in pleasuring this little bundle of sensitive nerves. She was crying out deliriously now, her breathing ragged, her upper legs stiffening.

He knew she was near her very first orgasm and he was just so fucking selfish he wanted that to happen with his cock buried to the hilt in her virgin pussy.

He paused to remove his shirt. Then he unbuttoned his pants, kicking them away. He crouched on all fours above her, his ten-inch cock pointing upward angrily like a dagger between them.

“Jared...”

He caught the fear in her eyes as she stared at his cock. If not for her wet pussy staring right back at him, he would have paused and maybe stopped. But it was too late for that.

He spread her legs wider and placed his rock-hard erection between her soft, wet folds. The first contact of their genitals scalded them, and they

both jerked in surprise.

He was so hard, and she was so soft. The contrast was unbelievably pleasurable.

Jesus, this was going to be the best fuck of his life.



SIX



The Rapture

HE WAS HUGE! Scary huge. But so beautifully huge. His cock was a sight to behold. It was dark, long and thick, adorned with veins that only made it look like a magnificent sculpture.

Janina was fascinated by every ridge, line, and curve of his enormous cock. She'd never seen a live one before, but she'd seen pictures, and she could say Jared's cock was extraordinary.

For a moment she wondered how she would be able to take him knowing she was still a virgin, but she trusted nature. She could take him. She had to. That big, badass-looking cock was going to give her her precious baby. She would take it every day until she got pregnant.

"Jared..." She touched the bulbous crown. She pulled her hand back when it jerked as if it had a life of its own.

He sucked in his breath harshly.

Her eyes flew back to his face. "Sorry..." She was embarrassed by her inadequacy. She wished she had more experience, so she could give him pleasure the way he had been giving it to her. But she knew nothing about penises and how to handle them, especially in this state.

"I'm sorry, I don't know much about pleasuring a man but—"

He suddenly grabbed her hand and kissed her fingers. "Don't ever apologize for that, sweetheart. I'm glad you haven't touched a dick before in your life. I couldn't bear it if you have."

His voice was gruff and shaky, his eyes, intense and shining, and she could swear at that moment, Jared was emotional.

“You will not touch any other cock but mine, you hear me? I couldn’t bear it if you’d want another, Nina.”

His possessiveness warmed her heart and made her core clench in sweet longing for his ultimate possession. How would it feel to have him inside her? She craved to touch him there, but she hesitated.

But her wish was granted shortly.

He guided her hand to wrap around his cock. She gasped faintly as her palm met scorching hot silky hardness. He was really thick her fingers couldn’t fully cover his circumference. The feel of him was indescribable. God, he was beautiful. She wanted this beautiful thing inside her, helping her make a baby.

“Is my hand small or is your cock just too big?”

He froze, then let out a chuckle. It had been a long time since she’d heard him laugh, and it was the most beautiful sound. She wanted him to laugh more often. A lot from here on. “Not afraid now?”

Her hand tightened around him. “It’s scary, but it’s the baby-maker so... like I have a choice?”

He kissed her lips gently. “I’ll try not to make it hurt too much the first time, but it will get better, I promise.”

She trusted him. Jared had never let her down. “I know...” She dragged her hand up. The skin on his shaft seemed to follow, and when she dragged it down, it went with her movement, too. Oh wow, this was awesome!

He groaned, and she felt his muscles stiffen. “God, baby...”

He seemed to like it, so she repeated the movement, and soon established a rhythm. Goodness, he felt so good in her hand that her other hand joined the party. He seemed to grow thicker and harder as she stroked him. Experimenting, she cupped his balls. They were soft and yet they seemed to heave and give more power to his cock. Fascinating!

“Nina, are you sure you haven’t done this before?”

“No, just winging it. Am I doing it right or...?”

“You’re doing it perfectly. Yes...tighter...just like that...” He bent to kiss her again, licking her, driving his tongue in and out as he pumped his shaft in her hands. She could feel his surging energy, right there beneath her

fingers. How would it feel inside her?

Her core felt empty now, and she knew this was what she needed. His fingers were good, his tongue was great, but his cock would give her the ultimate bliss, she was sure of it.

“Jared...”

“Yes, I know, baby.” He plied her hands from his cock and took over. “I’m going to make you mine now, my Nina. Are you ready for me?”

Oh, she was more than ready! “Yes.”

He spread her legs wider. Then he peeled her nether lips open with his fingers and guided the head of his cock to rub on her slit, gliding up and down, dipping into her flowing wetness below and then dragging the moisture up, spreading it around her clit.

She watched as he did this, breathing raggedly, awe and mounting pleasure mingling inside her. He was rubbing around and around her clit.

Her inner muscles clenched tighter and tighter as the delicious sensations built up, pushing her toward something...

She could feel this would end with something really really good because she didn’t want him to stop. Her vision couldn’t focus anymore, and she closed her eyes, her head thrashing from side to side on the pillow. “Oh, Jared, that feels so good!”

“Yeah? You want more?”

“Yes! Don’t stop! Oh God, I feel like exploding!”

“Yes, my Nina, I want you to explode for me. Don’t fight it, sweetheart...give in to it...”

She clung to his shoulders, her legs wrapping high around his back as the pressure within her threatened to sweep her away into an unknown place and she was afraid where it would lead her but she didn’t want it ever to stop.

“I want you to come for me, baby. My sweet Nina. Come for me.”

Her clit was being whipped in the most delicious way, and her hole was giving way to a blunt pressure. She gasped and froze, wanting to focus on that feeling.

He was entering her gently... and it felt good to be stretched like that.

“Jesus, Nina, you’re so fucking tight...” he groaned.

The exquisite sensations in the pit of her belly became almost

unbearable as he continued to rub her clit and push his thickness into her tight passage, expanding it inexorably.

“Oh God, sweetheart. So fucking good. This pussy!”

She opened her eyes and watched his face above her, suspended in harsh planes akin to extreme pleasure and pain, and it was exactly what she felt as she hit the breaking point.

Something in her seemed to snap and her core erupted into the most mind-shattering pleasure she'd ever known.

As she sobbed his name and shook all over in ecstasy, she felt him stab into her, momentarily hindered by resistance, but he tore through it, filling her completely. Pain shot through her but got quickly overwhelmed by the bliss gripping her from inside out.

She clenched around him, welcoming him into her body.



Nothing in his wildest fantasies could beat this. Janina's tightness wrapped around his hard cock, her virgin pussy in the throes of her first orgasm spasming around him, milking him, all pulsating inches of him.

Jared stayed still. He didn't want to come yet, though it was killing him not to. God, he wanted this to last longer, but she gave out a pitiful mewl. He felt like a bastard for enjoying her virgin tightness too much while he must be hurting her. Her eyes were tightly shut, and she was biting her lower lip.

“Baby, are you alright?”

She opened her eyes. She was clearly in pain, but the haze of orgasm was still there. Christ, this tightness was unbelievable. He could hardly move. And he was hesitant to move. He might rip her badly.

“Nina?”

“I'm alright. I'm super alright.”

“Are you sure? I don't wanna hurt you any further, *piccola*.”

“No. It hurts just a bit.”

He lifted himself to look where they were joined. He froze when he saw blood coating the base of his cock. Fuck, he tore her pussy.

“Baby, you're bleeding.”

He began to pull out of her as gently as he could, feeling guilty, but she grabbed his ass, pulling him back. “Don’t you dare leave without finishing what you started, De Lucca. I want my baby.”

He nearly blurted out how much he loved her then. He had never loved anybody like he loved Janina. God, yes! How he loved this young woman, had been loving her for years. He wanted to tell her, but it might be too early for that. But he would make her feel his love in every way that he knew how. “Sweetheart, are you sure...?”

“Yes. I want you to come inside me. Give me everything you’ve got, Jared.”

He framed her face in his palms, pushing the damp strands of her hair away from her face. “I promise, it will get better next time.”

“Yes, I know. I trust you.”

Those magic words made him lose it. He hooked his arms at the back of her knees and lifted her legs higher, bringing her hips in an angle where he could penetrate her easier and deeper.

He pulled out slowly and pushed back in gently, but her incredible tightness grabbed at him. He couldn’t hold back any longer. He pulled and slammed back harder, grunting like an animal out of control. Placing her legs on his shoulders, he rode her, pounding in and out of her.

She whimpered in pain, and he kissed her, whispering to her how sorry he was for hurting her while a bigger part of him rejoiced in possessing her virginity. He would always cherish this gift. He would always take care of this, he swore, as he worshiped at her temple of pleasure.

His orgasm ripped through him like the mightiest storm, rocking him from inside out. He roared, shaking in her arms, his hips helplessly pumping as he came. Years of longing and yearning and craving shot like liquid bullets inside her, filling her.

As his vision swam in white and his body quickened with every burst of his essence leaving his body, he hoped he had granted her wish right this moment. He never wanted anything more than making his little Nina pregnant right now.

He slumped onto her, hugging her tight and she wrapped her body around him, limbs and softness and heavenly scent.

“My Nina, you belong to me now,” he whispered, gently kissing her cheek.

“Yes. Only yours,” she whispered back weakly and sighed in

contentment.

He smiled in her neck, satiated from the most incredible orgasm he'd ever had.

He just knew, he wouldn't be able to survive not having her again after this.



SEVEN



The Loss

JANINA WOKE UP alone in her bed.

The last thing she remembered last night was looking in lethargic awe at Jared as he cleansed the blood between her legs with a warm, wet towel. He was so gentle as he took care of her, a worried expression on his face.

“I’m sorry, *cara*. You were a virgin and...”

“No, you just have a huge cock,” she’d teased him sleepily, basking in their intimacy.

He’d blushed. “I know. I can’t help it, *cara*, that I have a big...” he turned redder in the face.

She’d found him so adorable at that moment. She’d never describe Jared like that. Adorable was for cute, clueless boys. Jared was all man, hard-as-nails, always formal, professional and detached, except when she got sick. A simple fever would drive him crazy, and she’d found herself wishing several times that she’d get sick so he’d hover like a mother hen over her. It was during those moments that she’d get a glimpse of his gentleness and softness. At times she’d feigned sickness so he would come to her and check on her every hour, making sure she was getting better.

Last night, he’d all been that and more. Gentle, caring, open. She’d never seen him so expressive. The things he’d told her while he made love to her. Her lower belly fluttered in remembered pleasure. Last night, he’d made her a woman in the real sense.

Oh, the things he did to her last night. She was glad she’d waited this

long to give her virginity to the man she really loved—

She slowly sat up.

Love?

Was she in love with Jared?

She watched the sunlight filter through the drapes in her bedroom. She felt like a new person. Yes, she would acknowledge it now. She'd loved Jared for so long. She'd felt connected to him in an indefinable way since he'd rescued her from the kidnappers when she was a child. It developed into a stronger bond over the years as he became the only person she could depend on and trust next to her father. And now that her father was almost gone...

Her chest constricted as she thought of her father lying in that little room in the ICU right this minute. She missed him so much.

She wished she'd woken up in Jared's arms this morning. She'd always think of her dad in the mornings, and her anxiety would attack. She'd feel so alone.

She was tempted to call Jared's phone and ask him to come up to her room, but she hesitated. She suddenly felt...shy. Unsure.

Jared was no longer just her bodyguard today. He was also her lover, too. They'd crossed that line.

How would they go about it? She came up to him like a woman on a mission last night, primarily out of desperation. She was panicking, losing grip of her father's empire and she grabbed onto the only lifeline she had. Jared.

She was still on that mission. She had to be pregnant as soon as possible. But what if he had changed his mind?

His words came back to her. *"I promise, it will get better next time."*

He'd said *next time*. He intended to do it again with her. Make love to her until she got pregnant. That reassured her. A lot could happen next time.

