



AMARIS RICCI

BETRAYED

Hydra Series

Betrayed

Book One

Amaris Ricci

© Copyright Amaris Ricci 2023

This is an authorized free edition from www.obooko.com

Although you do not have to pay for this book, the author's intellectual property rights remain fully protected by international Copyright laws. You are licensed to use this digital copy strictly for your personal enjoyment only. This edition must not be hosted or redistributed on other websites without the author's written permission nor offered for sale, translated, or rewritten. If you paid for this free edition, or to gain access to it, we suggest you demand a refund and report the transaction to the author and Obooko.

Chapter ONE – It All Fell Apart

“Nate, come to bed, you must be tired.” A soft voice drifted out to him as he entered the bedroom.

Nate looked at his wife. Nothing in him stirred when he was near her, not even a little bit. He knew she married him for his money but that was their agreement. He would deposit money into her account every month and at the end of a year, he would let her go with a nest egg. She agreed and said the wheelchair didn’t bother her, but she was lying through her teeth. Twenty thousand per month for a year and then one hundred thousand when they divorced. She would never make that in her lifetime.

She thought Nate didn’t understand her but he did. He installed cameras all over the house and she never knew. He would sit in his office and watch her move around the house doing nothing. She went into his personal belongings, searching for what he didn’t know.

“I’m not tired, go to sleep without me.” Nate said in a flat tone.

“What’s wrong Nate?” Mandy asked sweetly but her stomach churned as she thought about spending yet another restless night with this man beside her.

“I have work to do, go to bed.”

“Does it always have to be like this?” Mandy asked softly with a strange look on her face.

“Like what?” Mandy sighed and Nate felt her frustration but there was nothing he could do.

“I know our marriage was an agreement, but don’t you like me even a little?”

Nate frowned. He did not expect this.

“I’m sorry Mandy, we never should have gotten married, and I feel I have wasted these few months of your life.”

“Well, I feel I took your money and gave nothing in return, we don’t have sex, you don’t even look at me with an ounce of want, we don’t spend any time together. Hell, we’ve never been out on a date. Why do you hate me? Have I done something to make you feel this way towards me?”

Nate smiled.

“It’s okay Mandy, there is no animosity towards you, I know I haven’t even tried to get close to you and all of this is my fault, don’t lose any sleep over it.”

“We could try again, I’m not a bad looking girl.” Mandy smiled.

“You are very beautiful Mandy, but I... I’m not in a good mental place and I’m sorry I have neglected you.” Nate chuckled at her expression and for the first time, he felt comfortable being in the same room as her.

“Don’t worry, one day you will find someone who will love you the way you deserve.”

He turned and wheeled his chair out and closed the door. His personal assistant stood up immediately, awaiting his orders.

“Myk, take me to the club.”

“Sir?” Myk let out a surprised response. Nate owned several night clubs in the most active parishes in Barbados. They all operated under the name Hydra. In Christ Church was the Hydra Gold club for the mature crowd, in St. Michael was Hydra Red for the teens, twenties and thirties and Hydra Platinum St. James was for the very elite. Nate never visited the clubs; he paid well to have them managed and they were all successful.

“I know Myk, let’s go to St. James tonight, I need a change of atmosphere.”

Myk arranged Nate into the car, and they headed out.

“Myk?” Nate sounded from the backseat.

“Sir?”

“Mandy will be leaving soon.”

“Best thing. Does she need to be watched?”

“No, I don’t feel I’m in danger, she isn’t a bad person, she just doesn’t need me.”

As they pulled up to the club... Nate decided to enter through the main door. He was greeted with disdain.

“Sir, no wheelchairs allowed.”

Myk made a move to intercept, Nate stopped her. Nate looked up at the camera he knew was aimed at the entrance and nodded slightly. A few moments later two of the biggest bouncers in the club came to greet him.

“Sir, follow us please.” They ignored the protests of the man guarding the door and lead the duo into the noisy den of the elitist.

There were men in suits, and women dressed as if they were going to meet the queen. Nate always believe in separating the sheep from the goats. Some hated this mentality but if you think about it, sometimes you need to keep apart from one another. This club was exclusively for the rich and powerful, it was membership by invitation only. You made an application online, security checks were conducted and if accepted, you paid one million dollars upfront. Then, a Hydra Platinum Elite VIP Card was hand delivered to you. For the next year, you were afforded privileges fit for a king and you had access to all the other clubs under the Hydra brand. Only one other club on the island offered such treatment but that was a car club operating under the name of Rapid Run Swift Club and funny enough, the owner was a friend

of Nate's. She gave him the ideas and he tweaked to suit the club and ran with it.

As a member, you could visit the club 24 hrs per day, you had access to the best dishes and premium drinks on the island. If you wanted to sleep off drunkenness, a room was provided, if they were fully occupied, a driver would take you home safely. Nate also provided on-call lawyers, doctors, construction, insurance agents, you name it he had access to it.

This club had thirty-five thousand members. Nate did not tolerate drugs, prostitution, or any kind of illegal activity. Any member who violated the rules, was kicked out and the value of the balance of their membership was calculated and half of it was donated to a charity. Nate referred to it as administration expenses.

Myk pushed Nate to his private room and got him settled. She turned on the screen that allowed him to watch the show on the stage without subjecting him to the looks and scorns of the people who made Nate rich. They didn't even know who he was, but the wheelchair made them brush him off when they saw him. Nate smiled often when he heard the comments from his club's members. He didn't care, every million-dollar deposit that went into his bank account was worth the ridicule. *They*, came to him. As he got comfortable, something on the big screen TV caught his eye. There was a dark and sexy woman dancing on the stage in an extremely exotic pole performance.

Immediately Nate felt his entire body stiffen. Nate stared at the woman dancing on the pole. His reaction was instant and shocking. He almost grabbed the front of his pants to ease his discomfort. What the hell?

The woman was agile, skilled, well trained and she was sexy. Every part of her needed his touch. He motioned to Myk, pointing at the screen, to send the woman an invitation to his private room. Myk looked down at his face and she wondered what he was thinking. It was not like him to pick up strange women to take home before thoroughly vetting them and many nights, Myk ended up getting a taxi to take them home before anything happened. She shrugged and decided she would let him play this out. Maybe he just needed to let off some steam, he was a man after all.

Myk left the room, headed out to the main stage, and waited until the woman finished her set. As the woman came backstage, Myk motioned to her and a whisper to her ear, was softly delivered.

“Miss, the club’s owner would like to have a private meeting with you, please follow me.”

She blushed, nodded and silently followed the tall sexy female bodyguard. Yes, Myk was a woman, and she could throw you farther than she could see you. When Myk pushed the door of the private room, Elle immediately inhaled. The room smelled of a cologne she loved as a child. Eternity for Men by Calvin Klein. She always said if she could find a man who wore it, she would love him forever.

“Thanks Myk, Everleigh, take a seat please.” Nate motioned to the seat opposite him as Myk swiftly closed the door and left. Elle looked at the leather seats and decided to stand. She quickly took in the man she came to see.

“Good evening, Sir, it’s nice to meet you. If you don’t mind, I just finished a set and I am rather... sticky, I don’t want to dirty the seats.”

Nate smiled.

“The pleasure is mine Everleigh, I can afford to have them cleaned, it’s okay, sit, do you need anything?” Nate wheeled to a cupboard and pulled out a soft blanket and handed it to her.

“Just some water, thank you.”

Nate pointed to an ice bucket with several bottles of water chilling. Elle walked over, took one, put the bottle on the coffee table, spread out the blanket and sat down.

“Now, let’s get a few things off the table, I need you to answer me honestly, then we will go from there, agreed?”

“Yes sir.”

“Nate is my name, for now, there is no Sir here.”

“Okay.” Elle whispered.

“Why do they call you Elle?”

“My mother’s name is Elleyna; she loves to watch me dance.”

“Are you involved with anyone?”

“No.”

“I have two more questions for you, and they will determine if you leave or stay. Remember, I require honesty, don’t worry about offending me.”

“Okay.”

“Does me being in a wheelchair bother you? If yes why, if no, why?”

“Yes. You wear it like a suit of armour. People fear your mental strength not your physical. No, because the chair is not who you are.”

Nate smiled.

“Last question. If I asked you to be my girlfriend, what would you say?”

“No.”

The smile on Nate’s face faded a bit. Her answer bothered him yes and for some reason, her rejection kneed him in the gut.

“Can I explain Nate?” She asked quickly, not wanting the feeling that flittered across his face just then to remain.

“You may.”

“It’s clear you are wealthy since you own three clubs and whatever other investments. I am currently a nobody, dancing in a club so I can help support my family. People will talk and say I am only after your money. I don’t know you. The only way I would say yes, is if we spent some time together, talked. I would need you to know the real me and not who you see now, and I would need to know about you and why you use your chair as an excuse to be alone.”

Nate sighed. How did she know?

“Thank you, Everleigh. You now have two choices, either stay and spend some time getting to know me or leave and forget this conversation ever happened.”

“How about I finish my second set, come find you and take you up on that offer.” She smiled and her eyes twinkled.

“Deal. Do you have a car? I can take you home if you like when we leave here.”

“My brother usually picks me up but thank you anyway for asking. My set is in a few, I have to go.” She stood at the door and paused, looking back.

“Promise me you will be here when I get back.” She said hopefully.

“I promise.”

For some reason Elle believed Nate, she didn’t understand it, but she trusted herself. Elle smiled and left.

Chapter TWO – Up Rising

Nate let out the groan he had been holding. He was hard as a rock and needed release bad. This was the first time since the accident, that he had an erection. Nothing his wife did affected him, and she was a sexy woman but yet, nothing. Many nights he lay in bed willing himself to get hard, as he thought about women he had been with before, porn he watched when he was a teen but nothing. She tried a few times and after no response from him, she gave up and went to sleep. Nate never made any attempt to ease her frustration either. Several times when she thought he was in a deep sleep, she touched herself and tried to muffle her groans but he knew.

The mood was just not there, and he had no intention of forcing it. He saw many times how she looked at him when she thought he couldn't see her but he understood, what wife wants to put up with no sex in her marriage, even if it was a business deal.

Nate decided he would go out to watch Elle's second set, then he looked down and the tent in his pants and groaned again. He wheeled behind his desk and called for Myk. The door opened and Nate's fists clenched.

"Sir, is something wrong? Are you in pain?"

"It happened Myk." Nate groaned out loud this time. It took a few seconds for Myk to register what he was referring to and then it clicked when she saw his discomfort.

"Is that why you called her in here?" Myk asked with a grin on her face. It was her job to know everything about the man in front of her. When Myk needed a job and a home, Nate was there for her, she owed him her life.

“All this time, I thought it was me, Mandy never brought this out in me but when I saw Everleigh dancing, I...”

“She is a beautiful girl, curves in all the right places. I’m not surprised at your reaction.”

Nate chuckled at his long-time friend.

“You going back out? She is on again and some heavy hitters are throwing US hundred-dollar bills at the stage.”

Nate chuckled.

“Who says Barbados is a poor country? All of them throwing money at her aren’t even from here, they are staying at one of my Villas nearby.”

“Why am I not surprised, well are you?”

“I can’t, haven’t recovered from the second time yet.” Nate laughed at his own situation.

“Jesus boss. Need me to get a drink for you?”

“Yeah, a club soda and a bottle of wine to chill, oh and some wings, two different sauces, salad and you can relax for a bit. Everleigh wants to get to know me before she agrees to be my girlfriend.”

“Boss...”

“Mandy is on her way out Myk, I can’t wait much longer. I’m unhappy, you know this. If I felt anything towards her, I would try to work it out, I would stay. I just can’t bring myself to touch her. The document she signed said I can terminate our marriage anytime I see fit and this is the time. The whole time Elle was here... I felt like I was back in my teen years.” Nate chuckled. He looked up at Myk and frowned.

“What are you not telling me Myk?”

Myk sighed.

“I think Mandy and Jeff and sleeping together.” No frills or sugar coating.

Nate's fists clenched.

"Where are they now?"

"If I told you, promise me not to have them killed when you see them."

"I promise."

"Top floor, room 34B." Myk stepped back as her boss immediately wheeled himself out of the room.

"Go get the stuff ready for Everleigh, make her comfortable until I return."

"Okay. Nate You promised." Myk only called him Nate when she was worried about his reaction to something awful.

"I know Myk. Get me the master key."

Myk handed his boss a key from his pocket. Nate laughed.

"What would I do without you? Get going."

Nate, went to the elevator that lead to the rooms over the club. He didn't care who used them, as long as they paid and didn't cause trouble. As he reached 34B, he swiped the key card in the lock and turned it. He could hear the loud moans and skin slapping as he approached the bedroom. Nate felt cold as his eyes landed on his wife and his brother. He knew she was cheating, he accepted that he could not fulfil her needs but his brother? His brother's betrayal cut him deep. This he did not expect at all.

"Harder Jeff!" Mandy screamed as her lover pounded into her from behind. Spanking her ass with one hand.

Nate, reached into a hidden pocket in his chair and pulled out his gun and rested it on his lap. He wasn't going to shoot either one of them but if they made a move, well...

