



**THE BASKETBALL
PLAYER'S**

Obsession

emma bray

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CHAPTER ONE

Jesse

“GREAT GAME TODAY, JESSE, MAN.” One of my teammates high-fives me, and then we all hold our beers up and clink them together.

I scored the winning goal, but I toast to the entire team because it was a team effort. I might have scored the last goal that tipped us over the edge, but no basketball game can be won without the effort of the entire team, and I’m not one to take all the credit.

I tip my beer back to drink to a job well done.

I nearly choke on the brew, pausing mid-guzzle when I spot the most beautiful angel I’ve ever seen in my entire life.

She’s tall for a girl, but nowhere near as tall as me. Of course, there aren’t many people who are as tall as me at six foot six. That’s why I play basketball. I’m just built for the sport and happen to be good at it.

I’d put this beauty around five foot seven. She has long red hair that flows all the way down to an impossibly tiny waist. Her head is tossed back as she laughs at something a man to her left says, and I know it’s irrational, but I’m instantly jealous of the guy who can elicit such a sound from her.

I lower my beer, my eyes still pinned on the beautiful goddess in front of me.

I hear the rest of the team still buzzing and clapping each other on the backs, but I'm over the game now. I plant my beer on the counter and start making my way through the bar over to the redheaded beauty.

I don't know who the guy with her is, but at this point, I don't even give a fuck if it's her boyfriend. This girl is *mine*. I know it deep down inside me. If I have to pry her away from another man, I will. I'm willing to fight for her.

"Hey, beautiful," I say just as I come up behind her. I try not to be so obvious about it, but I can't help inhaling the scent of her hair. Like fresh berries.

She turns and raises an eyebrow at me coolly while the guy with her grins as he looks between us. My brow furrows in confusion. Do they have some sort of open relationship? Just what the hell's going on here? This isn't exactly the reaction I was expecting from the man who has this beauty.

"Do I know you?" she asks, knowing damn well she doesn't.

I smirk and take a step closer to her. "No, but you should. I definitely want to rectify that."

The guy standing next to her chokes on his drink before he gives her a wink and says, "Well, I'll see you later, sis."

I instantly relax when I find out he's her brother.

"Nate!" she calls after him. "Where are you going?"

He just holds a hand up in a backward wave to her.

She huffs and then turns to me with crossed arms.

I grin down at her, taking in her beautiful golden eyes. Fuck, everything about her is perfect, from her flawless complexion to her puffy pink lips.

"What's your name, beautiful?"

"You first," she quips back, and I smile fully. She's a sassy one, and I'm loving everything about it. My cock twitches as I can't help imagining what a little hellcat she'd be in bed.

"Jesse Hamilton."

Her eyes don't widen in recognition, so I assume she doesn't follow sports. For some reason, I like that she's not one of those women who's going to throw herself at me just because of my fame or fortune. It's obvious this girl has no clue who I am, and there's a certain freedom in that.

"Now your turn I prompt her."

"Cindy," she grudgingly admits.

"Cindy what?" I prompt her for her last name.

She just gives me that cool glance, and I laugh. "Okay, you want to make me work for it. I lean in close to her until my lips are right by her ear, her berry scent wrapping around me like a drug, "You should know that hard work and perseverance are my strongest traits."

Her lips twitch, and my smile widens. I decide then and there it's going to be my mission to make her laugh the way her brother did. "Let me buy you a drink, Cindy whoever."

She shakes her head and politely declines, "I was just leaving."

My chest tightens at the thought of her getting away. "Well then, let me walk you home."

She shakes her head again and steps away from me. "No need. I came in a cab."

"Well then, let's share a cab together."

She holds her hands up and tells me firmly, "Look, I'm just not interested, okay?"

I'm so shocked by her outright refusal all I can do is stare after her as she walks away from me. I can't help but notice how that pretty blue dress clings to every curve of her body as if to torment me with visions of what she's saying I can't have.

I've never been the kind of guy who doesn't take no for an answer, but something about Cindy pulls at me. I saw the twinkle of interest in her eyes before she banked it.

Oh, she's interested all right—whether she'll admit it to herself or not.

I can't just let her walk away without knowing more about her. There's something deep in my gut telling me she's the one—she's *mine*—and I've always listened to my gut.

So, I do something I've never done before.

I follow her.

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CHAPTER TWO

Cindy

“BY THE WAY, I’m going to murder you the next time I see you. Just so you know.”

My brother’s laugh grates on my nerves over the phone, but then he cuts himself off. “Wait, what are you doing calling me? Why aren’t you with Jesse Hamilton?”

My brow furrows. “You knew that guy?”

Nate lets out another raucous round of laughter right in my ear. “Cindy, he’s only the best basketball player on the court nowadays. If you ever turned on your TV, you would know that.”

I sniff. “I don’t care who he is. I’m not interested.”

I can practically see Nate shaking his head through the phone. “Man, only my sister would have the audacity to turn down the most famous basketball player in the nation. Do you realize how many girls would kill to be in your position, Cindy?”

I flip my hair over my shoulder as I put my brother on speakerphone and start getting undressed for bed. “All the more reason to *not* give him the time of day,” I point out sensibly.

If he has hoes throwing themselves at him left and right, I certainly don’t want to be mixed up in all that.

Nate groans over the phone. “You’re impossible, Cindy. When are you going to put yourself out there and give someone a chance?”

“Never,” I deadpan. “I’m perfectly happy with my life the way it is now.”

Nate sighs on the other end of the line, and I brace myself for what I already know is coming.