Sighing, she got out of bed, wincing as her muscles protested. The tell-tale soreness between her legs proclaimed her no longer a virgin. She was now Jared's woman. The thought gave her a warm, fuzzy feeling.

Smiling like silly, she went to the en suite to take a bath.

Maybe later they would talk...or something.

She missed him already.



Janina had just left her bedroom when Jared suddenly appeared at the end of the hallway.

“Janina,” he called out to her the moment he saw her.

Joy engulfed her at the sight of him, already in his usual work clothes — black suit, white inner shirt, but without a necktie.

She was ready to greet him cheerfully, but her smile froze. He was walking toward her with long, urgent strides, his expression not happy but serious. Deadly serious.

“What is it?” she asked him, her heart slamming harder against her rib cage, but no longer in excitement.

He stopped a few feet from her. “It’s your father.”

Fear slammed into her. “What happened?”

“Let’s go.”



Jared embraced her tightly.

If only he could absorb all her pain at this moment, he would. He couldn’t bear to see her cry in physical pain, much less in anguish.

“Jared, I can’t lose him yet! I can’t! Not now! I’m not ready! I’m not ready!” she cried in his chest, holding his arm tightly, her nails digging into his skin. He didn’t mind the little pain, nor the fact that her other hand was gripping the front of his shirt so hard it might rip any moment.

“Shhh, Nina. Shhh,” he whispered in her hair as he rubbed her back.

“Tell them to do everything! Everything! We will pay! Money is no object! Please, Jared! Make them save him! I need him! I want my Dad! Oh God, please don’t take him yet!”

He’d never felt more helpless. He knew he couldn’t do anything except watch the doctors and nurses work frantically to revive Nathan while he and Janina stood helplessly on the other side of the glass partition. He was

glad for the privacy of the ICU. Janina's grief was for him to witness alone. It was sacred. It was his devastation, too.

He could feel it in his gut, in his heart. This was the day.

Nathan was confined in the most expensive hospital his billions could buy, but death was indeed man's greatest equalizer. In this moment of transcendence, a man was as naked and helpless as the day he was born. But he wanted to hang on to the last threads of hope as he held Janina in his arms.

Fight, my friend! Don't leave us like this! I don't know what I would do with Janina! Why the hell did you make that codicil, dammit? Look where it got us, and now you're gonna leave her? Okay, I'll admit now. I love her. Yes, I want to marry her. I will marry her, I swear, Nathan. I will always take care of her, you know that. But she needs you, man! Nathan, goddamit, don't leave us!

He saw the heartbeat monitor go flatline.

"Da—d!" Janina screamed beside him, her knees losing strength.

He caught her, and she clung to him, shaking, sobs wracking her entire body.



Jared carried her into her bedroom and laid her gently on the bed. She had fallen asleep in the limo after the doctors had given her a sedative. His heart was breaking for her.

My poor Nina. He kissed her hair. But you're not alone, cara mia. You got me. I'll be with you for as long as you want me to. Even if you don't want me to, I'll always be with you one way or another, I promise.

He pulled the comforter over her and sat on the bed, staring at her sleeping form for some time.

Then he left the room to take care of his old friend's remains.



Janina bolted upright on the bed, chasing her breath, feeling cold. Freezing. She was alone.

Remembering her father, she started sobbing.

“Nina...” He was beside her like magic.

Jared. Her knight.

She scrambled from the bed and jumped into his arms, hugging him tightly. She wasn’t alone. Jared was here. He didn’t leave her.

She cried in his arms again, as the loss of her father slashed through her anew.

He lifted her in his arms effortlessly and walked around the vastness of her bedroom, crooning to her as he would a baby. The coldness left her body, replaced by the warmth coming from him. It felt so good to be close to him like this. She wished he would always hold her like this.

When her tears stopped falling, and her sobs had faded into small hiccups, he walked back to the bed and laid her down.

She clung to his neck. “Don’t leave me.”

“I won’t, baby. I’ll just remove my shoes.”

She let go of him for a bit. She scooted to make room for him. He joined her on the bed and pulled her back in his arms.

“Did you? Is Dad...?.” she asked in a voice now hoarse from crying.

“He’s taken care of, *cara*. We’ll see him tomorrow at the funeral house.”

She pressed her face to his neck. “Thank you. I’m sorry I couldn’t help—“

“Shh, don’t apologize. I understand. It’s my duty to take care of your father, too.”

She laced her fingers with his. “What will I do without you?”

It was true. She was at her lowest, and without Jared, she’d be lost. He was the strongest pillar in her life right now.

He kissed her hair. “You don’t have to worry about anything, sweetheart. I’ll take care of everything.”

She nodded. She had no strength to think about anything but her loss right now. Maybe tomorrow, she’d feel a bit stronger. She had to, for the sake of her father’s legacy. Nathan wouldn’t want her to be defeated. She won’t be defeated. She would stand up again tomorrow. But tonight, she wanted to be totally weak in Jared’s arms.

“Have you ever lost someone you loved, Jared?”



Since he left the service, Jared had never talked about what happened in his past. It was too painful to remember.

“Yes.”

“Who?”

“My father.”

He felt Janina freeze beside him, then pressed closer to him.

“I’m sorry. You never told me. Will you tell me about him now?”

“He died when I was almost eighteen, just after my high school graduation. Heart attack. My father was a hard-working man. He probably abused his body working too hard to send us all to school.”

She rubbed his chest gently as if to comfort him. “Do you miss him?”

“Yes. But not as much as I miss Jamie.”

“Who’s Jamie?”

“My childhood best friend.”

“Oh, Jared. What happened?”

He knew she needed this. Something to justify her own loss. She wanted to feel that it happened to everyone else and no one was exempted from grief.

“I was a Navy SEAL a decade ago. Before I came to work for your father.”

“Yes, I knew you were no ordinary soldier. Dad told me. But you never told me.”

“It’s not something I’d blurt out in a casual conversation. It was a distant past life.”

“Tell me.”

“Jamie and I went to the Navy Academy together. We went to SEAL training together. We did everything together. Wherever I went, he followed.”

“You must have been his hero.”

He swallowed, his chest constricting in pain. “Only I wasn’t the hero Jamie had always thought of me. I failed my best friend when he needed me the most.”

She was quiet beside him, waiting for him to continue, and he found out that he needed this too, to finally talk about Jamie.

“We were on our second tour in the Greater Middle East, in Afghanistan. Jamie and I and four of our comrades were chasing a band of Taliban insurgents in the desert. I was in charge of the team. But I made a bad judgment call.”

A lump appeared in his throat at the recollection. It was a long time ago, but he could still vividly see in his mind what had transpired that day.

She pressed closer to his side. He turned to face her so he could fully enclose her in his arms and entwine their legs.

“I should have called off the chase. I saw some signs, but I ignored my gut feel and paid the price. We were ambushed. I only survived because they thought I was dead and they left us in the desert for the vultures to eat.”

“Oh God...”

“I was wounded badly, and it was a miracle I even survived the loss of blood. A NATO search platoon found us hours later.”

“Oh Jared, I’m so sorry.”

“I was taken to Germany for the treatment of my injuries. I fell into depression afterward, and I was contemplating leaving the service. My contract was nearing its end that time. Then I was ordered to go to France.”

“I’m glad you came to rescue us, or I won’t be here today .”

“I also feel guilty for not saving your mother.”

She touched his face so he would look at her. Her eyes were awash with tears again.

“It wasn’t your fault Mom died. I know you tried, Jared. I saw how you tried to carry us both.”

He felt his own eyes getting wet. For the longest time, he’d wondered if she blamed him for her mother’s death.

“Nina...”

“I’ve never blamed you for her death. Did you think all these years that I did?”

“I just wondered, sweetheart. You were so young then, so innocent of the horrors of this world and you had to witness that.”

“I was old enough to understand what was happening. I knew my mom was already dying and you couldn’t carry us both. We would have died, too if you didn’t decide just to leave her in that warehouse and save us both.”

He brought her hand to his lips. “Thank you, baby,” he said, his voice croaking with emotion.

“Did my father blame you?”

He shook his head. “No. Not at all. But like him, I was devastated, Nina. I felt like I failed twice. I led my best friend and my comrades to their deaths and then I couldn’t save your mother—”

“Shhh, you could only do so much. You may be tougher than most men, but you’re still human like everyone else. We commit mistakes. Please, don’t castigate yourself for it anymore.”

Her kind words lifted the heavy load weighing down on his conscience for the first time in years.

“Thank you, Jared.”

“For what?”

“For always being there for me. For always being my knight.”

“I’m no knight.”

“Yes, you are. More than you’ll ever know.”

He kissed her hair, feeling closer to her like he’d never been.

“I’m afraid, Jared.”

“Of what, *cara*?”

“Of being alone.”

“You’re not alone. I’m here.”

“Promise you won’t ever leave me?”

“I promise.”

She slept in his arms like a baby afterward.

He drifted off to oblivion, too, his soul, blessedly lighter.



E I G H T



The Desolation

JANINA STARED AT HER father's coffin as it slowly disappeared into the ground. Her tears rolled freely behind her dark sunglasses, and she let it all go as her childhood full of her father's memories played right before her eyes.

She could say she was a daddy's girl since her mother passed away so early. But Nathan grieved the loss of his beloved wife for many years until his last days. Janina had felt that every time her father had looked at her because she resembled her mother so much. Every time she'd smiled at her father, there was a wistful look in his eyes. It diminished through the years, but it was always there. Nathan had never remarried, too, staying faithful to his wife's memories.

Nathan and Leticia were finally together, her beloved parents. She knew they were in each other's arms now and for that alone, no matter how painful it was that they were both gone from her life, it comforted her. Her father was now happy wherever he was.

A sob escaped her as her relatives, a few of them from Nathan's side who came to pay their last respects, threw flowers into the grave. She'd only allowed a few people closest to Nathan to attend his burial. He didn't have many close friends but was loved by many because of his generosity.

Janina didn't want her father's burial to be a circus, too. She knew people were fascinated with her even more now than before. Her mother was a beautiful, elegant woman when she was alive and was active in New York's

social scene. Leticia was often photographed for her sartorial elegance and charity works and had been featured in several lifestyle magazines. As a child, Janina was often pictured with her mother, too.

Their kidnapping in France which resulted in the death of Leticia was talked about for ages by both the media and the rags. It even inspired books and a movie—how a family vacation in the City of Lights had turned into a tragedy.

Nathan became almost a recluse after Leticia's death. He ceased going to galas and social functions that he and his wife used to frequent.

Janina grew up secluded within the high walls of the Fullerton mansion, guarded by a team of bodyguards wherever she went. Now she was a very wealthy young woman with no parents. The rags loved poor little rich girl stories.

She came forward and threw the stem of flower she was holding. It was a Juliet Rose, her mother's favorite and also hers. The flower landed on top of the bronze coffin. She felt like she was embracing her father for the very last time.

Be with Mom now, Dad. I'll miss you both every day. Until we meet again. I love you forever.



It was not commiseration Janina saw in Donovan's eyes when he came forward to shake her hand and verbally express his sympathies. His shrewd eyes belied his words.

"We should talk, soon, Jenna."

"About what, Donovan?"

"About the future of Fullerton Group."

"My father isn't even cold in his grave, Donovan."

"Forgive me if I sound disrespectful. It's not my intention. It's just that the corporation needs to maintain an image to the public. A solid image."

"I'll take care of that soon. Don't worry."

"Are you sure you're up to it? You can take a break if you want. I'll take care—"

“No. I’ll be back to work as soon as I can. Fullerton Group is *my* responsibility now, Donovan.”