"Take it, you can't get this from my crippled brother can you?"

"Shut up Jeff!"

Jeff stilled. Did they have sex? He needed to know.

“Did you two have sex?”

“That is NONE of your business, he has never been unkind to me, we just aren’t compatible. Look if you can’t give me what I want, you can leave!”

“Aww baby come on, you know I get jealous when I see you with him, knowing how inside you feels.” He shoved into her roughly, making her cry out.

“JEFF!”

“Yeah that’s how you like it, I bet Nate never even sniffed you.”

“Jesus, what the fuck are you on, leave him out of this!” Mandy yelled as Jeff used her like a stuffed toy.

A voice from behind them sounded, stopping them in mid-stroke.

“I find it funny, that you are screwing my wife’s brains out and me the man who is in a wheelchair, still makes you jealous.”

“Nate! OH MY GOD! Jeff, get off me!” Mandy flopped onto her stomach and scrambled to get away from Jeff.

“Don’t stop on my account. Mandy I understand why *you* did it, but Jeff... anyway. Mandy, we will discuss this the next time we see each other. Jeff, you are fired.”

Nate wheeled himself out and headed for the elevator. Getting in he made his way back to his private room. When he thought of who was waiting for him, anticipation kicked in and he got hard again, this time he grabbed himself and squeezed, trying to ease his tension. It was useless.

As he entered the room again, the scent of Exclamation invaded his nostrils. She was here.

“Hello Nate.”

Nate froze. Gone was the made-up, dressed up dancer, standing in front of him was the sexiest woman in the world. She was dressed so simple in a

pair of washed-out jeans and a navy blue off the shoulder top. Nate felt like a lusty teenager again. He squeezed his eyes together and tried to calm his body down. He groaned and turned away from her.

“Are you okay? Do you need me to get Myk?” Elle asked softly as she moved toward Nate and stood behind him.

Nate groaned again and adjusted himself.

“I’m sorry, I... I thought I could do this, but I can’t.”

“Oh. I’m sorry I wasted your time. If I can keep my job, I would appreciate it.” She moved to head to the door. Nate turned quickly, reached out and grabbed her wrist gently.

“Elle, I’m not rejecting you, quite the opposite. Sit, have some food and wine and we will talk.”

“Tell me what’s wrong with you first, in case I have to get Myk and explain what’s happening.”

Nate sighed. How do you tell a stranger that just seeing her made you so hard, you could pound nails.

“It’s embarrassing.” Nate said as he shifted in his seat.

“Nate, I work in an elite club, your clients try to pay me thousands of dollars just to see me naked, ain’t much I haven’t seen.”

“I’ve been married to a woman for over five months, she has never managed to turn me on. I saw you dancing, and I’ve been having erections ever since.”

He said everything in a rush. He took a deep breath and waited for Elle to call him nasty names and leave.

“Is that all?”

“I want you Elle, not because of my reaction but something about you calls to me, I need to find out what it is if you let me.”

“I see.” Elle sat down on the sofa and sneaked a peek the food she knew was under the bell cover.

“Mmmm wings, my favourite and with Dana’s special sauce. She dipped her finger in the sauce and licked it off with only her tongue.

“Jesus Christ Elle.” Nate gripped the wheelchair arm, and his body shook as he fought his desires. She was doing this on purpose.

“Nate.” Elle’s voice penetrated his thoughts. He opened his eyes slowly and saw her watching him intently.

“Let’s make a deal.” She said in a low tone that sent needles and pins through Nate’s body. She was killing him.

“Tell me, hurry before I embarrass myself further.”

“Divorce your wife, I will be the girlfriend, I don’t want anything from you but loyalty. I’ve been cheated on, lied to, verbally and physically abused all my life. I don’t need that from you. You asked me for honesty, I am asking you for fidelity and simple respect. I don’t need your money, I work hard for what I want. I will devote myself to you as long as you need me.”

“No.” Nate said firmly as he looked her dead in the eyes.

Elle stood straight, waiting for him to continue.

“There is no way, you will have the title as my girlfriend and I not share my wealth with you. I was raised by a good woman, she knew her self-worth and if she found out that I had a woman as lovely as you and didn’t spend money on her, she would skin me alive and call me luggage. If we don’t work out, you have to be able to see rewards for your effort. It’s not up for debate.”

“Do I have a choice?”

“No. Next issue.”

“I hate when people yell at me. I will let you be the man you need to be but I need to be the woman I am. I don’t need saving, I am quite willing to work

for what I need in life. Fancy cars, clothes are not important to me. What I care about is how people treat me 24 hours a day and not just when they want to look good to their peers.”

“Honey, I understand you quite well, look, I have some serious issues to deal with on my end, I am not saying it will be easy but all I really need from you is to believe in me, pay attention to my needs as a man. If something is wrong tell me to my face, don’t hide things from me. Hurt my feelings with the truth if you have to.”

“Okay then, anything else popping up we have to promise to deal with it together.” Elle said softly as she sat down and smiled at Nate.

“Agreed. Next thing, I took a glance at your Resume, why are you in a club dancing when you should be the one running it?”

Elle sighed loudly and covered her face with her hands. Could she trust this man with her story? Yes.

“I had a crush on my next-door neighbour from the time I knew what a crush was. He was my Prince Charming, he taught me so many things as he was very intelligent, but what I didn’t know was that because I wanted to get married before I had sex, he cheated on me for eight years. I was clueless. I thought he loved me. I found videos on his laptop of the women he was involved with. When I compared them to myself, I kept wondering why was he with me? They were beautiful, most of them well-off. I got up the courage but when I tried to break it off, he tried to kill me twice. Told me he didn’t groom me all those years for someone else to benefit.” Elle let the memories flow through her as the tears fell. Nate gripped the wheelchair handle hard. His heart ached for the woman in front of him. He wanted to tell her that she didn’t need to say anymore, as he could see how painful it was for her to tell him, currently a stranger to her but he waited.

“I ran from here, went overseas to study, got my degrees in Human Resources Management and Business Marketing. I stayed in touch with my family, I had gotten scholarships for all my studies, Summa Cum Laude when it was all over. I achieved all my parents wanted for me at that point, but I was scared to come home. I sucked it up and flew back here to find work and help my parents, within a few days, Christopher found me. Told me if I didn’t come back to him, he would kill me this time.

He was sleeping with all kinds of women, spreading STDs and having unwanted babies, threatening the women so they would have abortions. Fortunately for me, one of the women he was involved with found out about the life he lived and she... killed him. I honed my dancing skills when I was away, trained in every area but my fear of being involved with anyone, kept me in the dark. I wanted to be a part of the background, so I applied here and started working. Seems I can’t stay out of the limelight anymore since you set your eyes on me. People don’t recognise me when I leave here, I am a completely different person. When I am on stage, I pull out all the stops, when I get home, I feel alone, useless and unwanted.”

Elle finished and wiped the rest of her tears away.

“I think I better go.”

She got up to leave and Nate reached out and grabbed her hand gently.

She was thinking Nate wouldn’t want her anymore but when she looked at him. She saw... desire. It was soul searching for her.

“Thank you for sharing that with me, I know it was hard for you. I maybe in a wheelchair but I will do my best to protect you from all the bad things out there, including me.”

“You are harmless to me Nate.” She smiled.

“Oh honey, you have no idea. The food must be cold, let me get Myk to heat it up.” Nate looked at the door to yell for Myk, but Elle stopped him as she lifted the food cover.

“Nope, it’s still warm and the wine is nice and chilled, let’s eat.”

Nate’s heart picked up, this woman was meant for him, he knew he had to give his best shot at making her happy. His only issue was how she would react to his scars when they were intimate. He shook off the negative feeling and watched as Elle started to eat. She pushed the plate so he could have access and then poured wine into his glass. She looked up at him and licked her fingers.

“What?” Elle asked as she saw him looking at her.

“Nothing much, being here with you makes me feel appreciated.”

“I’m glad I could make you feel that way. Can I ask you a question?” She let her eyes fall on his legs.

“My brother and I got into a fight, he tripped and was about to be it by a car and I pushed him away, the car hit me instead, I have no feeling in my legs for the most part.”

Elle gasped.

“Oh Nate, I’m so sorry. How long were you in the chair? Can’t the doctors do anything?”

“Over a year, had a few operations but the result was the same, I gave up. I’m still alive, that’s what counts.”

“Fair enough. I want to ask you something very personal Nate, you don’t have to answer.”

“Ask me.”

“You haven’t had sex since the accident?”

“No, my urges were buried under rage, depression and self-loathing and 20-hour work days. I don’t want anyone to see my scars.”

“Why did you get married then?”

“I was lonely, Mandy had taken an interest in me, I knew she just needed the money but at least I would have someone there when I came home. I never touched her.”

Nate frowned.

“When you were doing your set, I went upstairs and saw her and my brother having sex.”

“Oh my god Nate, I’m sorry.”

“It’s fine, I never loved her, she never loved me, I fired my brother, and my divorce papers are already being prepared, so no worries. You on the other hand, I find myself wanting to be with you, needing that smile to be aimed at me. I’m not sure if I can even..., or how to.” Nate sighed in frustration. He felt Elle cup his face and tilt his head to look at her.

“One step at a time Nate, we just met, let us grow our relationship, make assessments along the way. I have a feeling we will be just fine.”

“Thank you, Elle. Come on, I’m tired, I need to get home and deal with Mandy. I will wait with you until your brother comes to get you.”

“Oh! I forgot to tell you I messaged my brother and told him I would get a ride. I should have asked you first.”

“It’s not an issue and I think the first order of my day tomorrow is to take you to pick out a vehicle, don’t even start, we are getting it.”

Chapter THREE – Oh Mandy

It was three in the morning when Nate reached home and as Myk pushed the door they heard shouting from the main bedroom. Nate raised his hand for Myk not to push him any further.

“Leave me alone Jeff!”

“I love you Mandy, what do you see in him?”

“Are you CRAZY? He has always been kind to me, all you want is a roll in the hay and now he found out, I feel awful!” Jeff frowned.

“Do you love him?” Jeff asked with a weird look on his face.

“In a way yes, he is not a bad person, he will make someone a good husband someday and I know that won’t be me but I’m not a robot!”

“Come with me, he fired me but I still have my house and some savings.”

“WHAT? NO! I need to get myself in order, so this doesn’t happen again. Every time I see you, I will see his face and remember what WE did. I know we hurt him even though he hid it well. I can’t stay here, and you and I are OVER!” Mandy yelled in tears.

Jeff calmed down a bit.

“I do love you Mandy and I know I hurt him, he hates me now.”

“We shouldn’t have done it.”

“Yeah well, too late. I’m leaving, I will give you some time to re-think about being with me. You know how to find me. I need to go before he gets here.”

“I’m already here.” Nate said as he appeared in the doorway.

“Don’t worry, I’m leaving.” Jeff said as he walked past his brother without a word.

“Myk, you can head home, I will call if I need anything.” Nate said.

“Sir.” Myk said in a warning tone. She was afraid Mandy would try something and hurt Nate.

“I’ll be just fine; Mandy and I will have a nice chat.”

“Okay.”

“I’m sorry Nate.” Mandy said as she sat on the bed, still shaken from her shouting match with Jeff.

“It’s okay Mandy, I can take some of the blame for this situation. I made it easy for you and my brother, it was quite convenient. He isn’t bad person but I won’t be able to forgive him for this for a long while.”

“I will pack my things in the morning and get out of your hair. Can you give me some money to get a cab, the new bank card hasn’t arrived yet and I don’t have any cash on me.”

Nate pulled an envelope from his chair pocket and handed it to her. She took the envelope and opened it. Her eyes widened and more tears fell.

“Are you sure about this?”

Nate smiled.

“I’m sure, as I said, I share the blame, think of this as my apology for making you suffer for these months.”

“Not suffer Nate, you were always kind to me, the money you gave me helped with my parents, so I am grateful.”

“Your parents are ill?” Nate frowned, why did he not know this?

“Yeah, both have cancer, but they are fighters.”

“Come to me next week, I will give you some more.”

“No! Thank you but no, I’ve taken enough.”

“Mandy, come see me next week.”

Mandy smiled.

“Thank you, Nate, for everything and I believe I can trust you with this bit of information and I know you won’t harbour any ill will against me.”

Nate looked at Mandy and guess it.

“You are pregnant.” Nate smiled.

Mandy nodded and the tears began again.

“This is wonderful news for you, I wish you a good pregnancy. Will you tell Jeff?”

“He said he doesn’t want children so that is a no.”

“Bastard.”

“Don’t blame him, I should have protected myself. I have to get a job and sort myself out.”

“I will set up a trust fund for the baby, you can message or email me with updates and if you need help with his care.”

“You would do that? You don’t even know if the baby is his.”

“Well, either way, you and I were in a relationship, that has to mean something. So even if the child wasn’t Jeff’s, I would still help if you asked.”

Mandy got up, made her way over to Nate and bent down to hug him. He stiffened and she flinched.

“Sorry, I didn’t mean to upset you.” She pulled away and stepped back.