Sure enough, his voice becomes more serious as he starts in softly, “Cindy, everyone’s not like our father, and you’re not meant to be alone. You’re so beautiful, and you’re smart and funny and witty...”

I cut him off, “Save me the TED Talk, Nate. I’ve heard it all before.”

He lets out another long sigh, “It’s just the way Jesse Hamilton was looking at you...I’ve never seen the guy show that much interest in any girl before.”

I can’t deny the flutter that takes flight in my belly at Nate’s words. As much as I might try to deny it, Jesse is the hottest guy I’ve ever seen. I’m tall, but he even towered over me and made me feel tiny.

And the way his dark hair fell over his forehead and the way those emerald-green eyes glittered down at me...

My heart starts to pitter-patter away when I remember it.

And god, those muscles...I could see them straining underneath his shirt, as if it was all the fabric could do to contain them.

I shake my head as if to physically clear the memory from my mind. “It doesn’t matter, Nate. I’m just not interested in dating right now.”

“You’ve never been interested,” Nate points out stubbornly.

He just won’t let it go.

“Cindy...” he tries again, and I finally snap at him.

“Why don’t you worry about your own non-existent love life instead of always meddling in mine?”

Nate is quiet for a long moment, and I pinch the bridge of my nose, already feeling guilty for snapping at him when I know he just means well and is worried about me. “Look, Nate, I know you’re just in big brother mode and you want the best for me, but you don’t have to try to fill his shoes.”

An ache forms deep inside me at the thought of the father who up and left us when I was only eight years old. Nate was thirteen.

Our mother died of cancer, and our father may as well have died when she did because he turned to the bottle. And then one day he just left us. We were put in the foster system because of him.

We did a people search on him a few years ago and found out that he’s still alive. All this time he was still alive, and he just abandoned us. He never came back to check on us.

It’s not like he’s really moved on either. To make matters worse, I think he just lives on the street and stays drunk all the time. It’s really sad, but I can’t find it in me to conjure up any sympathy for the man who made our childhood hell by leaving us. We’d already lost one parent. We needed him, and he turned his back on us.

Yeah, so maybe I’ve got abandonment issues. Maybe I’ve got some daddy issues too. Why would I want to get into a relationship with that kind of baggage? Who wants to deal with that?

I’m doing just fine on my own, and Nate can throw stones at me all he wants, but while he does have a very active dating life, the shelf life of the girls he dates is usually less than two weeks.

He might not want to admit it, but he’s just as fucked up by our childhood as I am.

I don’t get into all that with him though. “Look, I’m just tired. I had a long day at the salon, and I’m glad we went out

for drinks, but my head is pounding now, and don't you have to get up early for your big game tomorrow?"

Thankfully, Nate drops it and agrees with me, "Yeah, I do, sis. You get some rest. If you need me, you know I'm always here."

I can't help the tiny smile that stings my lips. Nate is a good big brother if nothing else. "I know," I tell him softly. "Hit a home run for me tomorrow, okay?"

"You bet your ass I will," he laughs. I'm glad Nate is doing something that he loves and is good at. Baseball helps take his mind off everything. He had to grow up too soon to try to take care of me, and I can't help feeling guilty about that sometimes.

"Goodnight, big bro."

When we hang up, I finally fall into bed, completely exhausted.

As I drift off to sleep, the last thing I see in my mind's eye are emeralds set beneath dark brows and a strong jawline with a sinfully sensual mouth.

I don't want to, but I dream of Jesse Hamilton all night.

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CHAPTER THREE

Jesse

I CAN'T BELIEVE I'm still sitting outside Cindy Crews' apartment like a psycho stalker. I've been parked out here all night because what was the point in going home? There was no way I was going to be able to sleep a wink.

Better yet, I just couldn't bring myself to pull away from the curb. I've sat here staring at her window, transfixed, even though her blinds are shut. I've been pining for even a glimpse of her silhouette when she passes in front of the window with a light on.

Of course, the light has been off for hours now as she sleeps. The sun is just starting to rise along the horizon, and I should be feeling tired, but I'm not. It's like I'm high and she's the hit I took.

I've never felt this way before, and fuck it. I'm just going with it. I'm not even trying to fight it. Every atom in my body is screaming at me to claim this girl before she gets away.

I spent all night on my phone doing a thorough search on her. I found out her last name. I found out that she's twenty-one and works at one of the hippest hair salons in the city.

Her brother—the guy I saw her with last night—is an up-and-coming baseball star. I thought the guy looked familiar. I don't follow baseball much, but I've definitely seen him around—at least on TV. There wasn't much else I could find

out about her since she doesn't appear to have any social media.

Which is odd yet somehow refreshing. Most chicks nowadays stay glued to their phones posting selfies online, but I like that my girl is more private and that she doesn't appear narcissistic doing all that.

She's for my eyes only. All of her.

I sit up in my seat when she finally emerges from the apartment building. My chest squeezes painfully at the sight of her. Fuck, she's even more beautiful than I remember.

That long red hair flows down to her waist. I can see the golden hue of her eyes all the way from over here.

She's slim and lithe. She's not so tiny that we will look comical standing next to one each other. I wouldn't care how tall she is, though. I want her like I've never wanted anything in my entire life. I want to jump out of my car and run over to her. Take her out to breakfast for coffee. Walk her to work. Hell, anything just to be near her.

I hold myself back, though, not wanting to scare her off by coming on too intense too soon. Instead, I pick up my phone and send her a text.

Me: Good morning, beautiful. Let me take you out to lunch today.

I watch as she digs in her purse and frowns as she reads my text.

The little bubbles on my screen start dancing up and down.

Cindy: Who is this?