She emphasized the word ‘my’ to deliver the message that she was going to take over her father’s vacated position and no one else.

“You said you were going to take a vacation.”

“I changed my mind. I’ll see you at the board meeting soon.”

His jaw clenched. Then he just nodded and left.

She was just maintaining a tough facade, but in truth, she was floundering. She had worked all these months to be her father’s successor, but Nathan’s sudden passing blindsided her.



Janina looked around for Jared.

He was just a few feet away from her, discreetly watching her, as usual. He could move like a panther or a ghost— there one moment, gone in a blink.

Her father’s funeral was a three-day affair of proper socialization. The president of the United States came to pay his respects. Fellow billionaires flew in from different states to see his remains for the last time. Representatives from Nathan’s various charity foundations offered their tributes. Janina had to face them all as a grieving but gracious hostess, receive their condolences with small, polite talk and grateful smiles, even if all she wanted to do was go home, curl in a fetal position and cry herself to sleep. If only Jared would hold her in his arms again.

But Jared he’d been staying away from her, only coming near her when necessary. His sudden distance disheartened her. She thought they’d established a connection, but he’d gone back to his detached professional demeanor, and she couldn’t stand it, not after all the intimacies they’d shared.

She missed him so much.

Jared approached her. “Are you alright?” he asked her, his tone formal, his eyes inscrutable. She wanted to rant at him to knock the bodyguard act, but that would be silly, of course. He was her bodyguard.

She nodded. “I wanna go home now.”

He nodded and guided her away from the grave site into the waiting

limo.

As he shut the vehicle's door, her anxiety escalated. She felt a different kind of tension between them that wasn't there before.

Neither of them started any semblance of conversation as the limo rolled out of the cemetery.

When he did talk, it was about something she'd rather not talk about.

"Did Donovan bother you?"

"You know he always uses every opportunity to bother me."

"What did he say?"

"He just reminded me that we need to talk about what's best for the company. As soon as possible."

He fell quiet.

She could have bitten her tongue when she realized the implication of what she said. She just reminded him of their baby-making arrangement.

Embarrassment fueled her anxiety. Why did she feel so cheap for asking him to make her pregnant now?

Because it was low and cheap to ask a man who wasn't even your boyfriend to knock you up like you were just asking him to take your dog for a walk. And now he probably realized he didn't want to donate his sperm anymore. Or he didn't want you, after all.

Maybe it was a mistake. She should have just gone to a sperm bank. Their professional relationship wouldn't have been affected. She needed him as her bodyguard. He was indispensable in that area. Now he was probably feeling awkward on the job because his boss seduced him. It was a major conflict of interest, and it was irreversible.

God, what had she done? Shame washed over her now.

She sighed and reclined in her seat, closing her eyes, pretending to take a nap. She couldn't stand the growing void between them.



Jared watched her prone form beside him. Janina's face was turned away from him, and he visually devoured her profile.

Her simple, white dress molded her body in subtle elegance, but he knew the curves hidden underneath were exquisite.

He ached for her so badly.

Seeing her every day dressed in white, looking fragile with her porcelain skin and luminous eyes that filled with tears one too many times the past days had him tied into knots. He ached to take her in his arms and comfort her like a child, and at the same time, he craved to take her to his bed and claim her as his woman again. It was the most disconcerting contrast of feelings.

There were times when he wanted to touch her so badly, but he reined his lust. She was grieving. She just lost her beloved father. Hell, they were both grieving. He had come to love Nathan like his own brother. But his need for Janina had no shame. He would probably burn in hell for having a boner during her father's funeral. After having her, tasting her, knowing how it felt to be sheathed within her, she'd been a constant torment in his gut that won't go away.

He clenched his fists when the urge to touch her became almost unbearable. He was so hard he could feel his heartbeat in his cock, pulsing with his acute need to possess her again. He sighed discreetly and tried to relax his muscles in his seat.

It felt like the longest ride going back to the Fullerton mansion when it was only seven miles away.

When the limousine stopped at the mansion's driveway, Janina sat up straight. She hadn't been sleeping after all. He was hoping she had fallen asleep so he'd have a reason to carry her upstairs to her room, so he could touch her and smell her again.

"Janina, are you—"

"Please," she cut him tersely, not even looking at him. "I'm tired."

It was a tone that drew boundaries. She was acting like a boss. His boss.

Anger rose within him, and it was all he could do not to grab her and wipe that coldness from her face with a kiss. But he curbed his temper.

"Jared, the door, please."

He got out of the limo and opened the door for her.

She stepped out and walked toward the mansion's entrance, her posture stiff, dismissive. He watched her in mounting frustration. The butler

opened the door for her. She entered the house without a backward glance.

He inhaled deeply and went to the security room to get some work done. He'd had more cameras set up around and inside the mansion.

He installed a few bugs in strategic places, too, so he could track Janina's movements all the time, especially in public places where he couldn't be near her within seconds if she needed him. He just couldn't leave her safety to chance now that Nathan was gone.

It was solely in his hands to keep her safe now.



NINE



The Breaking Point

JANINA COULDN'T SLEEP. She'd been tossing and turning on the bed for hours now, frequently looking at the clock at her bedside table. It was close to midnight.

From the events of the day, she should be exhausted and asleep by now, but her entire body felt wired, restless. Hot.

There was a tingling sensation on her skin, and they were concentrated on her nipples and between her legs.

She knew what it was.

She wanted him. Was craving for him. Was dying to feel his touch again, feel his hands and lips on her body, feel his big, hard cock filling her emptiness again. She'd tasted pleasure in his arms. Now she couldn't forget it, had been reliving it every day, even at this moment that she was grieving. It comforted her, made her forget her loss.

Angry at herself for getting addicted to his touch so quickly, she left the bed and donned her robe. It was summer, and the humid air probably contributed to her condition. Maybe a dip in the pool would release all the tension from her body. Yes, she hadn't enjoyed the pool in a while.

She left her room on her bare feet, her footsteps, silent on the plushly carpeted floor.

The entire house was quiet with scone lights illuminating her way. It was a big, beautiful, empty house without her parents.

Her chest constricted in pain again. Funny how she was grieving and wet between her legs at the same time, craving for a man who probably didn't

want her anymore.

The thought depressed her even more.

She descended the split staircase that connected the three floors of the mansion. Her mother had used this beautifully designed stairs with the intricate wrought-iron railing for a lot of her magazine pictorials in the past.

She gasped and froze in her tracks when a shadow suddenly appeared at the bottom of the stairs. But she knew a second later that no one could enter the mansion without his knowledge or permission.

It could only be Jared.

Their eyes connected.

Even with a floor separating them, he looked huge and formidable, like a warrior guarding this castle.

He wasn't wearing any shirt. Only a pair of black track pants.

The dim interior even enhanced his impressive physique, the shadows delineating the hard muscles in his abdomen and arms.

The fire in her belly burned hotter. But she was scared by the look in his eyes.

"What's wrong, Janina?" he rasped, his gruff voice wafting toward her in the stillness of the night.

His voice alone made her weak. But she was suddenly afraid of him, of what she was feeling for him. What if it was one-sided?

"I..." she wet her lips. "I just want to have a dip in the pool."

"At this hour? You'll catch a cold."

She stiffened at his high-handed tone. She didn't need it right now. "It's my house, and it's my body, Jared. I'll be fine. Go back to sleep."

"I wasn't sleeping."

"Oh..."

He slowly ascended the stairs. His abdominal muscles slowly rippled with his every step. He stopped a few tiers below her. "Can't sleep?"

She gripped the banister harder to keep her balance as her legs were melting like chocolate on a hot summer night. His gaze was so intense, and yet she couldn't read anything. She hated it when he'd look at her like that and wouldn't say the words that she longed to hear from him.

“Oh, forget it!’ She turned around, intending to go back to her room.

He caught her by the waist. She cried out and lost her balance, falling on his chest. His strong arms went around her. She didn’t worry at all falling a long flight down because she knew he would catch her.

She sighed as his warmth surrounded her, his scent filling her nostrils, making her feel heady.

He turned her around to face him. He was standing a step lower than her, but he was so tall that he still looked down at her.

Her palms rested on his chest. She could feel the erratic thudding of his heart.

“I couldn’t sleep either. You know why?”

She swallowed and shook her head slowly.

“I was thinking about you.”

His eyes transformed, and now they were open, showing her how he felt. Desire. As hot as the one raging within her.

He lifted her by the waist as if she weighed nothing and brought her close to his frame. Her arms wound around his shoulders for support.

“Feel what you do to me, *cara*. Thinking about you makes me like this. And I can’t sleep feeling like this, Nina. I’ve been like this for days, and it’s killing me.”

He ground his hips against her, his hard cock gorging her lower belly. She couldn’t contain her need any longer. She moaned and ground herself back at him.

“Christ, I need you, Janina!”

She mewled, going weak. “Jared...”

“I need you so much I’m going to explode if I don’t bury my cock inside you in the next minute.”

Her inner muscles clenched achingly, her fluids gushing profusely from his words.

“Tell me you need me too,” he commanded.

“I need you. I’m dying too, Jared. Please!”

His dark eyes smoldered like black diamonds.

He slowly lowered her until her back touched the carpeted stairs. He

kneaded her legs apart and crouched before her like a big beast about to ravish her. She could only watch him, her entire body pulsing with urgent need.

“It feels like forever since the last time I was inside you, baby. I’m afraid I can’t be slow.”

“I don’t want you to be slow. I don’t care. I just want you.”

He pulled at her long nightgown none too gently, and when it snagged at her sides, he tore the sheer material in two with a feral growl. She lay bare before him in her lacy white thong. That didn’t escape getting torn off of her in one short tug, too.

He didn’t touch any part of her yet, just devoured her naked body with his eyes as he pushed his pants down his hips, freeing his cock.

Her breath caught in her throat at the sight of his erection. Her inner muscles churned, anticipating getting pierced by that magnificent cock again, clenching around it as her pleasure peaked.

“Are you wet for me, baby?”

She could only nod as her eyes were riveted between them, at his big hand gripping his thick shaft from the base. Moisture glistened at the tip.

“I need to be inside you now, Janina. I need to feel your tightness around me.”

He moved forward, putting his powerful arms under her knees, pulling her legs up and wide. She felt his tip against her nether lips. She mewled, lifting her hips, wanting to impale herself on him now.

“Fuck, baby, I want to pound your pussy so badly, but I don’t wanna hurt you. Guide me in.”

She didn’t need to be told twice.



Jared breached her opening as gently as he could, even if his animal hunger was urging him to ram all of his steely length inside Janina and explode.

He could barely fit his tip in her still virgin-tight entrance, but she was wet, and he could swear she was even wetter than the last time, a proof of how much she’d been craving for this too, and he reveled in the thought.

He pushed in, sinking an inch inside her. She gasped.

“Tell me if I hurt you...” he grated, reining in all his lust. His entry must be careful, so he won’t tear her inner muscles anew. Once he was in and she’d adjusted to his enormous size, he can ride her like he wanted to. God, he hoped, because he was dying, his balls so tight and primed for release. Fuck, he might just come before he was fully imbedded in her.

“Oh Jared, it feels so good,” she practically purred as he filled her more, her sheath clenching around his shaft, pulling him in. If he could have this every day of his life, he’d be the happiest bastard on earth.

He looked at her face, and she couldn’t be more beautiful than she was now, her eyes dazed with passion, her pupils dilated, her lips open as she caught her breath. The kittenish mewls coming from her throat drove him mad with desire.

He braced his knees on the stairs, lifting her legs on his shoulders and pushed deeper, pushing two inches and two more...and then he was home, his balls resting on her soft ass.