“It’s okay, it’s a reflex, don’t take it personally.” Nate smiled genuinely.

“I need to get some sleep; I will take the guest room. For the record, you really are a good person, find the woman who is for you and love her hard. Good night Nate.”

Chapter FOUR - Hired

Nate was sitting in his office looking at Elle's Resume. He had been working late and needed a drink, food and the company of his woman. He called for Myk and went home instead. He had made a decision and knew it would be the best one he ever made when it came to a woman.

His divorce was swift, he had Jeff escorted out of the company by security. Nate had arranged a final meeting with Jeff the next morning and told him he would forfeit his shares and all he would get was five million for them.

"WHAT?" I built this company up with you! After your accident I kept things here working to perfection and now because you can't satisfy your wife, it's MY fault?" Jeff yelled angrily while walking towards Nate.

"Take one more step and you won't like it Jeff. Take the money and leave, you are no longer welcome here." Nate's voice was laden with malice as he rested his hand on the door of his drawer.

Jeff knew his brother was quick and he would never get to him in time.

"I didn't mean to hurt you Nate." Jeff lowered his head.

"That's the thing Jeff, you are my brother, of all the people in this world, we share the same blood but you sleep with my wife. Did it not matter that she was mine? You hurt me Jeff, I have feelings, I am not this wheelchair. I am the brother who took care of you when our father abandoned us with a sick mother to care for. I sacrificed doing all the things a teenager does to make sure YOU, were fed and safe from the outside world. Think about your actions Jeff, I mean think really hard. I don't care about her, I expected nothing from her but you? I never want to see you again. Now get out."

Jeff turned as a tear escaped from his eye. Everything he had worked towards was gone all because of a good romp between the sheets.

Just then, Elle strolled into the building. She was wearing a sexy navy-blue skirt suit that hugged every curve she had. Her long wavy hair was parted on the left and it shone in the sunlight streaming through the foyer of Naton Corp.

The receptionist looked up at the beautiful woman and flashed a wide smile.

“Good morning miss, how can I help you?”

“I’m here to apply for a job. I have an appointment with Nate Tondale for 8:30am.”

“Give me a moment to confirm, and you are early, just have a seat and ...”

Just then Jeff Tondale was being escorted out of the building and for some reason he glanced at Elle. She flinched when she thought he might have recognised her from the bar, but she let out a sigh of relief when he looked away and kept walking.

“Sorry miss, it’s been a busy morning. Have a seat and I will see if Mr. Tondale is ready for you.”

“Thank you.” Elle said as she turned and headed to the seat the lady pointed to.

Naton Corp was eloquently designed. The furnishings were equal to that of royalty, but you felt warm when you entered and had a feeling of peacefulness and calm.

Just then, the elevator doors opened, and Nate peeked out.

“Thanks Kaia, I will take it from here. Elle come with me.”

“No problem, Mr Nate.” Kaia replied with a smile.

Elle followed Nate into the elevator and the moment the door closed he pulled on her hand.

“Let me kiss you Elle.”

“Oh Mr. Nate, you have to work for that.” Elle replied, imitating the bubbly Kaia.

Nate laughed loudly. He was on both sides of the fence with his feelings, he was glad and sad that she didn’t give in so quickly.

The elevator dinged and they went into his office. There was no one in sight.

“Let me take you on a quick tour, you will be up here with me most of the time.”

Elle’s eyes widened as Nate spoke.

“Um, Nate, you told me to apply for a job, what’s going on?”

“Why apply for something you are already qualified for? You know the boss, use me to get the job Elle.” Nate’s tone was serious.

“Don’t do this, let me go through the right channels.”

“Elle, the position of Vice President has opened, and I am not in the mood to be sifting through hundreds of resumes when I have you right in front of me. The job is yours, hands down.” Nate sounded angry as his face changed. Most women would jump at the opportunity he was giving her, but she was not only second guessing his decision but her own capabilities.

“Now, this is your office, next to mine of course, you have sitting, dining areas, private sleeping quarters in case you work late and don’t want to drive home. No one is allowed up here but you and unless we give permission. All meetings are held on the second floor, we have catered lunch. I developed an app specifically for this company, I have over four thousand employees and I have a contract with a restaurant to cater to all our needs. Download it to your cell and order when you like, the service is 24hrs but you need to order at least half hr in advance so they can prepare. I was going to get a simple car for you to get you to and from the club but since you will be

working here, I'm upgrading your vehicle. You also have a private parking space underground; I will have everything setup for you by tomorrow.

We have lots of benefits; insurance, pension, health, and they will be automatic for you as well. If there is anything you see lacking in the company, feel free to suggest it and we can discuss. You will be in charge of the Marketing department as well. The only person you answer to is me. You will be on a trial basis for three months at the end of that, if you can hack it, marketing for the clubs will fall under your direction as well.”

“When did you decide all of this?”

“The minute I looked at your resume... I am lucky to have you and that suit is wreaking havoc on me.”

“This is my power suit; I don't wear it often.”

“Well then I must get more for you, you look ravishing.”

Elle blushed.

“Sir, you better behave.”

“With you? Never.”

“Okay you bad boy, let me get affiliated with the company.”

“Nope, that is next week. We don't currently have any pressing projects and my staff already are working on other jobs. This week you will take the time to get everything in order, your wardrobe, car, benefits, expense account, travel documents everything, must be done this week, you will have an assistant, she is on the second floor with mine. I travel often, sometimes you will go with me, other times you will be in charge when I am gone.”

“Nate, this is a lot, how are you so trusting of me in just a few days?”

Nate smiled.

“I saw my brother having sex with my wife, two people I knew, I trusted them. What's the point of trust when it is misplaced? Your job is to keep my

company running smoothly, any issues, call me immediately, we will solve them together. Deal?”

Elle smiled at Nate warmly.

“Deal. Now you can have that kiss.” Elle said softly.

“Definitely.” When Elle leaned down to kiss Nate on the lips, he pulled her onto his lap.

“Nate, STOP!”

Nate quickly felt embarrassed and allowed her to get up.

“I’m sorry, I shouldn’t have done that. It won’t happen again.”

“Nate, I didn’t tell you to stop because I was offended or scared, I said it because I didn’t want to hurt you!”

“Hurt me?” Nate was confused.

“Yes, I’m too heavy to be sitting in your lap.” She knew she wasn’t a size two and being conscious of her weight, she stayed away from men. People could be cruel to others who don’t fall into the norm. The insults she endured over the years, crushed her confidence unless she was on stage.

Nate laughed out loud.

“Elle. Come here.” He held out his hand to her.

“Nate...” She warned.

“Please, come here Elle.”

Elle inched over to Nate and when she stood in front of him, he turned her body and gently pulled her to sit on his lap and wrapped his arms around her.

“I’m not a weakling, tell me sitting on my lap doesn’t feel good and I will never do it again.” Nate’s sexy voice rumbled in her ears.

“It feels good Nate.”

“Then understand that you won’t hurt me in anyway unless you jump on me, okay?”

“Okay. Oh dear.” Elle whispered as she felt Nate’s body respond to hers.

“That’s what you do to me Elle, each time, you are near me, I get so hard I want to do things to you.”

“Give me time.”

“I know, I’m not pushing, just letting you know how I feel and how you my special lady make me feel. Now, kiss me.”

Elle turned slightly and the moment she pressed her lips onto to Nate’s, her resolve went up in smoke.

Elle felt sore all over. She felt a warm body next to her as she opened her eyes and took in her surroundings.

“Oh no.” She whispered.

“Elle? What’s wrong?” Nate’s voice sounded as he felt her stir.

“What did we do Nate?”

“We made love honey, don’t second guess it, it was a wonderful thing between two people.”

“Will you look at me any different? Do I still have a job? You might think I slept with you for...” Elle didn’t get the last words out. Her body was once again covered with Nate’s. He took her lips hard. His powerful arms holding his weight up. His erection poked at her entrance and in one swift movement, he claimed her once more. She winced as her body opened up to him. This man, gosh what was she going to do with him. She gave herself to him, going against everything she kept close to her heart. She was no longer a virgin. She wasn’t even sure how she felt about it. She remembered every kiss, his touch, the loving words he whispered to her. No, she was

glad it was him; he made the experience good for her and she felt herself fall madly in love with everything that he was.

“Oh God Nate!” Elle shouted as she climaxed for the third time.

Nate chuckled. She was his now, nothing would ever change that. He looked down at her body and he was hard again. He eased forward into her and felt her respond.

“Everleigh.” Nate whispered.

“Yes.” She whispered.

“You are mine now. Don’t ever let me hear you put down yourself. We made a decision, don’t cheapen it by letting others’ beliefs crowd your head. I have feelings for you and I will act on them. Trust that I will treat you like my queen. Never let anyone come between us. I chose you, then you chose me, nothing or no one else matters.”

Elle looked into his eyes and a tear drifted down her cheek.

“Aww baby, don’t.” He eased away from her and rested back on the bed next to her. He pulled her to his side and brushed her hair from her cheek.

“Your hair is beautiful.”

“Thank you, my mom is Trinidadian, and my dad Barbadian, they met on a cruise ship and by the time they got off, mum had a bun in the oven.”

Suddenly Elle sat up. Oh no.

“It’s okay, whatever comes we will deal with it.” Realising what she was upset about.

“Are you sure? I’m feeling scared Nate, this is happening so fast. You will get tired of me, fire me and find some other girl to take my place.”

“I’m in a wheelchair Elle, you could leave me for a man who can walk.”

Elle sighed and turned to face him. Shaking her head.

“I’m not on the pill Nate, and well you know you are my first, what if I get pregnant?”

“Then we will get married, raise our child, and run Naton Corp together. Does that sound so bad?”

“No but you make it sound like a walk in the park.”

“Elle honey, stick with me, we can do so many positive things but you have to believe in us for this to work.”

“Okay, I will try.”

Chapter FIVE – For Her

Elle was sitting at her desk making notes, she saw a nicely dressed woman walk past her door. The secretary let her in so she must know who she was. She felt jealous immediately. The woman would only be going to see Nate and he was the only other person on the floor. She was itching to get up and go see what she was up to. Was she an old girlfriend? The Ex-wife? Just then her intercom sounded.

‘Elle honey, come here a minute.’

“On my way.”

Elle gathered herself together and headed to Nate’s office. She pushed the door and tried hard to put a smile on her face. For some reason she was nervous.

As she approached the two people, Nate smiled at her and held out his hand.

“Elle, this is my ex-wife Mandy. Mandy, this is my girlfriend and VP of Naton.”

Elle gasped.

“Hello Elle, you look familiar, not sure where I would have seen you before though, nice to meet you.”

“She used to dance at Hydra Elite.” Nate said proudly.

Mandy’s eyes opened wide as full recognition set in.

“Ah, yes, the girl who made men want to lick the floor under her feet.”

Nate laughed.

“Nate don’t be cheeky; she is beautiful with a figure to die for.”

“Yes, and I would do anything for her.”

Elle was confused.

“Nate...” Elle didn’t want Mandy to feel bad.

Mandy looked at Elle's face and giggled.

"I'm glad he has you. Nate and I weren't suited, we always knew that, and I guess we needed something that the other couldn't provide. We are good now. He is helping me with my parents and my baby."

"Oh! Congrats." Elle said genuinely.

"Thank you. Nate, I have to get going, my flight leaves in a few hours, I don't think we will see each other again but I will send photos and videos if that's okay."

"That's fine. Good luck with everything and if you do decide to tell him, you have my approval."

"Thank you. Elle keep him in line, he tends to want his own way." She stood up and much to Elle's surprise, Mandy hugged her and whispered in her ear.

"He loves you, hold on to that." Then Mandy left and closed the door.

"You made up?"

"Yep, didn't need bad blood between us and she is carrying my family, so until Jeff steps up, the child will not go hungry."

Elle walked over to Nate and kissed him on the lips. She found herself in his lap as usual. As they kissed passionately, things began to get hot and heavy. Within minutes Nate was ready to throw her on his desk but he didn't want to be rough with her again, so he pulled his lips away from hers and tried to catch his breath.

"The things I want to do to you Elle."

"I can't wait."

"Come on, we have work to do."

Elle laughed and left his office.

Over the next few weeks Elle got into motion with Naton Corp. Nate had held a meeting at the end of her first week, to formally introduce her to the staff.

“Good morning, everyone, Jeff Tondale is no longer Vice President here at Naton Corp, he is no longer an employee and must not be allowed into the building under any circumstances. To my left is our new Vice President – Everleigh James. She will also be head of the Marketing Department. At this time, she will say a few words and then it’s back to work. Everleigh.”

“Thank you Mr. Tondale, it’s a great pleasure to be here, I know I’m new and it will take a while to get to know all of you, so go easy on me for now. I promise I will do my best to keep with the success that Naton Corp has seen over the last ten years and to push the views and goals that are a staple to the company. Thank you for taking the time to be here and have a wonderful day.”

Elle finished with a gentle smile. She noticed a few people looked at her with scorn. She could hear a few whispers as well, they were not good at all. The butterflies in her tummy grew to the size of hippos. Nate glanced around at everyone, noting expressions. He was pissed.