Me: I told you I didn't mind working for it.

I watch her pause before she finally types again.

Cindy: Jesse.

My heart flips in my chest like she physically said my name. I'm dying to hear it spoken in her pretty little voice.

I type back.

Me: Cindy.

I see her lips twitch as she looks up and shakes her head before she starts typing again.

Cindy: How did you get my number?

Me: It's amazing the things you can find on the internet.

She tucks her tongue into the side of her cheek and shakes her head again before her fingers start flying over her screen once more.

Cindy: Sorry, stalker, I'm booked up today. You really need to just lose my number. This is not going to turn out how you want it to.

Stalker. Man, if she only knew how right on the mark she is.

Me: I can be patient.

It's a lie. I can't. I can't be patient when it comes to her.

Me: How about tomorrow or the next day? Or just whenever you're free?

She looks down at her phone again and pauses before she finally stuffs it back in her purse without answering me.

My jaw hardens. She's going to be a tougher nut to crack than I thought, but what she doesn't realize is that when I want something—when I *really* want something—I don't give up.

And what I want is *her*.

I already know where she works, but I follow her in my car anyway to make sure she gets there safely. I don't like the thought that she walks to work every day. Anything could happen to her.

She says she's completely booked up, and that doesn't look like a lie. I watch as her clients start showing up, a plan already hatching in my mind.

I've got to be in her presence again today, and *nothing's* going to stop me.

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CHAPTER FOUR

Cindy

THIS DAY CAN'T END FAST ENOUGH. More than once, I catch my customers giving me a dubious look, and I have to school my face into a smile instead of the frown it wants to keep settling into.

Not only did I dream of Jesse Hamilton and his big muscles and dark hair and green eyes all night, but then I woke up to a text from the guy.

Damn technology and the lack of privacy it gives us. I'm not on social media because I like to keep all of my shit private, and yet this infuriatingly arrogant, cocky basketball player who won't take no for an answer is able to type my name into a simple online people search and get my cell phone number? How the fuck is something like that legal?

I hate myself for how many times I check my phone expecting another text from him, but I never see one. And while that fills me with a rush of relief that maybe he's gotten the picture and he's going to drop it, why does it also cause my stomach to drop?

I don't actually want Jesse to keep pursuing me because it would end disastrously and make me look like a bitch when I keep shooting him down.

Because there's no way in hell I'm actually going to go on a date with anyone, much less someone as famous and in the spotlight as him. I don't need anyone, especially not some guy

like him who has so many women throwing themselves at him. He'd definitely get bored and leave me at some point.

If I'm not enough for my own father to stick around, why would I be enough for a famous basketball player who has countless prospects?

I can hear my brother's voice in my head right now, berating me for that type of thinking, but I can't help it. That's just how I feel.

No, it's better to not get attached to anyone because then you don't have to worry about them abandoning you. I have everything I need. I have a great job that I usually enjoy—that I would be enjoying today were it not for one infuriating basketball player who's invaded my thoughts.

I also have my brother, as overbearingly well-meaning and protective as he can be. What more could a girl need?

This girl right here doesn't need anything else.

I try not to sigh when I look at the clock and see that it's not even noon yet. Usually, my work keeps me so busy that I'm surprised when lunchtime rolls around. I'm usually never counting the minutes till I get a break, but today I am. I feel like I need time to recompose myself and push Jesse out of my mind.

I check my appointment book after I finish the last cut and almost sigh in relief when I see my next client is a male one.

My female clients are fussier and usually want more intricate cuts, but Ralph isn't fussy at all, and his cut is simple to do. Once I get his done, then it'll be time for lunch.

I dust off the chair and get my station cleaned up for him before I walk out into the front and call out his name.

I frown whenever suddenly a figure I would know anywhere stands up from a chair in the waiting room.

Jesse fucking Hamilton. What the hell is he doing here?

He comes striding over to me, and I cross my arms over my chest and give him a cool glance as my heart skyrockets in my chest. "I'm sorry. Since when is your name Ralph?"

I cock my head at him and say in my politest “fuck you” voice.

Jesse just grins infuriatingly down at me before he smirks. “Ralph had to take a rain check.”

The steel note I hear in Jesse’s voice has me narrowing my eyes at him suspiciously. “You better not be running off all my clients,” I warn him.

“He graciously offered to let me take his spot,” Jesse says noncommittally. I’m not stupid, though. I know there’s more to the story than that.

Jesse splays his hands open, and I inwardly fume, knowing that I can’t turn him away without really pissing my boss off.

I motion for Jesse to follow me and turn without saying another word to him. My heart is pitter-pattering away in my chest, and I hate how flushed I’m getting all over, knowing the close proximity I’m going to be with him.

I’m going to have my hands on him. He’s going to be staring up at me the whole time.

How am I going to survive this?

Jesse sits down in the chair with a shit-eating grin on his face, his eyes predictively never leaving me. He looks like the cat that got the canary.

“It doesn’t look like you need a cut yet,” I grumble.

His smile only widens as he agrees with me. “I cut isn’t what I’m after.”

I hear the innuendo dripping in his words, and I pause in my shuffle through my combs. When I get my flaming cheeks under control, I finally pull one out and run it through his perfect locks, trying to keep my voice as professional as possible. He closes his eyes as if he’s reveling in my touch, and it makes me pause.

“So, just what are you doing here, Jesse?”

His eyes snap open when I say his name, instantly capturing mine in the mirror. We stare at one another, and I try

my best not to squirm under the intensity of his gaze.

“A shampoo.”

I raise a skeptical eyebrow. “You came in just for a shampoo? What, you can’t wash your own hair?”