“Jared!” she cried out, her fingers biting into his forearms.

He groaned gutturally. “You okay, sweetheart?”

“Oh goodness, you’re so big. So so big!”

He gave out a throaty laugh. “Is that good or bad?”

“Good! You feel so good inside me.” She was flexing her inner muscles around him, embracing him sweetly from root to tip. It was unbelievable, and it was his undoing.

He fused their lips together, driving his tongue inside her as he started moving in and out of her. His rhythm went fast and deep right away.

“Janina...God...! So good, baby. So fucking good!”

He gripped her hips to cushion the pounding blows of his pelvis against her soft flesh.

He transferred his lips to her breasts, licking the globes and sucking her nipples alternately as he rotated his hips, angling his cock to hit her G-spot. He guided her hips to move with his thrusts, and she sobbed in pleasure. He wanted to hear her shout his name in the throes of passion every day, every fucking hour if he’d have his way.

He lifted himself and watched as he fucked her sweet, tight cunt. She was stretched wide open by his girth, and his shaft was shiny with their combined wetness as he jacked her relentlessly.

He wanted to see this every day, too, her sweet little pussy stretched to receive his thrusts, her womb ready to welcome his babies.

The thought of coming inside her unprotected was probably the best of all as he neared his peak. He was grunting like an animal, spewing obscene words he'd never thought he could utter in her presence, but now he was free to tell her everything he felt as he lost himself in her sweet paradise.

“Jared, oh God, please, please...!”

She was seconds away from coming, and she was so beautiful.

“Look at me, baby. Look how much you please me.”

She tried to focus her dazed eyes on him.

He strummed her clit with his fingers in tandem with his almost brutal thrusts. “You want me to fuck you like this every day, baby? Hmm? Tell me!”

She answered him with incoherent, delirious words as her eyes closed tightly, her mouth opening wide.

Her sweet pussy spasmed around him as her orgasm claimed her, her body going rigid under him.

He stopped moving for a few seconds to feel her, watch her, and then he unleashed the full force of his lust.

He fucked her harder, as far as he could go inside her. He was seconds away, and he wanted it to last a bit longer, but he'd been holding off for much too long it only took him a few deep strokes to explode.

His seed left his body in furious waves of ecstasy that made him cry out like a helpless animal in her arms, weak and defenseless as he poured it all in her depths.

“Yes...yes, Jared. Fill me. Make me pregnant. Make me pregnant.”

Her words were like angels singing in his ears as he did, pour all that he could give into her, hoping it would give her the baby she desperately needed. Who was he kidding? He wanted her to get pregnant with his baby so that he could bind her to him forever.

He slumped over her like a dead weight; his strength sapped from his incredible release. She purred under him like a kitten, undulating her hips lazily as her happy little pussy gave his even happier cock squeezes of appreciation.

He grinned in her chest like a contented beast.



T E N



The Surrender

“JARED, TELL ME YOUR SECRET.”

“I already told you my secrets, *cara*. I have none.”

“Tell me what would make men surrender in battle.”

They were in the home theater, trying to watch a movie in between their marathon lovemaking. But of course, they were both distracted by each other.

Jared couldn't keep his hands off of her, even if he tried. But he had to give her some rest, hence, the movie. But it seemed that she'd lost interest in it, too. What battle was she talking about? The only one he'd be interested in right now was another round with her right here in this room. He wanted to fuck his children into her in all parts of the Fullerton mansion.

“What exactly do you wanna know, baby?”

“I want to know how to lead men.”

He peered at her face. “Why are you asking me?”

“Because you've been in battle. You've been a leader. You still are. You command respect and obedience.”

Now she was talking. He smiled at her smugly. “I do?”

She slapped his chest lightly. “I'm serious, Jared.”

Her finger was circling his nipple which was making him hot all over again. Hot damn, he wasn't a young boy anymore, but his body was reacting

to her most innocent touch like a horny teenager.

Picking up the remote, he paused the movie and guided her face so she would look at him. “What’s with this making a man surrender shit, hmm?”

“It’s Donovan.”

“Ah. So what’s the asshole up to now? Do I need to deal with him?”

“No, not that way. I just want him to...” she shrugged.

“Submit to your leadership,” he finished for her.

“Yeah. I don’t trust him, but that’s beside the point. What the board will look at are performance and experience. To be fair, he really has more experience than I do and to be honest, he’s quite capable of running the company. It’s just that...I want to run it, Jared. I want the chance. I know I can. I’ve been working on it, you know that.”

“Yeah, you’ve gotten me acquainted with all the billionaires in New York this year alone.” That was true. Janina had been hanging out with her father’s old friends in golf courses and country clubs every weekend, and he had to accompany her every time.

“Sorry, were you bored?”

“No, baby. How could I? You were working hard. I saw you hold your own in the company of those old sharks. You charmed them all.”

Her eyes glowed at his praise. “I did?”

“Yeah, some of them were probably thinking how to divorce their third wives so they can marry you.”

She laughed. “Don’t tell me you were jealous of them? They’re old, Jared, come on!”

He snorted. “Not too old. No man is too old for a beautiful woman. Look at me.”

She rolled her eyes. “Jared De Lucca, you’re not old. You’re only forty. Jeez, you having a midlife crisis already? With a dick like that?”

He couldn’t help but laugh. She was good for a man’s ego. Any man would kill to have a woman like this in his life. He was lucky she chose him to be her first lover. He vowed to be her last. He wondered how he was going to make that happen except killing any horndog who’d try to steal her from him. God, he was really losing it. “Go on, baby.”

“Those men taught me a lot. But still, having all the knowledge doesn’t make one a leader. It’s charisma, the ability to persuade without

trying. It's a gift, Jared."

"Yes."

"So, how do I do it? You've lead men on the battlefield. How did you make them follow you against all the odds?"

He traced the delicate outline of her cheek. He felt ten feet tall that she was seeking his advice. With Nathan gone, Janina had become one of the most powerful women in New York, but when they were together, he was the mentor and she was the pupil. "Men follow only one rule, *cara*."

"What rule?"

"He who has more balls, wins."

She was listening to him attentively, but he had a feeling he was the one getting schooled.

"Speak their language. Play their game."

She nodded.

"Men follow someone who can put them in their place, who can take any blow and give it back harder. You may not exactly play their game, but at least appear to be. Visuals and sounds easily stimulate men. If you know how to use your weapons right, you'll have them where you want them without engaging them in a real fight."

She mulled on it for a bit. Then a knowing smile split her lips.

Her hand went inside his shorts, pulling his cock out, holding it upright.

"Whoa..." he drawled, unprepared for her sudden move. Needless to say, he was already hard, had been hard since she started rubbing on him like a kitten ten minutes into the movie.

"Look at this gigantic, alpha dick," she purred. "So strong, so dominant, so badass."

She pressed it to her cheek, feeling its pulsing power, its scorching hotness.

She smiled at him impishly. "Let's see if I can speak your language better than you do." She rubbed her nose and lips on his burgeoning arousal, inhaling his musky scent.

His breathing became ragged.

Her pink tongue snaked out to lick his cock head.

His entire body froze. He watched her, transfixed as she took him in her mouth.

He didn't expect her to do this so soon, but looking at Janina giving him head melted all the hardness in him, well, except where she was touching him. Mother of God, what a beautiful sight!

She'd definitely need a lot of practice not to choke while attempting to deep throat him, but her unpracticed efforts turned him on like nothing else. But she can lick. Fuck, she can! She was licking his balls like they were her favorite dessert and he had to grit his teeth to hold himself from coming too soon.

"Nina..."

"Am I doing it right?" She licked his cock on the underside, from base to tip and now she was sucking the tip again, licking off his precum.

He gripped her hair, his toes curling at the pleasure coiling tighter in his groin. "Hell, yeah, baby. You're doing just fine," he managed to say raggedly. "Move your hand like this." He guided her hand to pump his shaft as she sucked the tip. "That's right. Tighter. Grip me tighter. Yes..."

He licked his lips as his vision started to blur. Pretty soon his eyes would be rolling up. Fuck, she was a quick study.

She was making these sexy noises, and they vibrated against his length, adding thickness to his already swollen-to-bursting shaft.

His balls tightened almost painfully. He pulled out of her mouth.

She made a sound of protest.

"We don't wanna waste my cum, do we?"

She grinned. "Oh. Yes, we don't."

She suddenly stood up and walked a few meters away.

"Nina, come back here," he ordered her.

She looked back at him seductively, then dropped her pink teddy. He sucked in his breath as she pranced in front of him naked. Young, lush in all the right places. Untouched by any man but him.

She sat on the sofa opposite him. With a siren's smile, she raised her legs, folding them to her sides, opening wide.

Fuck.

Her hands crept between her legs, her fingers tracing the sides of her

glistening pussy.

He moved.

“Nah-ah. Stay there, “ she said in a commanding tone.

He stopped, not because she was controlling him but he wanted to see what she’d do next.

Her fingers danced between her folds. His eyes were riveted there. Her wetness coated her fingers.

“You like what you see, darling?”

His nostrils flared. “You know I do.”

“Hmm. Can you see how wet I am? I get like this every time I think about you...and I imagine your big, hard cock entering me...” She opened her pussy lips wide. “Stretching me.”

He stood up.

“No.”

“Nina...” he warned her. He might have given her some tips on how to control men but her doing it to him? Nah.

“Crawl.”

The little witch was pushing it.

“If you wanna eat this pussy, crawl towards it.”

Their eyes clashed across the short distance separating them. She was small he could crush her body with his bare hands like a delicate flower but her eyes held him in thrall, her sultry voice binding him like silk threads he could easily snap, but wouldn’t.

He couldn’t believe the sudden shift of power between them. He wanted to jump onto her and take her like he always did, dominant, primal, but he found himself slowly going down on his knees, crouching on all fours.

It was a voluntary surrender.

He crawled toward her, his mouth salivating like a dog who had scented a bitch in heat. His bitch. Fuck, he was dripping pre-cum on the carpet, so turned on he was. He reached her. The musky scent of her arousal invaded his nostrils.

“Look how much I want you.” She dipped one little finger inside her and brought it to her mouth, licking her digit. “Uhhh, you wanna fuck my pussy, baby?”

“Fuck, yes—“

“Na-ah. Not yet. You can’t until I told you so. Now lick it.”

With a feral groan, he buried his face between her legs.

She moaned. “Yes. Slowly. We’ve got all day, baby. It’s all yours. Oh yes. That feels oh so good.”

All day?! He gripped the base of his cock, fighting the urge to jack off while eating her but he didn’t want to waste his seed. It was going inside her. And though she tasted so fucking good and he wanted to spend all day eating her, he just couldn’t last a minute longer.

“Nina, I wanna fuck you now.”

“Fuck me with your tongue, first.”

He obeyed, tongue-fucking her little hole until she was gasping. He shoved two fingers inside her while he sucked her clit.

“Let me fuck you now. I’m gonna cum if I’m not in your pussy in the next second.”

“Only if you say please, Jared.”

“Don’t push it,” he hissed, gripping her hips hard.

She stood her ground. “Say, please.”

He swallowed and gave in. “Please, baby.”

She smiled triumphantly, and before she could say any smug word, he flipped her onto her stomach, lifting her hips. “You talk too much, *cara mia*.”

This ass. So fucking sexy! He squeezed the globes and opened them, exposing her pussy and ass hole. The sight was enough to make a corpse come. He traced her dripping slit, rubbing her clit. “This pussy... This can make any man surrender. But this is mine. Only mine. You hear me, Nina?”

“Jared...” she mewled.

He slapped one luscious ass cheek. “Tell me.”

She yelped. “Yes! Just yours! Only yours!”