“Thank you Everleigh. Come with me to my office, so we can go over the next project and what is expected of us for the next few weeks.”

“Yes sir.” Elle replied softly.

When they got to their floor, Nate sighed as he saw how dejected Elle was. He watched her walk to the window to take in one of the views of the South Coast.

“Elle honey.”

When she turned, she said nothing but the tears running down her face spoke volumes.

“Come here.” Nate said in a serious tone, opening his arms.

She did as he commanded, and she sat on his lap. She loved when he did this, it made her feel loved and cherished.

“What did you hear?”

“Someone said I was a fat bitch, another one said if I stood on the stage any longer it would collapse. They don’t know me Nate, why would they say such things, especially when I can fire their ass?” She quickly covered her mouth. Nate laughed.

“You have my permission.” Nate said, looking into her eyes and wishing she was naked. He loved touching her.

“Oh, I couldn’t do that.”

“Uh yes you can, you are the only one who has the power to fire anyone under you and everyone here is under you. Don’t let anyone disrespect you or your position. You are a brilliant, sexy, humble, talented woman, my woman. If you believe I need to intervene, call me, other than that, fire their ass.”

Elle shifted a bit when the usual thing happened. They hadn’t made love since the first time, and she was beginning to think he was tired of her already.

“Stop that.”

She wiggled.

“Elle...” Nate warned.

“I miss your touch Nate, have I done something wrong that you don’t... well ya know.”

“I’m giving your body time to heal, I was a bit rough with you that day.”

“Oh. Is being rough a bad thing?”

“I don’t want to hurt you or make you think I need to hurt you to feel pleasure. I got carried away. I will never get tired of you Elle. What did I say about doubting me?”

“Sorry, habit. I’m self-conscious around you. You are sexy, commanding, women drool when you smile. I want to be the woman you desire, the only one. I don’t think I could handle it if you cheated on me Nate.”

“I would let you go before I do that honey. I know what that feels like, but I should say though, I feel the same way when it comes to you. My heart would be crushed if you cheated.”

“I need you now Nate.” She whispered as she kissed his cheek.

“As you wish.”

A cell phone was ringing. Elle was closest and she didn’t check to see whose phone she picked up.

“Hello?” Elle answered sleepily and accidentally pressed the speaker phone button.

“Hey Elle, you and Nate are late for your meeting with the department heads.” Myk’s voice came over loud and clear. She wasn’t even surprised that Elle answered Nate’s phone. She grinned.

“Crap, tell them give me fifteen minutes, I have um ah, something to sort out.” Nate responded as he sat up on the bed.

“Okay boss.” Myk ended the call laughing. Since Nate had brought Elle into his world, he smiled more, his demeanour was more likeable. She knew they were already having sex, or at least getting there. Elle came to work, and a hickey was peeking out from under her collar and Myk had given her some powder to hide it. Myk was glad for Nate, he was never the player type, and he normally chose women who had pride in themselves, which confused her

when he married Mandy. God she hated that woman but Elle, she was sweet from hair to the soles of her feet. Always a kind word, always sharing pleasantries. She was as genuine as ever.

Myk went back to the board room and notified the heads that Nate would be another twenty minutes and to please be patient.

One man whispered... “Have you seen the new VP and Head of Marketing? I would take a crack at her; she has an ass that goes on for years.”

“Yeah, did you see those breasts? God a man could get lost in them for months.” Another man replied.

Myk cleared her throat.

“I would suggest gentlemen, you keep those thoughts to yourself. Mr. Tondale holds Ms. James in high regard and if he heard you speaking like that about her, it would not end well for you.”

“Oh come on Myk, we are just poking fun. She is actually a brilliant woman with great ideas, but you cannot ignore how she looks.”

“I am not blind Cyrus but again, keep that to yourself.” Myk walked away and left the room. She grinned at the older men, they were right about Elle but if the Boss heard them, he would discontinue any relationship with them – for her.

Chapter SIX – Head Turned

Back in Nate’s lounge.

“Baby, clean up quickly, we are already late for the meeting.” Nate whispered into Elle’s ear as she had gone back to sleep. His need for her was unparalleled. He never felt this way about anyone. It felt good.

“Oh Nate, you always have my head turned.”

“Damn skippy. Hurry, I’m so glad you decided to design a uniform, you would get strange looks if you came in wearing one set of clothing and went back out wearing another.” Nate said as he handed her a uniform from his closet.

“Thanks, I will only be a minute. Is there anything I need to prepare for the meeting or just an accompaniment for you?”

“Actually, I want you to Chair the meeting, I need to scope out these men and their reaction to my proposal for the next software launch.”

“No problem. Okay I’m ready.”

Nate didn’t want to go, he wanted to take her home and make love to her until the end of the week. He groaned as he got hard again. He reached down to his pants and squeezed himself. This had to be a sickness.

“Again Nate?”

“For you, yes. Head to Boardroom 1, begin the meeting without me but don’t share the proposal information until I get there. Introduce yourself to them, explain what your plans are etc. Myk and the others will back you up.”

“So basically... stall.”

“That’s my girl. Get going, I miss you already.”

Elle blushed and left.

As she pushed the door to the main boardroom, she made her way to the top of the table and sat in one of the chairs.

“Good morning everyone, My name is Everleigh James, the new Vice President of Naton Corp and Head of the Marketing Department. Our President is currently delayed at the moment and will be with us shortly. The meeting will begin in two minutes.”

Nate’s assistant handed Elle the proposal Nate had prepared.

“Thanks Kim, kindly make sure the refreshments are ready for our guests in an hour.”

“Okay Elle.”

Someone at the far end of the table snorted.

“Speak up Sir.” Elle said softly as she raised her head.

“You need to know your place ‘*Elle*’.” The man said with clear disdain.

“Call me stupid but I’m confused as to what you think my place should be Sir.”

“That girl is your subordinate, she called you Elle.”

Elle smiled widely.

“I my subordinates call me that because it is my choice, I have no need to Lord over my staff members and make them feel inferior because of my title as VP. This useless bit of information is unimportant to this meeting.”

“I agree Elle, we treat all our staff with respect, no matter what our titles are.”

Nate growled as he quietly appeared in the doorway.

“I’m not sure I want to invest in a project run by people who don’t know or appreciate the chain of command.”

“Our chain of command doesn’t include you Sir, feel free to leave, Naton Corp is competent enough to attract clients and investors who are willing and ready to sit shoulder to shoulder with us.” Elle replied confidently.

“You allow her to speak for you Mr. Tondale?” The man shouted as he stood up and pushed back his chair.

“She is *definitely* free to speak, and I agree. Leave or I will have security throw you out. Elle, we have another meeting in the next boardroom in half an hour, some of the investors are already there, ask Kim to take the refreshments to them.”

“Okay.” Elle grabbed the proposal from the table and left the room without so much as a look in the rude man’s direction.

“Let me explain something to you Mr. Tondale, I will tell everyone about your operations here and how you allow people to disrespect potential investors.”

“You disrespected my VP twice and THINK I would stand by and let it continue? Your issue was not that someone called her Elle, your issue is that she is competent and does not buy into your bullshit. Now, again, get OUT of my building!” Nate shouted.

The man huffed and left with his assistant who followed behind him sheepishly.

Nate went to find Elle; the meeting definitely didn’t go as he planned but he was a hair’s breath away from punching Sinclair Jones in the face.

Elle was sitting in her office at her desk. She looked up when she heard the door open.

“Baby, are you okay?”

“I ruined everything.” She whispered.

“Do you think I would stand for anyone insulting you?”

“He made me feel as if I wasn’t suitable to Chair the meeting. I’m sorry Nate, I can find him and ask him to change his mind and apologise.”

“That is never going to happen. I am done with him. We have another meeting, wanna’ play hookie?” Nate asked playfully.

Elle blushed. Her body heated up as Nate wheeled towards her.

“We were late last time Nate.”

“This is my company, they will wait, I need you baby.”

Elle turned away and left for her personal lounge. Before she turned to face him Nate had already gotten rid of his jacket and was unbuttoning his shirt. Elle had done the same, she quickly took off her clothes this time.

“God babe, you are so beautiful, I want you on top, I will try to make this quick.”

Half hour later, Nate and Elle were entering the smaller boardroom for their meeting. Once again Nate asked her to Chair the meeting but this time, everyone was blown away by her. Men lusted; women were jealous. Nate was happy.

“Ladies and gentlemen, it was a pleasure having you today. Mr. Tondale will be on hand to sign the contracts, thank you for taking an interest in the project. Refreshments are still available, don’t leave any on the trays.” Elle said as she smiled widely. The people applauded lightly. Success!

Nate decided to call it a day, it was only 2 in the afternoon, but he needed his woman. He felt he was suffering from some kind of deranged lust for her. He wanted to be with her every second.

“Sir.” Myk responded when her cell rang.

“Take us home, we will be down in ten.”

As Nate got comfortable in the car, he decided he wanted to give Elle everything she needed in life. He was ready to make her his business partner. In the short time she was at Naton Corp, his staff had been outfitted with a uniform that they loved wearing, even the executives. She had suggested some ideas about the décor, asked the staff to submit forms detailing their skills outside of their job descriptions. Everyone responded and the plan was for them to move up in the company and eventually move

on to owning their own business. She was a positive force and the ones who insulted her in the beginning, now had huge respect for her.

As they pulled up to his house, Myk pushed him inside and Elle followed.

“I don’t think I will be needing you until later Myk, you can relax until about 6.” Nate looked at Elle who was standing next to Myk.

“I think you better make that 8, if Elle is staying the night, I won’t need you to take her home.

Chapter SEVEN - Feelings

“Nate.” Elle whispered softly as their breathing slowed. Nate made love to her for two hours. She was exhausted and so was he.

“Mmmm.” A wiped-out Nate responded.

“I...”

“What babe?”

“How come you don’t tell people we are together?” Elle felt ashamed as soon as the words left her mouth.

Nate sat up in the bed.

“I’m sorry Everleigh, I didn’t want to put you under pressure. It’s not an issue for me, next time I introduce you to anyone, they will know you are mine.”

“I wasn’t demanding that you tell people. I just asked why.” Elle yawned.

“You are mine baby and if you want the whole world to know, I will let them know. I warn you though, this will make you a target but I’m not ashamed to show you off, just prepare yourself.”

“No!”

Nate looked at her.

“I mean, not right now, when we develop a bit further, then we can tell people.”

“Elle whatever you want, I am fine with it. If you get into any trouble, use my name, my influence, my money, I don’t care what it is, I will come get you.”

“Thank you, Nate.” Elle yawned again.

“I think I’m falling in love with you, don’t hurt me.” With that Elle was fast asleep.

Nate gasped at her words. He didn’t want to believe her, but she was the brightest spark in his life, he wanted her every second of the day and he

knew it wasn't just lust now, his heart called out to her, his soul was cracked open the first time he saw her. He looked at the wheelchair next to the bed and frowned. How could he keep a woman like her?

Nate got comfortable as he wrapped his arms around the love of his life and drifted off to sleep with memories of their love making.

“OH GOD NATE!” Elle screamed.

Nate had woken her up with kisses on her belly and he was plunging into her with a fierceness that scared her a bit.

“Take me Elle, you are mine forever.” Nate grunted out as his release broke his mind and body.

Elle was crying softly.

“Elle, baby, did I hurt you?” Nate asked as he gently pulled away from her.

“A little. Did I do something wrong? You were ... different.”

“I... I'm sorry. I was thinking that you would leave me eventually for some man.” Nate was feeling vulnerable for the first time in his life.

“I won't Nate, please believe me.”

Nate nodded. He kissed Elle on her forehead, got into his chair and headed to the bathroom. Elle watched dreamily. She needed to ask Nate if he had totally given up on walking but she didn't want him to feel that his chair was an issue for her. She wanted him no matter how he was. He doted on her, cherished and protected her. The man she was with before, had two good legs and he almost destroyed her.

Elle was so sore. Nate was very rough. He touched places inside her like never before. She was worried before about how they would make love in bed but Nate made it work. He had powerful arms from pushing the chair when Myk wasn't around. He had a home gym that he used several times a

day. Many times he would put her to sit on him, facing away from him and surge up into her, making her cry out. Did she really want the world to know that a poor girl like her was doted on by someone as powerful as Nate? If very few people knew now and others were ridiculing her because of her size, what would happen if they told everyone? She rushed off the bed and ran to the shower. Nate was in his shower seat that was affixed to the floor.

“Nate, I’m sorry!”

Nate glanced at her, held out his hand and smiled.

She walked over, took his hand and stepped into the shower.

“Do you remember what you said to me last night before you fell asleep?”

He asked as he pulled her to sit on him facing away.

Elle turned her head away but nodded.

“Tell me now.”

“I think I’m falling in love with you, don’t hurt me.”

“I have been waiting to hear you say that. I know what love is Elle, every time I see you. No one has to explain how I feel. I may get a bit confused at times but you are the woman for me. I am giving you until the end of your trial period at the company, then I will ask you to marry me. I want you in that time get to know me better, so when you give me your answer, you have no doubts about what I feel for you.”