“I came in to see you,” he says bluntly, “and I’ll do whatever it takes to get your hands on me.”

My cheeks flame at his shamelessness. I can’t speak, so I just snap the cloak around him and then lower his head into the sink where I start to run warm water over his head. I’m tempted to turn the water all the way to cold at the twinkling mirth in his eyes, but that would just be mean.

Plus, something tells me he’d probably laugh in my face.

He closes his eyes and moans when my fingers run through his hair. It’s a sound that sends wetness pooling between my legs, and I can’t help it. I bite my lip as I peek a glance at his face while his eyes are closed. God, the man really is a work of art. It’s like when the universe made him, it wanted to make sure he would drive every female on the planet insane.

He’s perfectly sculpted, every inch of him. My cheeks flame when his eyes flutter open. He smirks when he catches me looking at him, a smug look on his face that my fingers itch to slap off.

I squirt some shampoo on my hands and then lather up his head. He doesn’t close his eyes again. I glance back down at him and see his eyes pinned on my face, causing my cheeks to heat again, especially when his gaze roves leisurely over the column of my throat and down to my slightly plunging neckline.

I angle my torso back to keep from flashing him my cleavage and bra. He smirks at me knowingly.

“You’re incorrigible,” I can’t help grinding out.

He laughs. “And you’re irresistible.”

My lips twitch, but I press them together to keep from smiling. I don’t want to encourage him.

Dammit, why is he doing this? Why is he pushing this when I already told him no? Why is he making me feel all these things I don't want to feel?

I finish washing and rinsing his hair and then lightly dry it with a towel. I pick up a hairdryer to dry it and style it for him, but he stays my wrist by capturing it gently in his large hand.

“Let me take you to lunch.” His voice is imploring, and when I look into his eyes, they're looking at me so softly and tenderly, it causes my breath to catch.

“I have lunch in the back,” I tell him weakly.

His eyes ignite with something I can't identify before he suggests huskily, “Well then, let me have lunch here with you. Hell, I don't even care about eating, Cindy. I just want to talk to you. Is that so much to ask?”

I hesitate, and he takes full advantage of it, hopping up out of the chair and taking my hand. He pulls me to the back of the salon like he already knows where everything's at.

I'm so stunned I let him pull me along until we're in the little kitchenette. He walks over to the fridge and pulls out my salad. How does he already know which one is mine?

Before I get a chance to ask him, he pops the top off of it and pours the little cup of dressing on it.

He forks a bite out and holds it up to me.

I stare at him incredulously. “You're not serious.”

He is.

“You need to eat. I'm just helping you out.”

I try to take the fork from him. “I can feed myself, Jesse.”

He pulls the fork away from me, his eyes twinkling. “No, the only way you're going to eat is if you let me do it.”

I glare at him and press my mouth firmly shut.

He stares back at me with a frown before his voice deepens. “I couldn't stop thinking about you all night and wondering what your sweet pussy tastes like.”

My mouth falls open at his bluntness. He smirks and stuffs a bite of salad in my mouth.

I glare at him as I have no choice but to chew the bite and swallow.

He laughs at his victory.

“You bastard,” I hiss at him and try to grab the fork from his grasp again, but he holds it out of my reach.

His arms are too long, and he’s too fast. I can’t snag it from him.

“Give me my lunch,” I order him as sternly as I can.

He forks another bite of salad and holds it up to my mouth stubbornly. “I’m trying to, you stubborn woman.”

I scoff. He really has the audacity to call *me* the stubborn one.

He reads the thoughts on my face and grins before he shrugs. “I can do this all day, baby. I’m not letting you leave here until you let me feed you every bit of this salad.”

I can tell the lunatic means what he says, so I grudgingly open my mouth and let him feed me like a child.

He holds my eyes the entire time, except for when they flick down to my lips and darken.

I don’t even taste the food. All I can focus on is him and how this is way too intimate. Somehow, it’s more intimate than if he kissed.

When I’m done, he gathers the tray up and takes it over to the sink. I watch wordlessly as he washes it up for me and then dries it.

I can’t figure out what to make of him or why he’s so stubbornly inserting himself into my life.

I glance over at the clock. Dammit, this was supposed to be my time to get him off my mind, and yet he’s taken it all up and only inserted himself even further into my thoughts.

“I’ve got to get back to work,” I tell him.

“No, you don’t.” He stops me by looping a hand around my waist and pulling me closer to him.

I tilt my head up to meet his gaze. He tries to pull me flush against him, but I lay my palms on his chest to keep our chests from meeting.

“Yes, I do,” I tell him firmly. “I’m booked solid for the rest of the day.”

He shakes his head. “No, you’re not.”

I glare at him. “I think I know what my schedule says, Jesse.”

His jaw firms. “And I think every cut you had lined up this afternoon was for male clients, so I bought them out.”

My mouth falls open. “You what?”

“I paid them off to reschedule with another hairstylist.” His voice holds no regret.

My voice comes out shrill with my incredulity. “You’re going to make me lose all my clients!”

The big, handsome idiot just shrugs. “I’ll pay you for every client you lost. I’ll pay you more than they would have paid you in a year. I just don’t want you putting your hands in another man’s hair. Cut all the women’s hair you want.”

I stare at him. “Are you insane?”

“Probably,” he deadpans. “I’m definitely crazy when it comes to you.”

“I don’t know who the hell you think you are, but you can’t just come in here and—”

I never get to finish my sentence because suddenly a growl tumbles up out of Jesse’s throat. He grabs both sides of my face and then smashes his lips down onto mine.