He rammed his cock inside her, feeding her all of his pulsating inches. He wasn’t gentle. She’d teased him to the limit. But she pushed back her hips to meet his thrust, demanding to be fucked hard.

He gave her what she wanted, slamming like a jackhammer in and out of her, watching his cock stretch her tight cunt over and over. Their combined

wetness made their union slick and so fucking hot he was feeling all kinds of emotions as he took her roughly.

Possessiveness.

Tenderness.

Violence.

Love.

She screamed and buckled under him, her pussy clamping sweetly around his cock as she came.

A beat later he slammed one last time, releasing his seed inside her. The pleasure was so sharp he wanted to weep. Shit, this pussy had turned him into one.

But he didn't mind.

He'd die to have this slice of heaven every day.



ELEVEN



The Ascension

JANINA WALKED WITH an extra bounce to her hips toward the conference room. She was flanked by her PA, Marion, and her father's lawyer, Mr. Jennings.

She wished she was still in bed right now, making love with Jared but she had a corporation to run, and it must start today. She won't give Donovan any chance to steal her rightful position or the board to doubt her capabilities and intentions.

This was the first meeting she'd called on behalf of her father, the biggest shareholder of Fullerton Group. She wouldn't call it a board meeting yet, just a simple meeting she'd requested for them to attend in memory of her father. That was how she'd worded it in her executive letter sent to them this morning, so snubbing this meeting would be disrespecting Nathan Fullerton who was just buried last week and nobody would want that shame in their hands.

Janina entered the large conference room on the 37th floor of the Fullerton Tower, the room where her father had always presided. There was no way she'd allow anybody to sit at the head of the table except a Fullerton, and that was her.

They were all already there. She made sure they were all there first before she made her appearance.

She stood at the head of the table and faced them, pausing to fix her eyes briefly on their faces, all sixteen major stockholders of Fullerton Group. Half of them were Asians.

All of them were men.

She was up for some challenge. Nah. Scratch that. They were up for a big challenge.

She smiled at the Chinese and Japanese lawyers representing their various clients. They were the most charming in this den of lions ready to tear her apart at the mere sign of weakness. Then there were the hyenas, the wily, crafty bastards trying to ambush her ascension to her father's throne. She transferred her gaze to Donovan. He gave her a smirk. So sure of himself. The bastard thought he had this in the bag.

"Good afternoon, gentlemen. I apologize for being a bit late. Losing a beloved is not easy."

She took her seat and went straight to business.

"Gentlemen, I know my father's passing has cast some doubts and apprehension among you, particularly on how this company will proceed now that he's gone."

There was a collective murmur of unintelligible words and uncomfortable shuffling in their seats.

Donovan wasted no time pressing his case. "The board has a valid reason to be concerned, Ms. Fullerton."

She met his calculating eyes across the table, holding it steadily. "Yes, Mr. Burton, I understand that perfectly. It's a legitimate concern that I fully acknowledge. But you need not fear about anything. Fullerton is in good hands with its new CEO."

They all looked at each other, puzzlement in their eyes.

"We don't have a new CEO yet, Jenna," Donovan pointed out, dispensing of niceties.

"Oh yes, we have, Donovan. Me. I am the new CEO of Fullerton Group."

The noise was wiped out from the room.

"And how did that happen?" Donovan tried to be cool, but he couldn't hide the incredulity in his eyes.

"By simply being the biggest shareholder of this company. Why, is there any other reason aside from that, Donovan? Last time I checked, I was still Chairman of the Board, though Mr. Jennings here has been representing me for a few months now, but it's time I relieved him of this tedious undertaking." She turned to Mr. Jennings. "Mr. Jennings, you can now play

golf every day if you wish.”

Mr. Jennings looked taken aback but recovered quickly. “Jenna...ah, Miss Fullerton, I’m perfectly alright representing you. Your father was a great man, and I’d love to continue serving him under you for as long as I could.”

“Thank you, Mr. Jennings, but I’d really want you to retire now. It’s time to relax and enjoy the fruits of your labor. Let the young guns take care of business now. You’ve done this company a great service and Fullerton Group will compensate you handsomely for it, right, gentlemen?”

There was a collective murmur of approval.

Poor Mr. Jennings was rendered speechless. She just subtly fired him in front of the board.

“Hold on a minute, Jenna, I don’t think this is the time to discuss these matters. Let’s set a different meeting for that. A proper board meeting,” Donovan interjected. “We attended this particular session not to listen to a new CEO but to honor Nathan Fullerton, as you stated in your letter of notice.”

She skewered Donovan with a steely gaze, then addressed the board in general. “I am Janina Fullerton, the only child and sole heir of Nathan Fullerton. I may be a woman, but I assure you, gentlemen, I have my father’s balls and his intellect. Do not be fooled by my appearance. I could kick ass with the best of you anytime, any place and I can play even dirtier than the worst of you. What do you think I’ve been doing with the oracles of Wall Street every weekend?”

They were all staring at her.

“That’s right. Learning to kick ass. Moreover, learning to wipe my table of dirty asses so it won’t contaminate the entire company. So I suggest, Mr. Burton to respect your place in this corporation. That means you will respect mine,” she paused for good measure, “Or we will have a big problem.”

Donovan stared at her with barely concealed aggression then pushed his chair back and stood up. “I’ll see you at the board meeting.”

“And who would be calling a board meeting, Donovan?”

He opened his mouth, but no words came out.

“That’s right. Me. I’m the CEO and Chairman of the Board. I will call a board meeting soon, for sure. Wait for it.”

Donovan walked out of the room.

Now it was time for some loyalty check.

“Now, gentlemen, I’m sure Mr. Burton has been filling you in on the contents of my father’s will. And that little codicil.”

She watched their expression carefully. They were not good actors. They bowed their heads and pretended to read something on their tablets.

She turned to Mr. Jennings. The old man looked like he’d have a stroke. Her heart sank. Nathan had trusted this man. She considered him a friend of their family, but you just couldn’t trust anybody these days. Loyalty was just as cheap as honesty when presented with a bigger opportunity.

But she didn’t say anything to Mr. Jennings. She had to finish this meeting. “That codicil is really funny. My father was probably worried I’d be consumed with running this conglomerate I’d have no time left for a love life. I must admit, I gave him enough reason to be worried.”

All eyes slowly returned to her.

“Yes, I’ve been consumed for years in learning how to run this company. My GPA in my last year at NYU would make any parent worried his child was becoming worse than him. A workaholic. Obsessed with this company. So, he made that codicil to ensure I’d still be human even after he was gone. That’s a father’s great love for his child.”

She saw a few nods here and there.

“Now, what would any of you do if you were slapped with a codicil like that?”

No one dared to answer.

She looked at them knowingly, putting on a superior smirk. She leaned back in her seat and crossed her legs.

“That’s right. Find the biggest dick in New York City and fuck... fuck...and fuck.” She rolled the provocative words in her mouth like a dominatrix. “And I found that monster dick, alright.”

Their jaws dropped. She even caught a few of them blushing. Damn, she loved it. The mesmerized expression on their faces was priceless.

Jared was right. Confronted by a woman who spoke their language, men would all go shy like virgins. In the business of power, men would only respect a woman who played their games dirtier than they could. Like obedient puppies, they would willingly follow an alpha, male or female, who could put them in their places without even drawing blood.

“Believe me, if my father hadn’t died last week, I wouldn’t have

abstained from fucking until I got the heir my father wanted so much. I wish I could have given it to him when he was still alive but..." she shrugged. "Nevertheless, that codicil is not a detriment to my plans for Fullerton Group. It's just...shall we say... a few rounds of birdies, and if I get lucky, I'll get a hole-in-one sooner than I think."

That elicited chuckles.

While they had totally relaxed in her 'locker room talk'—they'd forgotten they were in the board room, fools— she delivered the coup de grace.

"My father built Fullerton Group into what it is today, and it's my turn to lead this company now. Anybody who stands in my way will be dealt with severely. I do not take well to traitors."

She made sure she delivered that last bit with conviction and enough underlying threat. "Is there any objections?"

They were looking at her differently now. With respect. Yes. Definitely with respect.

"Thank you, gentlemen. That would be all for today. I'll see you soon at the board meeting."

They all left one by one until only Mr. Jennings and she remained.

"Jenna..."

She looked at the old lawyer sadly. "You broke your confidentiality oath as my father's lawyer and mine, Mr. Jennings."

He nodded, not even trying to explain.

"I meant what I said. You served this company well, up until this moment. I'm sorry, but this is the end of our association. I will not press charges. Just leave quietly."

He nodded again, regret on his face. "I'm sorry, Jenna."

"Goodbye, Mr. Jennings."

She remained in the conference room for a few minutes, sitting at her father's table, looking at his portrait hanging from the far wall in front of her.

Tears rolled down her cheeks, but they were not so much of pain now but of hope.

I don't know why you made that codicil, Dad, but I'm not mad. Not anymore. I do need someone now that you're gone.

She touched her belly, wondering if a seed was taking root in her womb right this minute. She wanted this baby so badly now. She wanted a new Fullerton in that big house her parents had left her. Maybe two, or three, or a dozen, if Jared would be amenable to it.

She smiled, wiping her tears.

I miss you already, Dad.

She was startled from her musings when the door opened. Donovan entered the room and slammed the door shut. Fear crept inside her at the murderous look in his eyes, but she slowly turned the swivel chair she was sitting on so she was facing him.

“Yes, Mr. Burton?” she said, raising an eyebrow

“You set me up!”

“Set you up? How?”

“Don't play coy with me, Jenna. That was an ambush board meeting, and you planned it! You wanted to catch everyone unaware!”

She remained cool and stood up. “Did I not tell you before that I'd be calling a meeting soon?”

He moved toward her. “You shrewd little bitch! You think you can run this company like your father did?”

“I sure can, and I will, better than you will ever do, Donovan.”

“You got me there, Jenna, but next time—“

“There won't be a next time. I'm calling the shots now, and you will abide by the rules of the board or assign a new representation for your father. I don't need your shit on my board, Donovan. I know your father is an honorable man. I'm sure he won't appreciate your shenanigans—”

He took a step closer. She stepped back, but he kept on advancing until her butt hit the side of the conference table. He invaded her personal space.

“I heard you're working on getting pregnant. Why don't I help you with that, hmm?”

“You're disgusting! You're married for Christ's sake!”

“I'm about to divorce the bitch. But you and I, Jenna, imagine what

we can do together. My shares and your shares, we can build a dynasty. Think about it.”

“You’re dreaming! Never!”

He leered at her. “Ah, Jenna, women would kill to get a proposal like that from me.”

“Yeah, those poor, stupid women, they don’t know what kind of hell they’re signing in for.”

“I know your type, you bitch. You get off on it. You play this ballbuster in the boardroom, but you’d suck dick and swallow cum like a submissive under the fucking table.”

She slapped him hard in the face.

Donovan lost it, forgetting where they were. He grabbed her shoulders and pulled her roughly toward his body.

She gasped in shock. His head swooped down. She turned her face to the side to avoid his lips.

He sucked on her neck hard instead. Her skin crawled. She fought him, but he was strong.

Just as she was about to scream for help, Donovan was bodily yanked backward and then he was flying.

He slammed face-first into the wall then fell back on his ass, his nose spurting blood.



T W E L V E



The Realization

HE DARED. The motherfucker dared to touch what was his!

Jared saw red cloud his vision as he grabbed the still dazed Donovan by the front of his shirt and dragged him up only to land a hard punch on his face. The fucker's legs gave way again, coughing out blood this time.