Elle nodded. She wanted him badly, like right now, sore or not. She stared at him in the mirror.

“Elle...” Nate cocked his head to the right and seeing the look of desire in Elle’s eyes, he hardened as if on command.

“Secure your hair and take a shower with me babe.”

“Okay.” Elle got up, pulled her hair into a bun, and covered it with a shower cap.

When she turned to step back into the shower Nate's eyes were closed and he was stroking himself.

"Can I...?" She hesitated.

Nate opened his eyes and held out his hand.

"Not right now, I just want to be inside you. What have you done to me?"

"Same thing you have done to me. I feel so alive when I'm with you, protected, loved, needed."

Nate put her to stand in front of him and soaped up her entire body. Then he washed her off.

"Dry off and wait for me in the bedroom."

Nate finished his shower and dried quickly. His bathroom was retrofitted so he could stand and bathe or dry himself without falling.

He got back into his chair and went into the bedroom. Elle was sitting on the edge, waiting.

She smiled when she saw him.

"How are you feeling? Still sore?"

"A little, but I still want you."

"Lay back on the bed facing me, this will be a bit tricky but I have always wanted to do this since my accident and now is the perfect opportunity."

Elle did as he asked and closed her eyes. She felt her body being pulled and she opened her eyes in shock. Nate had pulled her body all the way to the edge of the bed and into his lap, while he was still in the chair. He rested each of her legs on his shoulders and waited.

"You okay baby?"

"Not sure yet." Elle giggled.

"I am going to take you, hard, when it gets too intense, tell me to stop."

“Okay.” She whispered.

Nate bent his head and slowly kissed her in her sweet spot. She moaned loudly and tried to look at what he was doing.

Nate felt her juices flow out of her slowly. She was so turned on he knew when he took her, he would have no issues.

“Please Nate, I need to...” Elle cried out as her orgasm split her in two. Before she could calm down, Nate pulled her all the way on to him in one swift motion.

“OH GOD!” Elle shouted.

Nate said nothing, his body trembled at the feel of this woman on him. Her weight was manageable for him, so he put his hands under her ass and lifted her. When she felt there was nothing else for him to do, he brought her back down and lifted her again and again.

“Nate, I’m coming, don’t stop, please don’t stop.”

Her words pushed Nate to his release. It was so powerful that ten minutes later, neither of them moved.

“Nate, my legs are numb, can I move?”

Nate eased back the chair and gently put her legs down.

The room was filled with the smell of their love making. Nate revelled in it. He felt himself grow hard again and decided she had enough for the night. He didn’t bother to shower again, he positioned her on the bed, climbed in, wrapped her in his arms and quickly fell asleep.

Elle woke up during the night, put on one of Nate’s shirts and left to get a snack. When she got to the kitchen, she was about to flick the light switch, she saw a figure walking towards her in the dark and she screamed.

“IT’S ME ELLE!” Shouted Myk.

“Oh my GOD Myk, you scared me!”

“Sorry, I saw all the lights in the house off and I was just making sure yall were okay. I didn’t see anyone, so I was about to go back to my quarters.”

Just then Nate’s voice sounded from behind them.

“Oh, it’s you Myk.” He put his gun back in the pocket in his chair.

“Sorry boss, was just doing my late-night checks, saw all the lights out.”

“Elle honey, you okay?”

“Yes, was hungry so I came to grab a snack, sorry for screaming Myk.”

“No prob. I will head back unless I’m needed. Sir, would ya put on some clothes before you catch a cold?” Myk turned and left.

Elle turned to face Nate who grinned and looked down. He had a washcloth covering his lap. Clearly that wasn’t a good idea. The washcloth moved.

“You are completely mental Nate.”

“Grab your snack and come back to bed.”

“Would you like anything?”

“There are some fruit bowls in the fridge, bring one for me.”

“Can I ask you something?” Elle asked as she looked through the window and watched Myk cross the lawn.

“Myk was my personal nurse before she was my bodyguard. We had known each other years ago and I helped her out with an issue she had. Don’t be jealous or concerned. She has seen me through some of my worst times. When I was recovering, she was solely responsible for my care 24 hours a day. She hardly slept. I had infections, hundreds of doctor visits. She is my best friend in the whole world, but you are the one I long to have in my arms. Myk has a boyfriend, Marcus and they want to get married at the end of this year.”

“Sorry, I didn’t mean to pry. I can see she loves you and I am glad she is there when you need her. Looking at her the first time at the club, I never thought she was a bodyguard, she is so hot and sexy.”

“Baby, Myk’s appearance is deceptive, she is a black belt, certified personal trainer, nurse, nutritionist, weapons expert, she speaks four languages and has a degree in Business. She chose to be my bodyguard. You are my woman; I have nothing to hide from you.” Nate turned and headed back to the bedroom.

When Elle entered the room, Nate was staring out the window. From his bedroom he could see the airport clearly, it was his favourite view.

“Did I upset you?” Elle asked.

“Upset no. Come here.” Nate held out his hand to her and she rushed over to take it.

“There are some bad things about me Elle, I don’t want you to ever find out but if you ask me, I promise I will always tell you the truth. Before my accident I was ... well let’s just say I ran in a circle of men who did not fear the law. We built up our wealth legally, but it gave us the power to have and achieve things people only dream of. I scaled it down after I was confined to the chair but if anything, ever happened to me, I can call on any one of them to help. I can pick up the phone now and tell them you are in trouble, and they will find you and bring you home, no questions asked.”

“I understand.”

“You have something else you want to ask.” He said softly.

“Do I please you Nate? I mean, you make me feel good but I know I don’t measure up to the women you had before.”

“I’ve never been anyone’s first. Never been naked inside a woman either. The women I dated just wanted status and that wasn’t an issue for me but

when they moved on, I felt no loss. You leave my eyesight, and my heart starts to shrivel. I want to keep you at home and make love to you until we are comatose. You have become the most important woman in my life, and I am going to cherish every single moment that we are together. You don't only please my body, but my mind feels lighter, freer than I have ever been.”

“Oh Nate.” Elle smiled widely as she sat in his lap and cuddled with him until they were ready for bed.

Chapter EIGHT - You Dare to threaten my woman?

Things at Naton Corp were progressing under Elle's management. More contracts for software were coming in. She authorised HR to hire temporary staff to fluctuate between jobs. She revamped the entire flow of the company to reflect positive movement. Nate was proud. The end of her trial period was approaching, he was nervous. When they were working, she treated him like her boss. When they were alone, he was the focal point of her affections. He decided he would approach the topic of her family and go from there.

Elle was Chairing a meeting with potential clients. Her voice was calm, confident and sexy. She didn't realise she sounded that way because it was her natural voice.

Nate listened but he kept his eyes on the men in the room. He was getting annoyed, the testosterone in the room was rising and he felt he would jeopardise the contracts if he didn't get a handle on his jealousy. Elle glanced at Nate every chance she got, and she could see he was getting angry.

"Ladies and gentlemen, we have concluded the first part of this morning's meeting, refreshments are available in the reception area. We will convene in 45 mins."

Everyone got up and left their folders on the table and headed out of the board room. Elle looked at Nate and left. Nate quickly followed. He could see she was upset. He couldn't help how he felt. She was his woman!

Elle went to her own office, sat at her desk and waited.

Nate rolled in, closed and locked the door. When he turned to face Elle, he knew he was going to get it.

“I’m sorry.”

“I know you are but my question is, why be sorry for who you are?”

“As of today I will no longer take the meetings with you, you are capable of handling them on your own.”

“Fine.”

“You don’t see men the way I do Elle, they get ideas without provocation.”

“I know men Nate, I have a brother and cousins and I have you. I know how to handle men, it’s your reaction to them I can’t handle. Do I growl at women when they blatantly stare at you? Do I bark at them when they lust visibly at you?”

“No.”

“Then stop it.”

A few hours later, Elle was wrapping up the meeting. She had secured contracts with four of the six and she was pleased. The other two needed a bit more time. She left the board room and was standing in the reception area, mingling with some of the guests.

One man in particular, came over and spoke softly.

“Can I take you out to dinner Elle?”

“Thank you for the invitation but I’m involved.”

“With that cripple? I’ve seen the way you two look at each other. Pity you want to waste yourself with someone as useless as him. I can do things to you he wouldn’t even dream of.”

Elle gasped and moved away.

“Mr. Windham, I would appreciate it if you kept those thoughts to yourself, it is definitely not appropriate.”

“I’ve seen you at the club dancing.”

Elle gasped. She was afraid of this day.

“What you think you could hide forever? Nate wants our money, I am willing to buy the software if you spend a night with me.” John Windham reached out and attempted to run his finger down her arm.

“Sir, please do not touch me, I am not interested in you.” Elle tried to move farther away without arousing suspicion.

“That cripple can’t satisfy you, I can.”

Elle sighed.

“If you don’t spend the night with me bitch, I will make sure you regret it.”

John’s voice was demonic, and it made Elle’s skin crawl.

She began to get a little afraid, to the others in the room, it looked like she was simply having a conversation with a potential client. What she did not know was that the man in her life, was listening to the conversation from his office.

“Myk.”

“Sir.”

“I need the file on John Windham.”

Myk walked over to the filing cabinet and pulled the file. She handed it to Nate and stepped back. The look on his face meant someone would either die, lose their job or have so many broken bones there would be no recovery.

“Call Mark, tell him leak any dirt we have on Windham.”

“Sir.”

Back in Reception

“I’m tired of this Mr. Windham, I won’t be sleeping with you, please leave me alone.”

“Don’t be shy all of a sudden, I see how you spread your legs on stage, inviting men to do things to you. I won’t hurt you but I bet I’m bigger than the cripple, you will feel me for a week. Give it a try.”

Elle turned to walk away. Windham grabbed her hand and yanked it. Elle tried not to let out a sound, but her hand hurt.

“Let go!”

In the next moment, John Windham was flat on his back, sporting a busted lip. Myk propped up on a wall as if nothing happened. Nate wheeled slowly over to Elle.

“Honey, are you okay?” Normally he would not use terms of endearment at work but he needed to let people know she was his. Whispers and murmurs could be heard but he didn’t care.

“My hand hurts other than that I’m fine.” Nate reached for her hand and realised she was holding it in a funny way.

“Myk, get Greg.” Elle’s hand was bruised where John had pulled it.

Myk pulled out her cell and made the call.

“Ten minutes sir.”

“Now, Mr. Windham, you are no longer welcome at Naton Corp. Whether my fiancée is willing to press assault charges, that is entirely up to her.” He looked up at Elle. She shook her head.

Some of the clients and staff murmured. She was his fiancée?

“As you can see, Elle is unwilling to take this any further.”

“Fiancée?” John screeched.

“You have known me for over twenty-years Nate, and you are willing to go against me for this bitch?”

Myk stood straight as Nate reached under his chair. She rested her hand on his shoulder, reminding him they were at his office.

“John...” Nate warned.

“What Nate? She worked in one of your clubs, that’s how you found her! She isn’t qualified to be the VP here. Are you blind? Let me have her for a few days, we can share.” John grinned wickedly from the floor.

“Everyone, I apologise for this gentleman’s behaviour.” Nate said firmly and nodded to Kim.

“Ladies and gentlemen, please take what’s left of the refreshments and head out.” Kim said nervously. She knew Nate was controlling his anger but the moment the guests were gone, she would be hiding behind her desk. She knew about her two bosses but when Nate said it out loud, her respect for him soared.

When the last person left the area. Nate glanced at Elle. Greg had just strolled through the door with his bag.

“Hey guys what’s the emergency?” Greg was a handsome Doctor, but he was fierce when it came to his patients. He was on call for Nate as he was the only one Nate allowed to perform surgery on him.

“Myk, take Elle and Greg to my lounge.”

“Greg, take Elle to Nate’s lounge.” Myk said.

“Myk.”

“Not leaving you here sir.” She replied.

“Fine. Greg, Elle, get going.”

Myk and Nate waited until the office door was closed with Greg and Elle on the other side of it.

“John, I know your reputation for sleeping with anyone who is willing, but my woman is off limits, especially since she refused you more than once, I will not say this again.”

“You have lost it Nate; I remember the days when we used to run shit together and all of a sudden you are shacking up with some black bitch from one of your clubs? Come on man, let me have her or I will take her from you and throw her back when I get tired.”

John didn't understand how his words affected Nate. When he did get the picture, Greg was standing over him with a strange look on his face.

“What happened?” John asked Greg as he struggled to sit up.

“I was told to wait here until you woke up. Damn, they messed you up good John. Why would you mouth off to Nate of all people? You know what he is capable of!”

“Man, she looks good and she would look better bouncing on my...” John never got the words out. When he woke up for the second time, he was in an alleyway in the heart of Bridgetown, surrounded by four men. Greg had punched him and left. Two of Nate's bodyguards took him out to a car and drove him away from Naton Corp.

The next day, the headline read, **John Windham, CEO of Wind Man & Associates caught with his pants down.**

“Oh gosh Nate, what did they do to him?” Elle asked as she curled up with him on the sofa. Her wrist was wrapped in a light bandage.