My heart leaps into my throat, and my eyes flutter closed as heat engulfs my entire body.

Holy fucking moly.

CHAPTER FIVE

Jesse

STRAWBERRIES. She tastes like the sweetest fucking strawberries. Strawberries are suddenly my favorite fruit because I can't get enough of her.

I deepen the kiss, thrusting my tongue deeper into her mouth, seeking hers out, coaxing it to twine with mine.

The way she hesitantly kisses me back shows her inexperience, and that sets my heated blood coursing through my veins. I like discovering that she's not an experienced kisser. It makes me crazy to imagine anyone else ever kissing her, much less being inside her.

I don't even want to ask her about any previous boyfriends. I'll probably go off the rails and want to hunt every single one of them down for daring to touch what has always been *mine*.

Cindy is mine whether she knows it or not.

I realize this is crazy thinking, but I truly am crazy when it comes to her. There's something about her that makes me unable to control myself.

She whimpers into my mouth, and it's the sweetest sound I've ever heard. My cock is instantly hard, pushing insistently against the zipper of my jeans.

Her arms wind around my neck, her fingers finding purchase in my hair, and my chest swells in victory as I pull

her flush against me and crush her little breasts against my chest.

I growl into the kiss as I press my rock-hard erection into her stomach, letting her feel how much I want her, what she does to me.

I've never been this hard up for anyone in my entire life.

I whisper her name against her lips. "My sweet, beautiful Cindy."

I can't help claiming her as mine. I want to claim her with words. I want to claim her with my body. I want to possess every inch of her from her beautiful lips and that sweet little cunt to deep inside her soul.

I want us so entwined together, no one will ever be able to pry us apart.

She makes a mewling sound, and I can't help myself. "Say my name," I beg her. "I need to hear you whimpering my name in that needy little voice of yours."

Surprisingly, she doesn't fight me. Instead, she whispers, "Jesse."

It's like kerosene on a fire. The flames within me blaze so hot I fear they'll consume us both.

I groan as I hoist her up and onto the table. I hold her with my hands splayed across her back as I devour her mouth like a man dying of thirst. I could drink from her sweet lips forever. I could live off of her strawberries. All I need to go along with it is some of her cream.

I yank her shirt up and pull down her bra, exposing the pretty little strawberries of her nipples.

"Fuck me," I whisper reverently before I descend upon them, licking and sucking on them in turn.

She holds her hands against the back of my neck, her head thrown back, a glazed look in her eyes, her body quivering, and I can't wait any longer.

She's like molten lava in my arms. I know she feels this electric current zinging between us. It's like fireworks.

I slip down her flimsy little leggings until they're pooled around her pretty little boots.

I kiss the back of her calves while I hurriedly pull myself from my pants. My throbbing length bobs out, and I feel the precum leaking out of my tip and traveling along my length. I hurriedly smear it across my head and stroke up and down, quickly lubricating myself and getting ready for her.

"Fuck, I need you like I've never needed anything else," I admit, my voice rough and gritty.

Cindy surprises me by pulling my head back down to hers, initiating the kiss. It makes my heart damn near burst with happiness that she wants this too. I can't believe this beautiful, gorgeous redhead is kissing me back like this.

I align my throbbing length up with her dripping wet hole and then plunge into her velvet heat in one deep thrust.

Her arms and legs tighten around me almost painfully as she cries out.

I hiss in a breath as stars dot my eyes. *Motherfuck!* "Fuck, baby. You're the tightest thing I've ever felt."

She's so tight. Fuck, almost too tight. I go completely still as I look down between us and pull back slightly.

She winces, and I see the blood on my cock. Realization hits me like a freight train. "You're a virgin?"

Her cheeks flame as she nods her confirmation.

"Fuck, Cindy, baby. Why didn't you tell me?" I cup her cheeks gently as I push back inside her. She winces and whimpers at the sensation, so I still, not wanting to heighten her pain.

Fuck, it's taking every ounce of my control to remain still, though.

I drop kisses all over her face and forehead and neck, my chest swelling with emotion at the thought that she's mine,

only mine. No other man has ever been inside her and none ever will.

“Baby, you should have told me. I’d have gone slower with you. I was too rough. Damn me.”

She smiles at me softly as she says shyly, “I’m okay. You’re just really big and...just give me a minute to get used to it.”

I continue kissing her, unable to stop myself. Just like I can’t stop myself from whispering everything in my heart against her skin, “You’re so perfect. So precious. Made for my cock.”

She glows under my praise and buries her head in my neck shyly. A surge of protectiveness wells up within me. This girl is everything. I’ll do anything for her now. She’s mine. Mine to love, Mine to protect. Just *mine*.

I groan when I feel her little pussy clench around me and tentatively slide out and push back in, carefully watching her for any sign of pain.

She doesn’t wince this time. Instead, she closes her eyes and lifts her little hips up to mine. I see the pleasure on her face, and relief floods my chest, especially when she moans, her eyelids fluttering closed.

“More, Daddy!”

I still, and her eyes snap open, her cheeks heating as she realizes what she just said. “Oh my god. I’m so sorry! I don’t know where that came from—”

I cut her off by slamming my lips down onto hers. I’ve never been into anything like that. But fuck if it doesn’t just fit for her. I am her daddy. I’m the one who’s going to watch over her and solve her problems.

“Baby girl,” I whisper against her lips, “just lay there and let Daddy make you feel good.”

I feel the way she clenches around me when I call myself “daddy.” Fuck yes. If that’s what this girl needs, I’m more than

happy to give it to her, and I feel myself swell in response, getting even harder. It's turning me on too.