He wanted to beat the motherfucker to a pulp, rip his throat out with his bare hands. He kicked him several times in the stomach, in the chest. He wanted to smash his skull to the granite floor and splatter his brains out. But he heard Janina screaming behind him.

"Jared, please, stop, you'll kill him! Jared!"

It took all of him to contain the rampaging violence inside him.

A woman came into the room and screamed, running back out, asking for help. In the corner of his eye, he saw people rushing in. But he didn't care. He wasn't finished with this asshole.

He bent and grabbed Donovan's hair and lifted his face. "Look at me!" he growled.

Donovan could barely focus his eyes.

He slapped the asshole's face. "I said look at me!"

Donovan's eyeballs rolled once then focused on him.

"You will live today. But if you touch her again, I'm going to feed you to the gators in the underground sewers, you understand?"

Donovan coughed.

Jared slapped his face harder.

“Morerfugerrr...” Donovan slurred. I’ll shue you...” he managed to utter.

“Yeah? You know what I used to do before I became a bodyguard? I hunted down terrorists.” He spoke in a low, almost gentle voice for Donovan’s benefit alone, but it was sinister. He was a master in interrogation back in the day.

Donovan’s eyes widened.

“Yeah, the ones who love chopping people’s head off or blowing them to pieces. I used to eat them for breakfast. We played hide and seek with each other a lot using machine guns and machetes. I’d killed dozens of them. Killing your privileged city boy ass would be like swatting a fly. Do you want to be on my bad side, Burton?”

Donovan shook his head quickly, terror in his eyes.

“Good. Now, that is my woman. Mine, you got that? You don’t touch what’s mine, or I will go after everything that’s yours. Everything, you hear me? I believe in an eye for your whole body. Any harm that comes to her, I will come after you and everything you hold dear.”

Donovan repeatedly nodded, losing any ability to speak now.

“Jared, please...” Janina’s pleading voice dissolved the fog of violence around him.

He released Donovan. The idiot fell to the floor with a thud.

Jared stood up to comfort his woman.

Just then, security came barreling into the door, guns drawn.

“Stop! Don’t shoot!” Janina screamed.

The three security men looked at Jared, then at Donovan’s bloody ass on the floor.

“Mr. De Lucca, I want you to raise your hands,” one of the guards said, his gun aimed at Jared’s chest.

Jared slowly raised his arms.

Janina ran to stand in front of him and calmly talked to the guards. “You know Mr. De Lucca is my bodyguard. He just came to defend me from Donovan who was harassing me.”

“Ma’am...?” The guard look flustered, undecided.

“It’s alright, guys. The CCTV cameras will show you what happened later. Just take Mr. Burton to the hospital first.”

The guards lowered their guns and went to help Donovan.

Jared held her hand. “Let’s go.”



“Are you alright?” Did he touch you?” Jared demanded as they walked down the hallway, heading for the elevator.

“I’m okay, Jared.”

“No, you’re not. I heard you. That bastard touched you.”

“You heard me?”

“Yes. I bugged you.”

“You did? Where...?”

“Doesn’t matter where it is, Nina. I just want to be there as soon as I can when you need me.”

She squeezed his hand. “You were there so fast that asshole didn’t even know what hit him.”

Jared grunted, not pacified despite knowing he got to her before that bastard could do any real damage to her.

They reached the elevator. When they were inside, he asked her again. “Where did he touch you?”

“Jared...”

“Where, Nina?”

He wanted to know. He couldn’t stand the thought of that motherfucker laying a finger on his baby.

“He just attempted to kiss me. He was angry I called a meeting and foiled his plans.”

He cursed. “I’ll go back later to kill that fucker. He’s going to be a cold case,” he rasped near her ear so that only she could hear.

She framed his face with her palms. “Shhh. It’s alright. He won’t dare

bother me again. Not after you totaled his pretty nose. ”

“This is no joking matter, Nina. He hurt you.”

“I know. It’s over now. Will you just kiss me, so I’ll forget he sucked on my neck?”

“That mother—“

She went on tiptoe and kissed him.

In an instant, he was rock hard. The onslaught of desire shook him. Lust, fury, and protectiveness mingled inside him, and it was a different dimension of arousal. It made his entire body throb with need so sharp every move he made magnified it.

The elevator dinged, and he was forced to let her go.

He practically dragged her to the waiting Phantom at the building’s entrance.



Janina felt his hardness in the elevator and got instantly wet. How easily Jared could trigger her arousal. Just one look at him, and she’d go hot. Just one taste and she couldn’t do anything else but have him.

Watching him go at Donovan had excited her. Jared looked raw in his fury, so damn sexy!

Poor Donovan got his handsome face beat up, but she didn’t feel sorry for him. That asshole needed some lessons in respect and Jared gave it to him in spades.

Jared opened the limo’s door for her. She scrambled in, frantic. He climbed in and slammed the door shut. Just as the vehicle moved, she turned to him.

“Jared...” she mewed in a needy voice.

“I know, baby. Soon.”

He squeezed her thigh as he pushed the intercom button. “We’re going to Maryland,” he told Marshall.

“Maryland, boss?” Marshall repeated as if he’d heard it wrong.

“Yeah, Baltimore. Do not disturb us for any reason until we get there.”

“Yes, boss.”

He made sure everything was locked then he practically jumped to her side. He’d never moved faster in his life in his excitement to be between a woman’s legs. But her tight skirt prevented him.

He cursed, yanking the material up her upper legs until it was bunched around her waist. Her white panties greeted him.

He palmed her crotch. Her panties were soaked. He pulled it impatiently off of her.

Her pink, glistening pussy came to view. His fingers spread her lips, exposing her inner folds. His mouth watered.

“Jared!”

He pushed a finger inside her. She cried out, her sheath squeezing his digit. He hissed in pleasure as the sensation traveled directly to his cock. He inserted another finger inside her and started stretching her, preparing her for his entry. Baltimore was a long way from New York. He could have used Nathan’s chopper to get there faster, but he needed a few hours with his baby. This little juicy box was going to get worked up for hours.

But he was not alone in this frenzied hunger. She was clawing at his pants, fumbling with the zipper. It wasn’t easy to open as the ridge of his cock pressed tightly against the material.

Her juices dripped over his palm as he finger-fucked her. He was dripping in his pants, too, from the sight of her whitish juice coating his fingers, so abundantly flowing for him.

She was like a hungry baby making these impatient noises. He could listen to it forever.

He could never get enough of the sight of her desperate to get to his cock. She’d managed to undo his zipper, and her hand was now inside his pants, gripping his thick length.

“Oh, Jared, please, I want this.”

His control snapped. Yanking his pants and his briefs down his hips, he freed his erection. She sighed in relief and immediately gripped him in her palms, rubbing him up and down as he’d taught her to do.

He pulled her so that her ass hung on the edge of the leather seat and pressed her legs up to her ears.

“Hold ‘em up,” he commanded.

She obeyed like a child, her eyes eager and hungry for the fucking he was going to give her.

“Good girl.”

Thank you, Rolls Royce. He could appreciate the extreme luxury of this limousine now. He could fuck his baby comfortably in complete privacy while they drove on a busy road in the middle of Manhattan. The interior was sound-proof, the windows bullet-proof and heavily tinted not even their silhouette could be seen from the outside, while natural light filtered inside, giving him this perfect view—Janina’s beautiful pussy, wet and waiting to be fucked by his monster boner.

“Jared! Hurry!” she whined.

He grinned. “So impatient. You want me to shove all of this inside you now, baby?”

“Yes!”

He pointed his bulbous tip against her waiting entrance and entered her in one long stroke. Her little hole put a bit of resistance, but once he got the head in, it was smooth all the way to fucking Maryland.

He watched his entire length disappear inside her, and he almost couldn’t believe it. His little Nina was taking all of him with minimum foreplay. She was squeezing him, urging him to unleash the full power of his lust.

He banged her in long strokes. He’d been fucking her every chance he got every day since last week it was a wonder she wasn’t sore. Maybe it was because she was so wet, or maybe she wanted him so much she didn’t mind the soreness. Whatever, he wasn’t complaining.

He lifted her upper body so she could watch the hot action between them, too.

“Look, baby. Look how wet you’re bathing my cock with your cream. Do you know how delicious your tight pussy feels around my cock, babe? So fucking good I could live in here forever.”

He watched her face as she watched them fuck, her eyes going dazed, her mouth half-open as she chased her breath like she was having an asthma attack. He knew better, of course. She was close.

Then she was coming, her entire frame quivering, as she sobbed in ecstasy.

He hammered her, riding her orgasm, desperate for his own. His

buttocks flexed in his exertion, humping her faster and harder until he felt like her pussy and cock became one moving flesh, their blood rushing together, their heartbeats pounding as one.

He let out a feral growl as he came, spurting inside her like a teenager without control. It was almost painful and raw and so fucking glorious he saw white light swim before his eyes.

As he lost it all within her soft body, he swore that nothing except death could tear them apart.

“What’s in Maryland?” she asked him sleepily after her third orgasm.

He smiled in her hair as she lay sprawled on top of him on the plush leather seat, disheveled and thoroughly fucked.

“My family.”



THIRTEEN



The Absolution

THE LAST TIME JARED had been in his hometown was when he paid his first and only visit to Jamie's grave three months after Jamie's death. Nobody knew he was even in town. He'd left that same day. He hadn't attended Jamie's funeral either. He was in Germany getting treated for his wounds then, but he was glad for the excuse because he couldn't face Jamie's parents.

All these years, he hadn't allowed himself to grieve for his best friend. He just wanted to bury it all in the deepest part of him so that he would survive.

He had avoided coming back to the place where too many good memories remained unvisited. But Janina changed him.

Now he wanted to deal with the demons of his past.

Jamie's family lived just across the street from his own parents' house. The thought of seeing them again knowing he had caused the death of their only son was almost unbearable. They didn't know what happened because his missions with Jamie were all classified, but in his heart, he knew the truth. He couldn't bear to look in their eyes, receive their affection while his soul cried in silent guilt.

But he had to face them now. He had to go back to his past so he could face his future on a clean slate. He couldn't be carrying this kind of baggage as he took on a new life with Janina because he intended to make that life with her, make her his in every way that a man should be joined with his woman.



Janina's heart was breaking into pieces as she watched Jared grieve for his best friend.

Jamie died more than a decade ago but the way Jared wept, it seemed like it happened not so long ago. She would never have believed that Jared was capable of deep emotions until she saw his body shake as he touched Jamie's tombstone reverently.

She hugged him from behind, pressing her cheek on his back. He gripped her hands in his own tightly, as if drawing strength from her. She felt his suffering in the silent sobs wracking his powerful body.

He was baring his all to her, his deepest pain and biggest regret.

She was finally one with this Jared, and she just knew, this was the man she would spend the rest of her life with.



"Jared!"

The old woman's eyes widened in joy as she saw who was on her doorstep.

"Mrs. Carson, ma'am," he greeted her, his insides fluttering in apprehension.

She hugged him tightly. "Oh, Jared, I have missed you!"

He closed his eyes. How he'd missed this woman, too, his second mother. Jamie's mother.

She framed his face in her hands. "Boy, look at you! You're more handsome than the last time I saw you! And that was ages ago!"

Mrs. Carson's eyes were shining with joy. He wanted to cringe as the old guilt assaulted him, but he braved it. He had to do this.

"Levi! Come down here! Look who came to visit us!" Mrs. Carson shouted.

Seconds later, Mr. Carson came out. His face registered the same

surprise and then happiness when he recognized their visitor. “Jared?! Is that you, boy?!”

Jared forced himself to smile even as he felt like his jaw had locked from the pain clenching in his throat.

“Yes, it’s me, sir.”

The old man pulled him into a tight embrace, as well.