“Oh I dunno, a rectal exam maybe? He dared to threaten my woman.” Nate said as he reached across, took her wrist and kissed it.

Chapter NINE - Left Out

“Elle honey.” Nate whispered as he turned to face her in bed. They were just lounging in bed and she was reading a book on her tablet, and she stopped to look at him.

“Hi.” Her soft voice immediately made him hard. Good grief, will this ever stop?

“How come I haven’t met your family?”

“How come I haven’t met yours?” She replied with a sweet smile.

“I have none.”

Elle frowned.

“Nate?”

Nate sighed.

“My parents were only children on both sides, all of their relatives were gone now, I only had Jeff and well, you know how that went.”

“Oh Nate, we can go see them tonight, mom will love you.”

“I’m not pushing for this, but ... never mind.” He moved to get off the bed.

Elle quickly grabbed him and rolled him to face her again.

“It’s a Saturday, we will go meet them. I am not ashamed of you Nate.”

Elle grabbed her cell and called her parents and told them she was bringing Nate to meet them finally.

“Are you sure honey? I know things were moving a bit fast with the two of you and we don’t want to tell you how to live your life.” Elleyna said softly.

“I know you are still scared for me mom, but Nate is... not like that. He stands by his word, and he always treats me with respect and I’m not dancing at the clubs anymore, so that is a plus, right?”

“Tell her bring that man over tonight!” Leigh barked in the background.

“Hush sweetheart, and stop being a bully.”

“Love you Dad, we will see you tonight.” Elle laughed as she hung up.

They spent the day together, sharing memories good and bad, their love was blossoming into something neither of them ever thought would be possible.

When Elle pulled up to her parents’ home, Nate frowned.

“Elle?”

She tried not to look at him, knowing what his thoughts would be.

“Elle.” He said more forcefully.

“Yes Nate.”

“Why did you not tell me you needed help with your parents?”

“It’s my burden to bear.”

“I thought we were moving forward, we shared so many things today and you left out THIS?” He raised his voice.

Elle flinched and Nate was immediately sorry.

He ran his hand over his head.

“I’m sorry honey but this is not something you hide from the man you love.”

Nate was clearly angry.

Elle glanced at the house the lights were on and her parents were waiting on the porch.

Nate picked up his cell and pressed a number.

“Myk, get a crew to pack up Elle’s family and move them to the property in Bay Gardens, I want it done tomorrow.”

‘Do I need a cleaning crew?’

“No, Myra goes twice a week.”

‘Oh yes, okay will get it done. Don’t scare the in laws Nate.’ Myk hung up and rolled over on to Marcus who moaned loudly.

When Elle helped Nate from the car, her father ran down the footpath to help.
“We got it Dad, get back.” Elle growled.

“Young lady, do not growl at your father. Nate, it is great to finally meet you. Come, let get inside.” Leigh took the chair handles and wheeled Nate inside, leaving Elle speechless.

“Welcome to our home Nate.”

“Thank you and I hope you don’t take this the wrong way but I am moving you out of here tomorrow. You are welcome to stay at one of my houses until this one is redone.”

“What?” Elle and both her parents said at the same time.

“Sir, Ma’am, I don’t know what kind of people you are accustomed to but my mother taught me to always show kindness, Everleigh is my woman, I want to marry her and raise a family with her. There is no way I can allow the people responsible for her upbringing to stay in a place like this and I mean no disrespect.”

Elleyna began to sniffle.

“Son, as much as we...” Leigh began to speak.

“Sir, I wasn’t asking permission. A crew will come and help you pack up tomorrow and move you to your new home. Are you renting?”

“Huh? What? Oh, yes renting.” Leigh responded.

“Then consider this a gift from your son-in-law, I will have the deeds prepared in your names. The guys are welcome to stay as well.”

Elle stormed out of the house, Nate did not follow.

“Ooooh sis is pissed. A deep voice came from behind Nate.

“Hey son.”

“Mom, Dad, and you must be Nate.”

Nate held out his hand and shook Evan’s.

“Nice to meet you.” Nate said.

“Let’s have dinner, when she is ready, she will come back.” Elleyna said with a snort.

Everyone sat down and began to pass around dishes. Nate knew he overstepped his boundaries but the house was dilapidated. In his mind any attempt to repair would bring it crashing down.

“Elle, what is your problem?” Evan said as Elle came through the door and sat down next to him.

Elle pointed at Nate and her parents.

“Oh I get it. Nate, Elle has been giving our parents money from the day she started working, they never took any. You meet them for the first time and all of a sudden, they are accepting your offer. She is offended.”

“I know but she has been around me long enough to know that I would do this, it’s prolly why she avoided bringing me here. I actually thought she was ashamed of me being in a wheelchair.”

Elle gasped. That’s what he thought? Oh dear.

“Elle honey, listen to me. Years ago, when a man wanted to marry a woman, her father or family had to provide her with a dowry, it had to be substantial. We have nothing to offer Nate for you. Do you have any idea how that makes us feel? Yet here he is giving us something.”

“But that’s just it... I love her because of who she is and you both have a hand in that. I have never met a woman like her, she gives with her heart not her head or hands. I am proud to be with her and I am glad that I have the finances to provide her family with a proper roof over their heads.”

Elle began to cry.

“Waterworks!” Evan snickered.

“Stop teasing your sister.” Leigh growled.

“Elle, you owe Nate an apology.”

“It’s okay, I understand her quite well, we will settle this when we get home.”

Nate said softly as he smiled at Elle.

Everyone ate and laughed and talked but Elle remained quiet for the rest of the visit. When they were ready to leave, Elleyna gave Nate a biscuit tin with some of her homemade treats and watched as Leigh pushed him out to the car.

“Everleigh James I am disappointed with your behaviour. You have bragged to me about the kind of man Nate is and yet you get angry when he portrays exactly who you described.”

“He didn’t talk to me about it mum.”

“You kept it from him, how do you think that makes him feel? We didn’t accept to upset you, we realise the gift for what it is. He was sharing his wealth with us even though you aren’t his wife. How many men do that? Go on home.” Elle hugged her mother and left.

Back at Home

“Elle.” Nate said as he pushed the front door closed.

“What Nate?”

“So, you are angry with me?”

“Damned right I’m angry! You are always saying to discuss things and you show up like a knight in shining armour and my parents fall all over you!”

“I’m sorry you see it that way. Would you have rather me show up, eat drink, come home and feel no guilt?”

“Guilt? Over what?”

“You think that because it’s night that I didn’t see the MOH spray painted on the side? I’m not blind neither am I stupid! They should not be living in those conditions, and you should have told me.” Now Nate was angry.

“I didn’t need you to fix my problems!”

“I see. I have work to do, I will see you at the office in the morning. Good night Elle.”

Nate rolled away and headed to his study. Closing the door, he sighed and went to his desk. He turned on the A/C and got to work.

Around 3am, he heard his study door open. He had gotten tired and lay down on the sofa and fell asleep.

“Nate are you awake?” Elle whispered.

Silence.

Elle quietly walked over to him and sat on the floor.

“I’m sorry Nate, I feel so conflicted. You know how I feel about you but sometimes your decisions make me feel inadequate. Do you know how many times I have tried to get my parents to move out? A few words from you and they were ready to leave. I’m not angry at you, I know your heart was in the right place. I’m sorry Nate.”

“I’m sorry too honey.” Nate said.

Elle gasped, she didn’t realise he was awake.

“Elle, am I not the one you should come to when things are rough? If you are sick, need money, a ride, if you hurt yourself, am I not on the top of the list of people you should call?”

“Yes but...”

“No, that’s it, full stop. I am the one you come to first. There is no way your parents should be living in that house and I am not sorry for the decision I made. I understand your reaction, believe me I do.

Elle surged upward and kiss Nate on the lips.

“I love you Nate, I won’t worry about it anymore, thank you for looking out for my family.”

“Well you are my family now.”

“Yes, I definitely am. Come to bed with me.”

“Okay, let’s go.”

They went to their bedroom, got naked and fell asleep in each other’s arms.

Chapter TEN - Petty Jealousy

Naton Corp was a hive of activity. Elle was bringing in contracts up to the wazoo and people were beginning to talk.

“Babe, do we have any meetings today?” Nate asked from the shower. Elle had given up her apartment and totally moved in with Nate. Against her brother’s advice but she was in love and would not change her mind.

“I have four meetings honey, three potential clients and one service provider. I can reschedule if you like.”

“No, don’t bother.” Nate was upset. He hooked up his harness and began to bathe. He felt warm arms wrap around his waist and a soft kiss landed in the middle of his back.

“Let me call and have Kim reschedule, don’t be mad with me.”

Nate turned and looked at the woman he loved. His face was unreadable.

“You work too hard Elle; I feel like I pushed you into this role and now...” His voice trailed off and he looked up to the ceiling. He had regrets, he knew she was talented, gifted by the way she dealt with work and people. He was jealous of his own company. How stupid was that?

“Nate, talk to me, this isn’t like you.” She wrapped her arms around him tighter as the water sprayed from behind him.

“I’m being stupid and needy Elle. You are a fantastic VP and I love you more and more every day because of the dedication you have shown to my company.”

“Then what’s wrong?”

“You are always busy now. I feel like I’m losing you to your job.”

Elle gasped and let him go. Nate frowned.

“I’ll cut back, hire two assistants and spend more time with you, is that suitable?” Elle said with a strained tone.

“No, it’s not what I want!” Nate turned around and tried to finish his shower.

“Then Nate, tell me what is really bothering you.”

“We haven’t made love in weeks, are you tired of me already?”

“Oh Nate.” Elle put her hand to her chest which suddenly began to hurt. She walked around in front of him and looked into his eyes. She raised her hands and held his face in them.

“I love you Nate and if you are having doubts about us, tell me as soon as you have them, and let us work it out, that’s what we promised each other.”

“It’s hard for me to admit shit to you Elle.”

“Do I make it hard for you?” Elle giggled at her words.

“Yes, you do and stop that I’m being serious here.” He grew hard at her words.

“Sorry. Nate, I will cut back my workload and the reason we haven’t made love is because I was tired, due to work obviously. I have one project to finish up and then I am all yours until next week.”

“You make me feel vulnerable Elle.” Nate said in a moody voice.

“I don’t care, you can be strong, silly, like a lion or an eagle or a mouse with me. I love you.”

Elle’s hands roamed his body. She loved touching him; his back was strong and his muscles were well defined. His hair was soft to the touch and many times she gripped it when he was giving her orgasms.

“Can you go in late to work?” Asked Nate as he dried himself off.

“My first meeting is 10:30, so yes.”

“I need you.” Nate’s voice was husky.

Elle, looked at him and smile.

“I’m all yours.”

He made love to her as if he would never see her again.

At the office that morning, Nate was sitting behind his desk signing some contracts. He felt himself harden as a memory flooded his thoughts.

They were working on some proposals and all of a sudden, Nate took one look at Elle and hardened to the point of pain.

“Nate?”

“Elle.”

“What’s wrong?”

“I’ve missed you today.”

“Is that right? Well then, my love, show me how much you miss me.”

“Go lock the door Elle.” Nate said as his eyes turned dark.

Elle did as he commanded and when she returned to him, he reached out his hand and spun her to face away from him.

“I have been thinking about this all day. Watching you in the board room, knowing that everything under this suit has been touched by only me.”

“You sure about that?” Elle teased as Nate ran his hands from her legs to her waist.

“Playing brave, are we?” Nate pushed her skirt over her ass and yanked her panties down. Elle gasped at his roughness.

“I need you so bad Elle; I feel like I’m gonna go mad if I don’t have you. Will you let me?”

“You are taking too long, I have a meeting to get to.” She teased some more. She didn’t know Nate was already stroking himself, he pushed her to bend over and squeeze her legs together. Then, he pulled her back on to him in one smooth motion and entered her, all the way in.

“Nate.” She almost yelled out his name.

“Shhhhh baby.”

“I... oh God.” Nate wrapped his arms around her waist and began to move.

“Tell me how good it feels baby.”

“I don’t know.” She whispered.

“So I can stop then?” Nate teased but when she clenched around him he had to grit his teeth not to finish quickly.

“I love you do you know that?” Nate asked as he pushed up into her.

“Yes, I know.” She responded.

“Who is your meeting with today?” Nate asked as he kept moving inside her. Elle froze. Oh no.

“Torien Branch.” She whispered and waited for the green monster.

Nate held her against his chest and his body trembled.

“Nate.” She whispered.

“Be quiet.”

Nate was angry.

“I love you Elle, please don’t leave me.”

Elle tried to get away from him.

“You don’t want me anymore?” Nate asked.

“Not when jealousy is the focal point of our love making. You want me to smell like you when I go to the meeting so Torien will know we were together. God what is wrong with you?” Elle moved completely away from him and fixed her clothes.

“I don’t get it, is it the men you don’t trust or is it me?”

Nate remained silent.