Fuuuuck.

I try to stroke in and out of her slowly and make it as good as possible for her first time, but she's *so* tight. I quickly lose control and begin rutting into her harder and deeper like an animal in heat.

She clings to me, and when I feel her throwing her hips up at me, fucking me back, it sends my climax rushing up my stalk.

"Fuck, I need you to be a good girl and come for daddy, baby," I beg her, my words coming out slurred. I'm so high on her body I can hardly think straight. I'm not going to be able to hold on much longer, and I *need* to feel her fall apart on me before I let myself go.

I lick my thumb and pass it over her clit. All it takes is that one light touch, and I feel her detonate, her pussy fluttering around me like a beautiful rose flowering open.

My cock slips even deeper than before. I feel the head of my dick pressing against her cervix, and as soon as it kisses it, I bust, flooding my potent seed inside her.

I didn't even ask if she was on birth control, and I never thought about using protection. There was no way I wanted anything separating her from me.

I start coming harder at the thought of getting her pregnant and push myself even deeper inside her. Fuck, I *want* to see her belly swollen with my child. I don't give a fuck if it's fast. If it'll chain her to me forever, yes, that's what I want.

I'm still dumping loads of cum into her when she goes completely lax in my arms. I catch her as she falls back and then lift her so that I'm holding her against my chest with her head burrowed into my neck.

I stroke the top of her head and run my fingers through that beautiful red hair.

"Mine," I whisper with my cock still buried inside her.

Cindy is mine, and I'm never going to let her go.

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CHAPTER SIX

Cindy

I DON'T KNOW what to do. I'm a wreck for the rest of the day, fumbling through the walk-in appointments that come in. I try my best to give my clients my full attention, but my mind keeps wandering back to the way Jesse took my virginity on the table in the back room over lunch.

The way he called me *his*. The way I felt so safe and secure in his arms. The way I called him daddy and the way that seemed to make him even more crazed.

He kissed me several times before he finally reluctantly left. He has to practice. He made me promise not to cut any men's hair, which is totally freaking ridiculous, so I don't know why I heard myself agree to it. Maybe it's because I was still in that delirious, just-lost-my-virginity-to-the-hottest-guy-ever state.

He's got me completely fuck struck, and that scares me because I know it's more than that. He's not only fucked me physically. He's fucked me on an emotional level, and I can already feel myself getting attached to him. I hate to admit it, but I miss him even now.

And that's terrifying because I know when he eventually leaves me, it's going to destroy me. I don't think I can handle it. That's why I've got to stop this before it even begins.

As soon as work is over, I head to me and my brother's favorite bar, but then I immediately wish I hadn't come here

because all I can think about is how this is where I met Jesse.

Some random guy comes up to me and offers to buy me a shot. I give him a quick once over. He's not bad looking, but he's no Jesse. In fact, he's the complete opposite of Jesse with his blonde hair and blue eyes.

It's not like I'm looking to get laid, but maybe if I spend time with another man, it'll help me get my mind off of Jesse. I've got to do something or all the feelings swirling through me are going to drive me insane.

So, I let the guy buy me a shot of tequila, and then we sit on barstools, making small talk. I couldn't tell you the guy's name or a word he says. I mostly nod wordlessly, my mind drifting back to Jesse over and over again. I keep trying to focus on Mr. What's His Name in front of me, and I accept another shot when he offers one.

I finally start to loosen up and laugh at some stupid thing he says, but then I feel his hand skate across the top of my thigh, and I go completely tense.

This was a mistake. It feels so *wrong* to have any man other than Jesse touch me.

"Look," I scramble for his name and when I can't remember it, I just skip over that part. "I'm sorry. I didn't mean to give you the wrong impression, but I'm not interested."

He frowns and looks pissed, and I guess I can't blame the guy. I've let him buy me shots and then I tell him I'm not interested. God, he probably thinks I'm just a lush looking for free liquor.

Before he gets a chance to no doubt chew me out like his eyes are telling me he wants to, he's suddenly picked up by the back of his shirt and flung away.

I gasp as I look up and see Jesse's furious eyes blazing down at me. "You're lucky I don't break every bone in his fucking body," he snarls as he glances at What's His Name where he's sprawled on the floor.

I don't know if it's the liquor giving me liquid courage, but I thrust my nose in the air as I snap back, "I don't know who the fuck you think you are, Jesse Hamilton—"

He interrupts me with a roar. "He fucking touched you!"

He grabs my shoulders and hisses, "You're mine!"

An undeniable warmth unfurls in my belly at his possessive words. God, what is wrong with me that I *like* how caveman possessive he is?

The next thing I know he plucks me off the barstool and slings me over his shoulder like I'm nothing more than a sack of potatoes. He stalks out of the bar with me as I flail my arms and legs in protest, but he just captures my legs against his chest and then swats me on the ass in front of everybody.

I hear chuckles from a few men and women, and my cheeks flame. Thank god my face is covered by my long hair. Still, I'm seething at how he's treating me like a child.

He doesn't set me down until we get outside the bar, and no sooner does he than I rear back and slap him.

His nostrils flare as he glares down at me and captures my wrist when I go to slap him again. I don't know what's gotten into me. I'm usually not violent like this, but Jesse has my emotions in a spin.

He hauls me against his chest as he warns me in a low voice. "We're not doing this, baby. If you think I'm going to watch you entertain other men, you're wrong. If you think it's going to push me away, you're wrong. Do I need to prove to you how insane I am over you? Do I need to actually murder someone for touching you? Is that what you want?"

A thousand emotions swirl through my chest until I finally can't take it anymore, and I burst into angry tears.