“It’s good to see you, boy! Where have you been all these years?”

He smiled tightly. “It’s a long story, Mr. Carson.”



Janina was right, Jared thought. He’d been castigating himself for far too long, underestimating humanity’s kindness and the power of understanding and forgiveness.

After telling Jamie’s parents how their son had died, they didn’t look at him with hate. They looked at him with regret. But not in the way he was thinking.

He knew this when Jamie’s mother reached out and wiped his tears, empathy in her eyes. “Oh, son. Oh, no, no, no. Oh, my poor boy.”

He felt it when she took him in her arms again and cried with him, telling him it was alright, that it wasn’t his fault.

When he asked for their forgiveness, Mr. Carson patted Jared’s back and told him there was nothing to forgive. That they were so proud of Jamie and him for joining the service, for sacrificing their own lives for their country.

He left the Carson residence a new man.



The moment they heard Jared was in town, his relatives who just lived nearby drove to the De Lucca house. Janina found out they were one happy, tight-knit clan. She wondered how Jared was able to bear not seeing them for a decade when he just lived three hours or so away. But she understood now, after witnessing Jared’s grief in the cemetery. That was a

catharsis for him, and she was glad she was there for him.

“Where’s Jared, *zia*?” Everyone had been asking about Jared for the past hour now, excited to see him.

“He went to the Carsons,” Martina De Lucca, Jared’s mother replied for the nth time. “And don’t go barging into the Carsons’, you guys. Jared would be back anytime soon.”

Jared’s cousin stomped out of the kitchen, grumbling about why Jared preferred to hang out at the Carson residence first than be with them.

Martina smiled at her. “They have missed him terribly.”

“I know.”

“Thank you for bringing him back to us, *bella mia*. We owe you.”

Martina’s words touched her.

Jared’s mother had welcomed Janina in the De Lucca home like she belonged in it. The house was a modest bungalow with a well-manicured front lawn and backyard. It would fit in the ten-car garage of her mansion but it was warm, full of life, and smelling of freshly baked cookies. God, she could live in this little house and never leave.

She’d been getting acquainted with Martina while they waited for Jared to come back. The old woman opened her life to her without hesitation. She spoke of her dead husband, Jared’s father, who died when Jared was just a teenager. She told her how her son, despite not coming home for years had always financially supported her and his siblings when they needed him. Martina had never remarried and just devoted her time to taking care of her children. Jared was the eldest. He had two younger brothers, Jorge and Julian, whom Janina met earlier. She also met their wives. Jorge’s wife was of German descent, and Julian’s wife was Thai. They all lived close to Martina’s house.

Martina had six grandchildren so far.

Janina was hoping she could add to that soon.

“When are you giving me my first *nipoti*?”

She looked at the old woman in puzzlement. “Sorry...?”

“My grandchild, *amore*. You and Jared must give me one or two soon.”

She felt her cheeks heat up. Could Martina read thoughts? “Uhm, actually, we’re working on that.”

“*Che bello!* My younger sons married in their early twenties and started popping *bambino* one after the other right away. The children grew up so fast. I want to take care of a little one again.”

Janina smiled. She really hoped she could pop out *bambinos* one after the other soon. She had yet to talk to Jared about it, but she was sure, it was in the bag.

They were interrupted by loud cheers and excited shouts from outside the house where the rest of the family had gathered around several picnic tables.

She knew Jared had come back from the Carsons.

She and Martina went to the balcony. Jared was engulfed in a hug after hug from more than a dozen De Luccas who were all ecstatic to see him again.

Jared met her eyes across the lawn.

He smiled at her. She smiled back.

There were no words needed between them. She saw it in his gaze. He loved her.

She made sure he saw it in her eyes, too, how much she loved him.

Jared was finally home, and with that, he’d gifted her with a new family, too.

Don’t worry about me, Dad. I’ll be okay. Godspeed, Dad. I will always love you.



Jared gritted his teeth to stop himself from coming.

Janina was rubbing his cock head around and around her incredibly wet pussy. She seemed to like it a lot, but he really didn’t have the patience for a lengthy cock-pussy rub at the moment. He’d been hard all night, watching her mingle with his family, looking like she’d known them all her life. He didn’t know life could still become this good for him. But it happened.

“How long does it take for you to find your sweet little hole, baby? I’ll find it in a split-second,” he complained as he licked her earlobe.

She giggled. “I know you’re a sharpshooter, darling, but this is nice... very very nice...” she purred as she drew circles on her clit leisurely using his cock as a paint brush. His balls were on fire, and he didn’t think he could last much longer.

He lifted his face and looked in her eyes. What did he do to deserve this precious gift?

Her face was awash with passion, but she was smiling, looking content as she played with him for her pleasure, forgetting she was torturing him. But he wouldn’t want it any other way. She could torture him to death like this. He knew he’d die the happiest man.

“I can’t believe how I’ve taken this inside me. Oh so big!” She gripped him harder, reveling in the suppleness of his cock.

“Thank you, but your pussy is the real champ, baby.”

She cupped his balls with her other hand and rubbed her wet folds against those, too.

He hissed and closed his eyes in pleasure. “If you keep doing that, I’ll come, Janina.”

“Jared...?”

“Uhhh,” he groaned, clenching his buttocks to keep himself from pumping in her hand.

“Do you think we could do this longer?”

He stilled and opened his eyes again. She was looking at him with this bliss on her face. “We can do this for as long as you want, baby.”

“No, I mean like...forever?”

His heart seemed to have stopped beating. Even his cock paid attention to what she was saying.

“Like you know...we don’t have to stop at one baby.”

His blood rushed back into his veins like a flood.

“If...you’re okay with that?”

He took over and hooked her legs over his arms, raising them high. He gripped the base of his cock and pointed it at her sopping entrance. Her arms went around his shoulders, bracing up for the ride she knew was coming, licking her lips.

“You can have this...me...for as long as you want, *cara*,” he pushed

in a firm stroke, burying half of his length inside her.

She gasped, her inner muscles clamping around him greedily.

“I will give you all the babies you want,” he fed her the rest of his thick inches and hit base-deep inside her.

“Oh, Jared...!”

He pulled out almost at the tip. “You can have me forever.” He pushed back in hard.

“Forever!” she gasped.

He began pounding her. “Yes, *cara*, forever and ever...!”

His emotions almost overwhelmed him as he lost himself in her, knowing she was lost in him, too. Her sweet cries echoed in the small guest room of his mother’s house, and he had to kiss her, so she won’t scream the whole house down and wake up the neighbors.

But really, he didn’t care if the whole world heard her, or him, as he sure as hell was making whipped dog sounds he didn’t know he was capable of as he neared the summit. Only Janina could bring him to these heights of pleasure, as if his life depended on it, as if his next breath meant his next thrust.

He framed her face in his palms. “Look at me, baby.”

She had difficulty focusing on him and he knew the feeling. He was close, so close...

But she focused on his face. So beautiful. His Janina. His baby. His woman. And it was the perfect moment to bare his soul to her to the fullest. But she beat him to it.

“I love you, Jared. I love you so much!”

Then she came, her eyes shutting closed tightly, her mouth emitting the sweetest cries of fulfillment.

He slammed one last time deep inside her and released his warm seed. He closed his eyes as pleasure wracked him, body and soul. He was lost, swimming in an incomparable bliss. But he was in a perfect place.

He slumped above her with his full weight, burying her deeper into the mattress, his cock, even deeper inside her.

“I love you, Nina. I’ve loved you forever.”

Her soft moan of contentment flowed into him, but he wondered if she

heard him as she became still under him, her breathing even.

He smiled. He'd been having at her all afternoon from New York to Maryland in the limo, only asking Marshall to stop at some gasoline station so they could use the bathroom or drive through some burger joint when they got hungry. Poor baby was wiped out.

He sighed and relieved her of his weight, settling beside her, enfolding her in his arms spoon-fashion. He couldn't wait to wake her up tomorrow with those words as he greeted her good morning with some good ol' loving.

He closed his eyes, and for the first time in his life since Jamie's death, he knew he was back where he truly belonged.

Into himself.

He felt whole again.



FOURTEEN



The Gift

JANINA'S CHEST EXPANDED in joy as her bodyguard who was also now her lover and the father of the baby she was carrying, walked into the conference room.

He looked extra-hot to her these days. Was it the fact that she already knew what was inside those tailored suits that always fitted him to perfection? Or was it the fact that she was now carrying his baby, the very essence of him, inside her? Or was it that she loved him more and more each day?

She knew why he came in unannounced. There was no way anybody could stop Jared when it concerned her and his unborn child.

"Excuse me, ladies, gentlemen, my woman has to take her meds," he said in a formal but unapologetic voice.

Jared's presence instantly commanded the entire room. Once, he also barged into a board meeting just to deliver her meds. No one, not even Donovan raised a brow. Jared had that effect on people. He was alpha through and through.

It was only with her when they were alone that Jared would drop all his tough-guy facade and act like a regular guy crazy with his woman. Nobody knew but her how soft and gentle Jared could be.

Nor do they know how hard he could get.

Damn her naughty thoughts. Her erogenous zones tingled at the mere thought. God, could she feel any more loved-up than she already did?

Her employees looked happy with the interruption. She'd been grilling them with their financial reports for three hours straight now. Since her ascension as the CEO of Fullerton Group, she went to serious business right away, and after three months, the board relaxed on her and let her do whatever she wanted.

Jared walked to her side and put the pillbox and a bottle of mineral water in front of her and a little box of her favorite cookies.

Thank you, darling," she said in a soft voice, only for his benefit.

He didn't even smile. He just nodded and waited for her to finish with her meds and quietly left with her pillbox, his fresh, masculine scent wafting in the air.

She watched in amusement as her female executives covertly followed him with their eyes until he'd walked out the door. She couldn't blame them. Jared was just panty-dropping hot. Add the fact that they knew he could kick ass probably added to his alpha appeal. Poor Donovan had not recovered from being talked about from the ground floor to the 37th as the poor guy whom the Big Boss' bodyguard beat to a pulp for sexually harassing her. Donovan had resigned and put his brother Mark as the new representative of their father on the board.

She rubbed her little bump gently. Yes, she had conceived almost immediately after she and Jared became intimate, fulfilling the codicil. Her bodyguard was a crack shot in the baby-making department, too.

Her phone dinged. She checked the message.

"Iv sumthing to giv u. Hry d F up."

Smiling, she responded. *"Gimme 30. Wat u hav 4 me?"*

"Smthng angry n red, big, shiny on top, a perfct 10. I knw ul luv it."

She couldn't help it. She burst out in a giggle. Her employees all looked at her, weirded out.

If they only knew that her stoic-looking, perpetually brooding bodyguard could talk panties off with just a few dirty words. Thank God, it was her panties he loved to take off whenever he felt like it.

The heck with this meeting. The Boss could take a break anytime she wished.

She grinned at them. "Ladies, gentlemen, we'll resume tomorrow."



The moment Jared had closed the door of the limo, Janina turned to him. Just looking at him could set her libido into overdrive. Must be her hormones changing. God, she was so wet, and she needed him right now. But he was calmly sitting in front of her and didn't look like he was feeling what she was feeling. It upset her.

She wet her lips. "Jared..."

"How was your meeting, *cara*?" he asked her casually. He wasn't giving her his usual horny look.

It was pissing her off big time. She glanced at his crotch and smirked. He could have fooled her with his nonchalance. There was no way he could hide that monster from her.

She knelt in front of him, placing her palms on top of his thighs.

"Janina, behave. We're going somewhere."

Her need was too strong. She touched his fly. He caught her hand and looked at her seriously. "No, *cara*," he said gently, but firmly. "I mean it. We're going somewhere first."