Elle gasped turned and left without another word. She headed to her office but before she could get there, her assistant told her Mr Branch was in her

office waiting. Crap, she didn't have time to clean herself up. Nate knew this would happen. Damn him!

Elle gracefully walked into her office and greeted Torien but when he got up to shake her hand, she politely refused.

"It's okay Mr. Branch, take your seat. Now what can I do for you?"

Torien looked at her in a weird all-knowing way.

"What's wrong?"

"That man of yours is interesting."

"I'm sorry but we are not here to discuss my relationship." Elle was immediately frustrated.

"I find it disturbing that Nate would do such a thing just to prove a point. Well, point taken."

"What are you talking about?"

"Nate knows I am never late, our appointment was scheduled for 9am, you strolled in here at 9:10. He knew I would be waiting. Well well."

"Whatever is going on between you two leave me out of it."

"Well that's kind of impossible when I mentioned that I was interested in asking you out. It was only then he allowed me to know that you my dear are his woman and it will never happen."

Elle groaned. She could not believe how petty men become when they are jealous.

"I'm sorry Mr. Branch but yes Nate is my fiancé, so there will be nothing between you and I."

"I can smell him all over you, so he has proven his point. Enough said. Tell him I want the software in a month, I will pay the full amount if delivered on time. Have a good day."

Elle stared at the door as Torien closed it. She could not believe the man she was involved with. She decided she didn't want to see him for the rest of the day, she packed up her bag, left the office and headed home.

Chapter ELEVEN - Elle runs away

“ELLE!” Nate shouted as he wheeled himself through the living room door.

“Yes Nate.” Elle said with frustration.

“Why did you leave without telling anyone?”

“Were you worried I would go out and meet with some man and leave you?”

Myk flinched, it was time for her to leave.

“Sir, I will be leaving now.”

“Okay Myk.” Nate responded.

“Bye Elle, glad you are safe.”

“Thanks Myk.

“Now Mr Tondale, let me say this again, I love you, I am in love with you, I want and need only you. All the good and bad things in my life I want to share with you. Do you understand how betrayed your actions make ME feel? You had sex with me in your office right before a meeting so Torien could smell me!”

Nate lowered his head.

“Look at me Nate.”

Nate looked up and into her eyes.

“You need to trust me or I’m leaving you.”

Nate froze. No, she couldn’t!

“I get jealous, and my heart begins to hurt when men ask me to put in a good word for them. We need to get married soon.”

“Will me being your wife make you any less jealous? I think not. If I’m only the fiancée, and you act like this, when I become the wife, you will start killing people!”

Nate covered his face with his hands in shame. She was right. He needed to keep himself in check. He couldn’t afford to lose her, ever.

“I’m sorry Everleigh.” Nate said sincerely.

“I know Nate, but when you do things like this, I get doubts. We don’t need this kind of behaviour, it will ruin what we are trying to build.” She walked over to him and kiss him on his forehead. He quickly raised his head and kissed her.

“Let me make it up to you.”

“I need a shower first. Your dinner is in the oven, have some, I’ll be back in a few.” Elle left go take a shower and change. When she came back, Nate was in the living room on the sofa eating and watching TV. She sat next to him and watched with him until she fell asleep. When she awoke the next morning, she was in the same spot and Nate was next to her. She eased away from him, smiled and left to get ready for work.

At The Office

“So Nate, when are you gonna ask Elle to marry you? I’ve never seen you so happy.”

“I’m not sure I can hold on to her Roland, her portfolio is on the rise and pretty soon companies bigger than Naton Corp will be trying to get her away from me. How can I compete with all those men who can go dancing with her, travel the world with her?”

“Bruh, are you kidding me? That woman sees only you and no one else. Do you know how many dates she has turned down? There is a pool going to see how many she will turn down by the end of the year, the person who wins has to buy drinks.”

Nate frowned. He didn't want Elle to be the topic of office gossip.

“Don't worry, it's harmless, I've even placed a bet. That woman is dynamite in the boardroom, she stands by you no matter what and she never lets anyone look down on you. Marry her Nate.”

“I don't know, she makes me lose my self-confidence when it comes to her.”

“Let me ask you this. If she left you tomorrow, what would you do to get her back.”

“Anything, sell the company if I had to, she means everything to me.”

“So why do you think that you aren't the same for her?”

Nate sighed. He was frustrated.

“Stop worrying, she is not going to leave you and if you get her pregnant, she will be tied to you for the rest of your life.”

“I told her when we first made love if she got pregnant, we would get married and raise our child together but I'm not so sure now.”

Elle felt her heart break as she stood by the door. He didn't want a child with her. Why didn't he say so? They have never used protection. Nate said he loved the feel of her and she felt the same way. So why be afraid of having children if he didn't safeguard against it?

Elle drifted backwards and went to her office. She hurried to the bathroom and washed her face. Looking into the mirror, she saw a woman who was on the rise, she was making ten times more money than working at the club. Nate helped her invest in stocks and a few startup companies. She had health and life insurance, a good pension plan and in a couple of years, she

would be a millionaire. All because of Nate, it was what he wanted for her but now, she didn't feel his love. She felt betrayed.

“Elle honey, Roland and I are heading out to lunch, you wanna come with?”

Nate asked as he stopped by her office.

“Uh, thanks but I have to finish up here for a meeting in a few, then I am heading home to cook.”

“Okay I will see you at home then.” Nate said as he blew her a kiss and left.

Elle sat at her desk and as she opened the container of food, Kim had gotten for her, she felt lightheaded. Without warning her stomach heaved. She folded over trying to calm herself then she got up and ran straight to the bathroom.

At The Doctor's Office

Elle had thrown up everything she had for breakfast, she felt dried out. She hobbled over to the kitchenette and got some bottled water. Taking a sip, she called her doctor and made a special request to see him.

“Elle sweetie, you're pregnant about six weeks.”

“I'm pregnant.” Elle repeated softly.

“You don't want the baby?” Dr. Camden asked softly.

“I'm not sure, this shouldn't come as a shock, my boyfriend and I don't use protection but I never...”

“It's okay, take some time to process this, in the meantime, pick up some info from the reception desk and she will give you some vitamins. Come back and see me in two weeks, okay?”

“Thanks Amari.”

Elle drove back to the office in a total daze. She and Nate were going to have a baby. NO! She was having the baby, Nate didn't want a child.

Why did this have to happen now? Things were going so well.

"Hey babe, I thought you were going home to cook?" Nate appeared in the doorway. He had taken off his suit jacket and was wearing a button-down long sleeve orange shirt. God he was sexy. Her body throbbed at the sight of him.

"I came back to pick up something, I'm heading home now. Are you all done for the day?"

"Yes, you can drive."

As they arrived home, Elle's mood was sombre. How could she tell the man she loved that they were going to have a child but since he didn't want one with her, she was leaving him and the company.

"Baby, what's wrong?"

Elle looked up from her plate and tried to smile. As she looked into Nate's eyes, she warred with herself. Tell him or not?

"I..."

"Are you ill?" Nate asked when he saw her expression.

Elle shook her head and swallowed.

"I'm not hungry."

"Okay, well just put it up for tomorrow." Nate knew she was lying but he didn't want to push.

"Are you cheating on me Elle?" Nate's voice was harsh and the moment the words came out, he regretted them.

Elle flinched as she stared at him.

"I'm sorry, ignore me it's been a long day."

"Is that how you think of me Nate? I'm just waiting to cheat on you?"

“No, I didn’t mean it, I told you to ignore me.” Nate pushed his half empty plate away from him.

“Suit yourself, I’m going to take a shower and get to bed, I’m tired.”

“Elle please don’t go, talk to me. I’m sorry.” Nate said gently as he wheeled himself towards her.

Elle looked into Nate’s eyes, searching for what she did not know.

“Do you love me Nate?”

“Yes.” He didn’t pause or hesitate.

“How do you know it’s me you love and not the idea of me.”

“I... years ago I fell in love, and she broke my heart. I realised later, it was not love, she was popular, well liked but she was sleeping with several of my friends. When they told me, I called them liars because I never believed someone as sweet as her could do that to me. It damaged me somehow and I lost my ability to trust people. When I got married, I knew I didn’t need to trust Mandy, we weren’t intimate so who she slept with didn’t matter. You Everleigh mean everything to me, the world we have built between the two of us, is what I have been searching for all my life. Anything that threatens that is an issue for me. I am a jealous man, I make no apologies. Yes, I will get angry, yes I will throw a tantrum but I will also listen to your side, try to see reason. Only you Elle. No one else has my attention the way you do. The first time we made love my world was ripped apart. You opened up yourself to me and only me, no other man can say that. Do you think I would not know that I love you the woman? You who holds me close at night, you who respects me, you Elle the woman who has stood by my side when others want to throw me away. I love you, all of you.”

Elle was in tears.

“Baby don’t cry. Come on, let’s take that shower we can relax in bed if you want, just don’t cry.”

Elle said nothing but she let Nate lead her to the bathroom, stripped her of her clothes and bathed her. As they lay in bed, Nate felt his desire rise.

“Elle honey.”

She kept silent but she turned to face him.

“Would you allow me to make love to you tonight?”

Nate had never asked her before, what changed? She knew this would be her last night in his arms, she would give them what they needed and tomorrow, she would be gone. Nate smiled when Elle put her arms around his neck and pulled him to her. He quickly shifted and moved down between her legs. He loved to smell her when she was aroused. It got him so hard stars would explode behind his eyes.

“Nate.” Elle said breathlessly as she looked down at him. All she could see was the top of his head. It was a beautiful sight and when he looked up at her while continuing, Elle felt all her nerve endings go haywire.

“Make me come Nate, please!”

He loved to hear when she said that. He pulled away and crawled between her legs.

“Raise your legs for me baby.” She did as she was told.

“God you are so beautiful, I love you so much Elle.” He maneuvered himself at her entrance, looked into her eyes and surged.

That initial entry was her undoing. It never failed to literally take her breath away.

“NATE!”

Chapter TWELVE - Nate is Furious

Nate awoke with a start. He was alone. Last night was memorable, he felt he had connected with Elle on a level they had not reached before, so where was she?

“Elle?” No response.

“MYK!” Nate bellowed as he left the bedroom and headed to the living room.

“Sir?”

“Where is Elle?” Nate’s face was brimming with anger.

Myk looked confused.

“Sir, she left early to head to the office.”

“Why would she go to the office on a Saturday when we have plans?” Nate muttered.

He pulled out his cell and dialed her number.

“The caller you have dialed is out of cellular range or is turned off, please try again later.”

Nate pulled up the surveillance camera for the office and checked the footage.

“She hasn’t been there. Are you sure she said the office? What was she wearing?”

“Yes sir Office, a pair of navy blue jeans, grey halter, and sneakers.”

Nate went back to the bedroom and it’s only then he realise some of her things were gone.

“She left me? Why would she lie about where she was going?”

Myk felt awful for Nate.

“I’m sorry sir. I will ask around.”

“NO!” Nate barked. “If she wants to leave, let her, I won’t force her to stay.”

Nate wheeled his chair back to his bedroom and slammed the door so hard all the ornaments and photos lining the wall fell to the floor. Myk felt the world shift.

Several weeks later.

“Sir, there is a doctor on the line for Elle, would you like to take the message?”

Nate nodded and Kim transferred the call. Since Elle left him, he had been going through the motions. Working like a jerk was his life now. She didn't want him, he would go back to the grindstone. To hell with her then!

Nate heard the phone ring, and he answered it.

“Nate here.”

“Mr. Tondale, this is Dr. Amari Camden...”

“Is Elle okay? Is she with you? Is she hurt?”

“Slow down son. She came to see me and she missed her 2 week check up. She has you listed as her ICE and I called her cell and got no answer. Can you remind her to come see me?”

“Elle was sick?”

“Sick in a way yes and as her ICE I can inform you, but you need to bring her in.”

“What's wrong with her Dr. Camden?”

“She is pregnant Mr. Tondale. Are you the father?”

“Dr. Camden, Elle left our home weeks ago and she has not returned and now that I know why she left, I need to find her and when I do, I will bring her to you.”

“That's fine, good luck, she is a nice girl.”

“Nice doesn't even cut it, thank you.”

As Nate hung up the phone, his blood began to boil. She was pregnant with his baby. Wait, was it his? Is that why she left? Was she pregnant with another man's child? Nate roared and swiped his hand and everything on his desk was scattered to the floor. He stood up and surprised himself but when his legs began to shake he fell backwards but as he fell he missed the chair and fell to the floor.

Nate was furious. His baby was cooking in Elle's body and she left him?

"MYK!" Nate bellowed.

Myk looked at Kim and frowned.

"You better go." Kim said, she knew her boss's fury and he would be angry until whatever plagued him was resolved. Myk opened the door to Nate's office and her heart hurt. Nate was sitting on the floor behind his desk with his head in his hands.

"Nate, what's wrong?" She was definitely worried.

"My baby."

"We will find her sir, we haven't stopped looking."

"No Myk, she is pregnant. Was she cheating on me? Is the baby another man's? Is that why she left me? Doesn't she love me anymore? She said she loved me, but instead of talking to me she left me? Why would she do this to us?" Nate's voice was filled with so much pain Myk wanted to cry.