"What I want is for you to just leave me alone! My life was perfectly fine! I don't need you! I don't need anyone! Just go away!"

His eyes soften, and instead of the hurt I expected to see there, all I see is sympathy, and it only infuriates me more. He

looks at me like he sees right through me. Like he sees what I can't even put into words. Like he *understands*.

“Cindy, baby.” His voice is soft. “I know you're scared, but—”

I don't give him a chance to finish. Instead, I rip myself out of his arms and go running down the street.

“Cindy!” he calls after me, and I know that he could catch me if he wanted to, but he doesn't force it for once.

Instead, he lets me go.

When I finally reach my apartment, I chance a glance back and see that he's been following me the whole time but at a distance. His worried eyes are watching me as I shut myself in my apartment and then slide down the door, giving way to full, gut-wrenching sobs.

Why the fuck did Jesse Hamilton have to happen?

And why am I so fucked up?

Jesse

I don't know what to do. I think I should give Cindy space, but it's the hardest thing I've ever done in my life.

I pace outside her apartment for what seems like forever. Shit. I haven't gotten sleep in over twenty-four hours—not since I first laid eyes on my girl, and I sure as hell can't sleep now knowing that she's in this state and there's nothing I can do about it.

So, I seek out her brother instead. Like a true psycho, I got the address of her brother too. He doesn't seem freaked out to see me. He lets me into his place and listens sympathetically as I pour out my heart to him like the crazy person I am.

It probably isn't my smartest move saying all this to her brother I just met, but he actually regards me sympathetically.

“I can tell you really care about my sister, man, and that’s all I’ve ever wanted for her, but she’s closed herself off because of our dad.” He goes on to tell me about how their father abandoned them when they were children and how it’s affected her.

“I know Cindy,” her brother says. “She’s scared. If she’s fighting you that hard, it’s because she really feels something for you too, and she doesn’t know how to process it.” He blows out a deep breath and shakes his head. “She’s afraid of being abandoned.”

“I would never leave her,” I tell him adamantly. Hell, I’ve been stalking her from the moment I set eyes on her. I don’t tell her brother that, though.

“I wish I knew what to tell you on how to get through to her. I’ll try to talk to her, but usually all of my advice to her falls on deaf ears.”

The two of us keep talking over a few more drinks. Nate is actually a pretty cool guy, and under normal circumstances, I would enjoy his company.

As we sit there drinking, a plan forms in my mind. It’s insane, but I don’t know what else to try. I look at Nate. “Do you think you could do something for me?”

Her brother lifts his eyes up to me, and when I lay out the details of my plan, he smiles, his eyes twinkling. He looks at me with a new look of respect. “You know, I think that just might work. Yeah, you can count on me.”

With her brother’s blessing and promise of help, I take a cab home and finally sleep like the dead.

I’ve got a big game tomorrow, but that’s not why it’s going to be the biggest day of my life.

Daddy is coming for you, Cindy. He’s going to make everything all better.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Cindy

“WHY WON’T you tell me where you’re taking me?”

“Shush.” My brother hushes me and gives me a firm look. “I told you it’s a surprise.”

“You know I don’t like surprises,” I grumble.

He mutters something under his breath.

“What was that?”

“Nothing,” he snaps. “Just sit back and ride.”

I huff and cross my arms. I’m still all tied up in knots over Jesse. I haven’t heard from him since I ran from him yesterday, and I’m a confusing mixture of relieved and anxious about that.

Has he given up? Good if he has. That’s what I want, right?

Then why does a deep pit of despair widen in my stomach when I think of never seeing his arrogant face again?

Before we round a corner, my brother suddenly pulls over and holds out a blindfold

“Um, whoa, no way.” I shake my head. “Nate, just what is going on with you?”

“Just humor me, Cindy? Please? When is the last time I asked you for anything?”

“Just last week”, I deadpan.

He rolls his eyes. “Will you just stop being difficult and trust your big bro?”

I finally sigh and let him put the blindfold on me. “This better be good.”

“Shush up, cupcake. It will be. “

Again, he mutters something under his breath I can't hear.

I wasn't lying when I said I don't like surprises. I don't like going into something blind either—literally.

Yet, I let my brother help me out of the car and guide me wherever it is he's taking me. I can tell we've left the outdoors and walked inside, but I don't have a clue where he could be taking me or what he's up to.

What I *can* tell is that wherever we are is crowded. I'm getting bumped into from all sides, and I must look like an idiot with a blindfold on my face.

The buzz of people gets louder and louder, and then my brother is carefully leading me down...stairs?

“Nate, what the crap is going on?”

He continues to steer me along, and when we finally stop, he lets go of me. “Nate?”

He doesn't say anything, and I don't sense him anywhere near.

I feel a trip of panic and lift the blindfold from my eyes.

My cheeks flame, and my heart starts beating a mile a minute when I see that I'm standing in the middle of a basketball court.

I'm starting to freak out. I don't know what's going on or why my brother would do this, but I vow to seriously kill him this time.

Then, I suddenly feel a pair of strong hands on my shoulders turning me around.

My heart leaps when I look up at Jesse's handsome face. He's outfitted in his team jersey, shorts, and court shoes, and damn if the bulging muscles in his arms aren't sexy as hell. My cheeks flame brighter when I remember how they felt wrapped around me while he plowed into me and called himself "daddy."

His eyes are riveted to my face, and he swallows nervously before he goes down on one knee in front of me.

I hear the aww's from the crowd as I stand there in shock, not believing what I'm seeing.

And then he speaks where only I can hear.