She went back to her seat, frustrated. What the hell was wrong with him? As the limo moved, she kept shooting him dagger looks.

"Seatbelt," he reminded her.

She strapped her seatbelt on. "Where are we going?" she grumbled, not hiding how pissed she was.

He gave her a mysterious smile. Then he fished out something from the inside pocket of his suit. "Here," he said, handing her an envelope.

She looked at him, puzzled. "What's this?"

"Read it."

She opened the envelope and read it. When she was done, she looked at him, her breath catching in her throat. "Jared...?"

"I hope that covers everything. I only want you, Janina. Just you and our children."

She couldn't speak. Her heart was beating on double time now. Jared just signed a prenup, notarized by one of her father's lawyers, Mr. Wilcox. Simply put, Jared wouldn't get anything from the Fullerton estate which was

all now in her name, if their marriage didn't work out.

But she would share everything with him, the silly man. Everything at all. All the material riches in the world meant nothing to her without Jared in her life.

Wait...Marriage? Did this mean...?

Jared went on his knees before her, took her hand in his and stared solemnly into her eyes.

Oh God... She held her breath.

"Janina Fullerton, will you give me the honor of becoming my wife?"

Her tears fell. "Oh, Jared!"

"Is that a yes?"

She jumped into his arms, embracing him tightly. "Yes! God, yes, yes, yes!"

He hugged her back. "I love you."

"I love you, too."

They remained like that for a few minutes, rocking each other, reveling in the moment.

"Now, don't you want to see my perfect ten?"

She immediately let go of him, her arousal kicking back to high gear. She sat back on the plush leather seat, opening her legs.

He grinned and opened a red velvet box in front of her.

She stared at the most beautiful ruby ring she'd ever seen.

He removed the ring from the box and put it on her ring finger.

"Ooooh Jared!" she gushed in awe. "It's so beautiful!"

"Angry red, big and shiny. 10 karats."

She was stupefied.

He gave her an innocent look. "Why, what were you thinking, baby?"

Her face was probably redder than her engagement ring.

He chuckled. "Now, do you think we can make you come within ten minutes before we arrive at the City Hall?" he said, his eyes now shining with wicked intention. His hands crept under her skirt.

"Jared, you're so bad!"

“But I really meant to give you this particular 10, baby.” He took her hand and brought it to his fly.

Her fingers curled over his hard length.

“We’ll do City Hall first, then we do it again wherever you want.”

His fingers were inside her panties now, at the center of her need.

She moaned in relief as he started petting her. “We can’t get a license that fast,” she said in between her gasps and moans as his fingers worked her like magic.

“I already filed our application online yesterday with the help of your secretary. All we need to do is show up today.”

“You got everything covered, hmm?”

“I can’t let this day pass without calling you mine in all sense.”

“Jared, will you do the honors of fucking me now?”

He burst out laughing. Then he was fumbling with his fly.

A second later, he was sliding his perfect 10 straight to her soul.



Several months later...

Jared teared up again as he held his baby girl in his arms. No words could describe how beautiful she was. How precious.

His heart felt like bursting with so much tenderness as he gazed at her little face. Emotions overwhelmed him. Tenderness that could turn him into a complete pussy over this little bundle. Joy so all-encompassing he was humbled to his knees. Love, ah so much love he could only thank the heavens every day. And fear. Oh God, this fear. How could he keep his baby girl safe all the time? He would probably die if something happened to her.

But he tried to keep his fear at bay. He didn’t want to ruin this happiness. His and Janina’s.

“I have a feeling she’s gonna be one spoiled rotten little princess.”

He glanced at his wife sitting on the bed. She just got home from the hospital. “Jealous, my love?”

She smirked. "She's all yours, Jared. I was a good girl, you know this. But this one will be your downfall."

He didn't know if he could still love her more than he already did. "No, *cara mia*. You were. You still are. Always will be."

The smile she gave him was priceless.

"What shall we name her?"

"Leticia Martinne."

He smiled. "I love it. I love you."

"I love you, too."



EPILOGUE



The Affirmation

JANINA STARED at the letter in her hand. It was addressed to her in her father's handwriting. It was given to her by Mr. Wilcox today, one of her father's trusted lawyers who took Mr. Jennings' place in administering her father's will.

Today was exactly one year since the codicil was read.

For some reason, she was afraid to open and read it, but Mr. Wilcox assured her there were no more surprise codicils from her father.

She left the study and walked back to her bedroom.

Sprawled naked on the bed on his stomach, Jared was a magnificent beast lying there in deceptive calm.

She knew how quickly he could move, how violent he could get. His raw, smoldering masculinity looked out of place among the frills of her peach bed covers and yet he looked right at home.

More amazing was the fact that their three-month-old daughter's crib was just beside him. Jared didn't want their baby to be in her own room yet despite modern technology. He was quite a hands-on daddy.

She stood beside the bed and scrutinized every inch of him. Even after all these months, having his baby and all, she still couldn't get over the fact that he was already her husband.

They got married in Baltimore, in the church where the De Luccas went as a family. They had a little party afterward at Martina's backyard. It

was a far cry from what New York society would have expected from the wedding of Nathan and Leticia Fullerton's only child, but she wouldn't have wanted it any other way. She liked her life uncomplicated. She might be doing a complicated job running a conglomerate, but at home with her little family, she wanted it simple. And happy.

Jared looked so perfect, even with the scars marring his back. She knew what they were. Those were caused the bullets he took for her and from his former profession as a soldier. Those scars were the reason why she was still alive today. If anything, they made him look more beautiful in her eyes.

His back was so broad she could use him as a bed. Her eyes traveled lovingly down his body, to his trim waist and his ass, and long, powerful-looking legs...back to his ass. Oh God, that ass. Firm and rounded she itched to bite the smooth globes. He had little body hair, except for a small smattering on his lower abs, and on his legs, and a neatly trimmed patch around his—

“Staring could get you places, *bellisima*.”

She smiled and joined him on the bed just as he turned on his back. She caught her breath. He had an impressive physique, but that big, bad cock could steal the show anytime. It lay hard and fully distended on his stomach, the tip reaching his navel. She licked her lips, her body reacting instantly.

“Like what you see?”

“Hmm,” she just said and moved to kneel between his legs. He opened them wider to accommodate her. She leaned over him and lay her arm on his belly, nestling his hardness between them.

She traced the jagged scars that adorned his skin on his front. Yes, these added more depth to his character. They were badges of his bravery. Jared was heroic in all sense, a real-life knight. A warrior of the modern times.

“I know they're ugly, *cara*—“

“Hush. They're beautiful.” She stared into his eyes. “You're beautiful, because these scars mean you saved lives. A lot of lives. Including mine.”

He swallowed, his eyes going darker.

“I don't think I've thanked you enough for that.”

He threaded his fingers on her hair. “You don't have to, *cara*. It was my duty.”

“No. Not everyone takes their duties to heart. But you...” She leaned

over and kissed the scar on his stomach. "You've taken your duty to heart all these years. For your countrymen. For me. Thank you, Jared."

"You're welcome, *cara*."

She picked up the letter which she put on the bed.

"What's that?" he asked.

"Dad's letter."

"I see. Have you read it?"

She shook her head.

"Why not?"

"I'm afraid. Will you read it with me? Please?"

He sat up on the bed and leaned back against the headboard. He pulled her so that her back was to his chest. He hugged her from behind, entwining their legs.

She sighed and opened the envelope and read her father's words.

My beautiful Janina,

I know by the time you read this, I'm already gone, but I'm absolutely sure there's a good man beside you to take my place and a little one in a cute crib. I'm so sorry I have to leave you sooner, my darling. I would like to stay longer very much to see my first grandchild, but my body is giving up, even as I'm writing this.

Forgive me for that codicil. I had no choice but to force the circumstances, but I also knew, it wouldn't be forcing you at all. I was only fast-tracking destiny because your knight was a stubborn one and you're too busy working to notice how smitten he's always been with you.

I know you're reading this, too, Jared. That codicil is your fault. But it was just as well that you rejected my offer. I knew my daughter would move heaven and earth to make my fondest wish come true. I know you love her. I'd known for a long time. Thank you for everything, Jared. Janina is all yours now.

You take care of each other. Fill that big house with a football team. I'll be fine where I'm going. I hope it's where I think it would be. God, I miss your mother, Janina. I'll always love you, my princess.

Your father,
Nathan

Silence reigned in the room for a few minutes. Janina couldn't help her tears from falling, but they were of joy than sadness. She just missed her father so much.

She turned so that she could look in Jared's face.

His eyes had gone moist, too.

"Dad talked to you before?"

He nodded. "He asked me...he asked me to make a move on you when his condition started to deteriorate."

"And you said no?"

"Uhm.." He was blushing. "*Cara...*"

"I feel offended, De Lucca," she teased him.

He completely missed her humor. "Baby, no. I was...afraid."

"Afraid?"

"Yes."

"You were afraid of me?"

"I was afraid you'd..." he sighed. "You're young and I'm...you have so many options. Why would you...why would you want me?"

She stared at him. Her heart melted. A man as powerful as Jared feeling insecure was just adorable. "Oh Jared, seriously?"

He shrugged, looking guilty.

"You thought I didn't want you? De Lucca, I'd probably had a crush on you since you rescued me. All the boys in high school didn't hold a candle to you. All the guys in college didn't have your aura."

A smug smile appeared on his lips. "My aura? What's my aura?"

She rolled her eyes. "Fishing, husband?"

He grinned knowingly and folded his arms behind his head. His biceps bulged. "Maybe it's you who has a big fish to catch, wife."

"Hmm, let's see," she naughtily peeked between them. She gasped

exaggeratedly. “Look what we got here! A sperm whale!”

He chuckled. “Janina, such language,” he chided her.

She widened her eyes innocently. “Me? But it’s true. I’ll show you.”

She gripped him with her hands and started loving him with her touch. She was rewarded by his masculine grunts and groans.

Oh, how she loved watching him take pleasure from her. She could orgasm from watching his face in the throes of passion alone.

Nowadays, Jared was an open book she could easily read. And this was a story she’d never get tired of reading.

Forever.



ARABELLA RAE'S



SCORCHING HOT, ALL-CONSUMING LOVE STORIES

Welcome to my fantasy world!

Hi. I'm Arabella. If you love all-consuming, scorching-hot romances that defy all odds and require you to suspend disbelief at some point, I'm your go-to romance author. I like my hero super-alpha— sometimes wearing designers and lording over a business empire, sometimes looking like a grease-monkey while fixing your car, sometimes a scary-shit, battle-scarred warrior wielding a submachine gun or a broadsword. But you know what he is deep down? (aside from his impressive 10 down south of course:) He's a real man capable of deep love and loyalty for his woman. Oh, he can be a smooth-talker or a filthy-mouthed bastard, and he'll really get on your nerves most times, and definitely in your panties all the time, but he'll conquer your heart before you even realize it, forever.

I have to tell you from the word go. I love writing "insta-loves" featuring older, very possessive and dominant heroes, and younger, feisty, virginal heroines. Or the reverse!

Yeah, those stories concocted by sexually hyperactive minds and patronized like junkies by equally sexually-hyperactive minds. Mostly I like them traditional— no cheating; no extreme violence or black-hole darkness; no inhumane and degrading scenes. But sometimes they crop up here and there, scenes with dubious consent, nothing too brutal, though; just to add extra spice to the story. But all in all, I like my romances sweet, sickeningly so most times, and hot, like set-your-panties-on-fire-call-the-firefighters hot.

Last warning: stay away if you are squeamish of too much sugar, cream, AND CHERRIES!

There is definitely HEA of HFN in every book.



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