"Cindy Crews, I know it's fast, but I knew the moment I laid eyes on you, you were the one for me. I know why you're pulling away from me, but, baby, I promise I'm not like your father. I'll never, ever leave you. Not even when I'm dead. I'll be with you forever—no matter what happens. I'll do whatever it takes to prove it to you—even put my heart on display for the whole world to see. You can crush it right here if you want, baby, but I am so motherfucking in love with you, beautiful. I'll probably stalk you every day for the rest of your life even if you say no."

He swallows again and takes my hands in his, reverently kissing the knuckles while never taking his smoldering eyes from mine. "Baby, be mine, please. Forever."

I stare at him, searching his eyes, but all I see is truth in them. Jesse means every word he says, and a little burst of joy explodes in my chest like fireworks.

I believe him.

I trust him.

I smile at him as tears fill my eyes. "Sounds like I don't have much of a choice anyway if you're going to stalk me regardless."

He cracks a grin up at me, his eyes heating when he senses my acquiescence. "That's right. I'm not going anywhere, baby, so you might as well marry me."

He stands and catches me just as the tears start to flow freely down my face and I leap into his arms.

His lips cover mine as he kisses me deeply—so deeply I forget where we are until he releases me and I look up to see our faces on the kiss cam.

“Now, I can play,” he says as his eyes wash over me possessively.

He seats me on the sideline where the families sit before he announces to the crowd, “This game is for my future wife!”

My cheeks flame, but I can’t stop smiling.

The crowd goes wild.

And of course, Jesse plays better than ever.

He wins the game.

And my heart.

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EPILOGUE

Jesse

Nine Months Later

THE CROWD GOES wild as I shoot the winning goal, the ball swooshing through the net seamlessly. My teammates are jubilant as well, but all I can do is look to the sidelines where my wife is standing, cheering with a protective hand on her swollen belly.

My cock jerks in my shorts. Fuck, I love nothing more than seeing her pregnant with my unborn child for all the world to see. Yeah, that's *my* woman right there. She's *mine*. *I'm* the one who bred her. I'm the one who gets to fuck that pink little pussy every night.

She's still as beautiful as ever, and while she still works at the salon, she's cut her hours back drastically. Not only am I a possessive caveman who doesn't want my wife's fingers in any other man's hair, but I also don't want her around all those fumes that they use for chemical treatments. I might be a bit of a psycho over her when she's pregnant, but so be it. Thankfully, she humors me and spends most of her time at home with me with my dick deep inside her just the way I like it.

She loves her daddy taking care of her.

I've got to hurry and get off this court before my cock makes an obscene tent in my shorts.

I rush to the sidelines and pick her up in my arms, not even giving a fuck when reporters start snapping pics of me carrying my wife off the court like a newlywed. We've been in the papers plenty for the way I pick her up and tote her around like a possessive caveman, and I don't care. I'll never hide the way I feel for Cindy. She is my obsession.

"Do you know how hard I am for you?" I whisper in her ear.

She wraps her arms around me and presses a kiss against my neck that sends my blood coursing through my veins like hot fire. I can't contain the growl that bubbles up out of my chest as I pick up the pace and hurry to a private room so I can sheath myself inside her hot depths.

Cindy has plans of her own, though, because as soon as I put her down on her feet, she places her hand on my chest and looks up at me with those beautiful golden eyes of hers. "You won the championship tonight," she tells me in that sultry little voice of hers, "so I think you deserve to be treated like a champion."

She falls to her knees then and slips down my gym shorts.

Oh, fuck yeah.

Her intent is clear as she tries to wrap her little hand around my cock. One hand won't wrap all the way around me, so she has to use two.

Moisture beads from my tip the closer she gets to lowering her mouth onto me.

She places a tiny kiss on the crown, and I swear as my entire dick jumps in her hand and spasms, a jet a precum shooting out onto her lips.

She licks it up like a cat at a bowl of cream, and fuck if that doesn't make my balls hard as rocks.

I fist my hands in her beautiful red locks. "Damn, Cindy, you're killing me, baby."

“I’m just trying to be a good girl for Daddy.” She blinks up at me innocently, and my cock grows impossibly harder.

I stroke my hand along her cheek as I prompt her, “Then, open up, baby, and let Daddy feed you all his inches.”

She eagerly obeys, and I slip in until I hit the back of her throat, hissing in through my teeth.

Motherfuck, the hot cave of her mouth is almost as good as her pussy. *Almost*.

She starts sucking on me greedily, slurping at me like the natural she is while stroking her hands along the base that she can’t fit in her mouth.

She quickly learned how to control her gag reflex and takes me deep into the back of her throat over and over again.

My balls are boiling, and I know I’m not going to last long at all.

“Cindy,” I rasp out, “Baby, I’m not going to—”

She suddenly tightens her hands around my stalk and sucks on my tip hard, swirling her tongue around me, her intent clear, and who the fuck am I to deny her? I couldn’t even if I wanted to.

I feel my sperm shooting up my length before bursting violently into her mouth. She swallows immediately, moaning as she drinks me up.

I cum so hard I see stars. My legs shake as she keeps sucking on me until I finally pull back from her, my cock popping out of her mouth with a wet pop.

She makes a little sound of protest before she wipes the cum that has dribbled from the side corner of her mouth and licks it off her finger.

My cock twitches again. “You just wait until I get you home,” I vow to her. “You’re going to pay for that later.”

She grins at me mischievously. “Didn’t you like it, Daddy?”

I lift her up and circle my arms around her. “You know I did, you perfect little princess.”

She smiles at me, and I cover her lips with mine.

My wife. My woman. Mine.

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