No. Not Elle, she loved him too much to let another man touch her, something was wrong. Myk helped Nate back into his chair and watched as the tears fell from his eyes. Gosh he was really hurting.

"Sir, Elle would never cheat on you, hold on to that. Let me call in some more favours, we will find her." Myk left.

Chapter THIRTEEN - Come Home Elle

“Sir! I found her! She rented an apartment in Christ Church and she was...”

Crap, Myk didn’t want to say where she found Elle.

Nate looked up and cocked his head to one side.

“Where did you find her?”

“Working in a bar.”

“She was dancing? With my baby in her belly? Bring the car NOW!”

Within a few minutes, Myk was driving to Christ Church. She pulled up to the bar and helped Nate inside.

Nate was gripping the chair handles so hard, Myk second guessed her decision.

“Sir, you need to calm down, if you scare her, she will run again, she may leave the island next time.”

Nate nodded and let go of the handles. As they got inside, Nate’s heart hurt him. There was the woman he wanted to spend the rest of his life with, dancing for a room full of men. He didn’t go to her. He got hard just watching and groaned inwardly. He didn’t have an issue with her dancing, that’s how he met her, but she was carrying precious cargo. He was furious.

Just then, one of the men grabbed her ass and she visibly flinched and moved away from him. The man did not give up.

“Come here sexy, let me slap that ass for you.”

“Sorry buddy, we have a no touch policy.” Elle said firmly but respectfully.

The man didn’t care, and he let her know.

“Look bitch, I paid to come in here and I am gonna touch you so just shut up and let me get my money’s worth.” The man licked his lips and kissed at Elle.

Nate growled.

“Myk.”

“Sir.”

Myk left Nate and walked over to the man.

“Sir, if you know what’s good for you, leave the lady alone.”

“Who the fuck are you to tell me leave her alone?”

“Try to touch her again, please.” Myk warned.

The man reached out his hand to a now stunned Elle and all could be heard was a loud yelp as his fingers cracked under Myk’s hand.

Elle paused her routine and looked around. She knew as long as Myk was here, Nate had found her.

She quickly left the stage but when she got to her changing room, she didn’t think he would be waiting for her.

“Elle, before I leave here, I need to ask you a few questions. If you don’t want to be with me, I will have to abide by your decision but answer me first.”

Elle nodded slowly.

“Are you pregnant?”

“Yes.”

“Is the baby mine?” As the words left his mouth, Elle started to cry.

“Elle, don’t cry, just answer me. Did you cheat on me? That’s why you left?”

“I would never cheat on you Nate, this baby was created by you and I. If you want a DNA test to make sure, feel free when the time is right.”

“Then why did you leave me? I thought we were doing fine?”

“I heard you and Roland talking. You said you didn’t want a child.”

Nate gasped. This woman.

“I can’t be with you knowing you don’t want a baby with me. Do you have any idea how that hurts?”

“So, the woman I love decided that she heard something and instead of confronting me, making me face you to find out the truth, you left?”

“What is the truth Nate? The first time we made love I expressed my fear of getting pregnant and you told me, we would get married and raise our child together but you confide in Roland that you weren’t sure you wanted a child with me.”

“Oh Elle, yes I did tell him that but if you had stayed or came in you would heard me say that a child with you would be the best thing that ever happened to me. Of course, I have doubts, but they are about ME and my ability to keep you by my side, don’t you get that? I am in a wheelchair! There are things I cannot do. You on the other hand are limitless. I would love our child and because he or she came from you, I would love you more than I ever have. A child would bind us together forever, but you didn’t TRUST ME! You said you loved me Everleigh, don’t I have feelings?”

Elle gasped and sunk into the nearest chair.

“I’m sorry Nate.”

“So am I, it seems that I am not the man you need after all. We agreed we would talk things out but you left me.”

“What do you mean by that?” Elle was fearful.

“You left ME Elle, you didn’t give me the chance to offer a reason for what I said. That tells me you don’t trust me; I can’t be with a woman who has no trust or faith in me. I’m sorry.” Nate turned to leave.

Elle watched as he left. It was hard when she left him but now, she knew how he felt, she still wanted him.

“Please don’t go Nate, I said I was sorry. I misunderstood what you said.”

“You would rather come to a bar to dance with my baby in your belly, than tell the man you claim to love, that he said something you didn’t like. What

if someone attacked you, tried to rape you on your way home? FUCK! I am going home. You need to think about what you want Elle. Either you want me and are willing to work shit out when it happens, or we simply be parents to our child and forget being in a relationship. I want you to come home Elle, but you need to believe that is where you belong, by my side. You choose.” Nate wheeled himself out and left the bar. Myk was waiting at the car and when she saw Nate come out alone, she frowned.

“Sir? She isn’t coming?”

“I gave her a choice, I for one am going home.”

Chapter FOURTEEN - Daddy

Elle was sad. She misjudged him and the situation. Now, she was hurting even more. She left work soon after Nate left the bar and headed home to her apartment. It had been a few weeks since she left him. She missed him so much and she knew she was wrong but would he still want her? She had to find out.

Elle rubbed her belly as she ate a granola bar and drank some juice.

“Oh my mini Nate, your parents need help, will you help us baby? Everything will be okay, mommy will fix this.”

Elle got up, took a shower and got dressed. She opened her travel bag and pulled out a Green sexy Boho summer knee length dress. It fitted her like a dream. She put on a pair of canvas shoes, grabbed her bag and headed through the door.

She pulled up to Nate Corp with serious butterflies in her belly. She was scared he would reject her.

“Now or never Elle.”

She got out of her SUV and headed to reception.

“Elle! You’re back! Mr. Tondale is in a meeting but I’m sure he will see you, go right in.” Kim’s voice was spritely and welcoming.

“Thanks love.” As she approached Nate’s office door, she heard shouting.

“I don’t fucking CARE Roland.” Nate barked.

“That woman loves you, go after her!”

“She doesn’t want me, she left, and she hasn’t come back to me. I’m not good enough for her it seems and clearly not good enough to be the father of her child. How do I deal with that?”

“You tell me to my face.” Elle said as she pushed the office door.

“That is my cue.” Roland said as he kissed Elle on her cheek and left, locking the door behind him.

Elle smiled at Roland as he left and went to sit on the sofa.

“So Nate, I’m here, what’s next?” Elle asked softly.

“You tell me, you were the one who stayed away.”

“Do you still love me?”

“I haven’t stopped. Do you still love me?” Nate asked.

“Yes I do.”

“Then why haven’t you come back to me?”

“I lost my confidence Nate. Yes, I misunderstood what you said to Roland but my heart hurt when I thought you didn’t want to have a child with me. You have made me feel like a woman from the night we met, you have respected me always. I was hurting and then I realised I hurt you in the process.”

Nate sighed.

“Come here Everleigh.”

Elle got up and went to her favourite place in the whole world, Nate’s arms.

“Do you want to come back home?”

“More than anything.”

“Good. Your job is waiting for you. I delegated out your responsibilities while you were gone. Take another week to refamiliarize yourself with the projects and we will be fine.”

“Okay, thank you.”

All of a sudden Elle felt it and she blushed.

“That’s what you do to me Elle.” He reached up and held her face in his hands and kissed her hard.

Elle pulled away and looked into his eyes.

“Take me home Nate.”

“Now?”

“Or we can go to the lounge. I need you.”

Nate didn't wait, he wheeled his chair into the lounge and Elle quickly got all her clothes off. Within minutes Nate was inside her, she wanted to scream out but she remembered they were at work.

“I love you so much Elle, don't leave me again.” Nate said as he plunged into her. She wrapped her legs around his back and moaned.

“I won't, I promise and besides, can't have my baby daddy all alone for the vultures to circle.

Nate stilled. He was going to be a father. He opened his eyes and stared down at Elle. He felt his heart burst. He loved this woman and she was having his child, his.

Elle was surprised when she felt liquid drip onto her face.

“Oh Nate. My Nate. We are blessed.”

“I'm going to be a daddy.”

Elle laughed.

“Yes, my love you are going to be a daddy.”

Her words gave Nate a surge of pride. He pushed into her, letting her know she and the baby belonged to him and only him. When he climaxed, he felt his soul was at peace.

As their breathing calmed, Nate put his hand on Elle's belly and kissed it.

“Hello baby, I'm your daddy.”

Elle's heart burst in her chest and she felt that the world was right again.

Chapter FIFTEEN – Marry Me

Elle felt her stomach heave, she flew off the bed and ran to the bathroom. Nate felt her move and got into the chair as quickly as he could. He wheeled into the bathroom and rubbed her back.

He waited until she stopped.

“Feeling any better? Do you need anything honey?”

“Crackers and ginger ale.” She groaned out.

“I will get Myk to grab some for you. Are you heading to work today?”

“If I feel better sure, if not I will stay home and do some light work.”

“I will stay home as well.”

Elle wiped her mouth with the damp washcloth Nate gave to her.

“Okay, thank you.”

Myk went to a wholesale place and bought a case of ginger ale and four different types of crackers. She Googled what kind of crackers pregnant women prefer.

“Thanks Myk, I feel like I’m turning you into my personal assistant.” Elle said softly as she saw the things Myk put on the counter.

“Elle, whatever you need, I will get for you. You have turned my boss and best friend into someone different and the world is better for it. He smiles more, he relaxes more, and you are now carrying his child. No matter what you need, call me.”

Elle felt like crying. She went over to Myk and hugged her. Myk laughed softly.

“So I was a horrible person before I met Elle?” Nate said from the kitchen door.

Myk snorted, smiled at Elle and left.

“Great, just great.” Nate grumbled with a smile.

Elle took a bottle of Ginger ale and poured into a glass with a few blocks of ice. She immediately felt better. She took a few crackers and nibbled on them.

“I love you Elle.” Nate said as he looked at her lovingly.

“I love you too Nate.”

“Marry me.” Nate pulled a small box from the pocket in his chair and held it out to her.

Elle’s hands flew to her face.

“I know it’s soon but you are pregnant with my baby and I want him or her to be born into a family. I want to spend the rest of my life loving and caring for you. I want another child when you are ready. I want you to be my business partner. I have already changed my will in case anything happens to me, everything is yours. I know my money isn’t a focal point for you, but you are the one I owe my happiness to, and I could never repay you for everything you have given me.”

Elle walked forward, took the box and opened it. Her eyes widened and she looked at Nate.

“How did you know?”

“Your brother told me.”

Years ago, Elle had lost a piece of jewellery her mom had given to her and for years she searched for anything looking remotely like it. Her brother had given Nate a photo of it and Nate had a ring made like it, just for her.

“Yes Nate, I will marry you.”

Nate beamed and he pulled her onto his lap. He took the ring from the box and placed it on her finger. Kissing her lips softly, Nate wheeled both of them into the bedroom.

“Wait, sorry honey, I was only thinking of my own desire. We can do this later.” Nate said when he remembered she was feeling sick all morning.

“Sorry.” Elle said.

“Don’t worry, I’m not going anywhere.

“You make me so happy Nate.”

“I can say the same for you honey. Come on, get some rest, I will try to do some work from here today. What would you like for lunch?”

“Chicken soup and garlic bread, my stomach should be able to handle that.”

Nate picked up his cell and called Myk.

“What do you need Sir?” Myk’s voice came over the speaker phone.

“Chicken soup and garlic bread for lunch please.”

“And for dinner?” Myk asked.

“Elle?” Nate asked.

“Ummm Myk, can you get me some fresh fruit, a large salad, some peppermint ice cream, a pack of bagels, cream cheese and 6 packs of probiotic yogurt.”

Myk laughed.

“Is that all?”

Elle and Nate laughed.

“She’s pregnant Myk, her mind may change before you get hang up.”

“Not a problem sir. Let me get going.”

Myk went out and bought the stuff Elle asked for. She went about her duties for the day and then later she stood in the line at the salad bar to place the

order for Elle. She specifically asked for everything except pineapple as Elle was allergic to it. Her cell rang and she answered while giving her order. About five minutes into her call, the server called her number. Elle looked at the transparent container and frowned.

“Miss, I said everything except Pineapple, my boss is allergic.”

“Sorry for you but I can’t take it back, you will have to purchase another one.”

Myk frowned as the voice on the other end barked.

“Put me on speaker!”

Myk did as she was told.

“It is company policy to offer compensation when you make a mistake. You cannot afford to play with people’s food. I heard when the order was placed and you are in the wrong. Either replace the order or I will shut the whole place down and you will never find another job on this island!”

Myk shuddered. The fact that Nate was willing to close one of his own restaurants for this, told her so much about him. He was protecting the mother of his child. If Elle ate Pineapple, she got a full body rash and had to take antibiotics but with the baby, there was no way Myk would risk it.

“Who are you to tell me what to do?”

The call ended abruptly.

“Oh oh.” Myk said and waited.

Just then the telephone on the wall rang and the supervisor picked it up and frowned and looked at the server and shook her head.

“Luan, what did you do?” Cherrie the supervisor asked as she hung up the phone.

“This customer placed an order, and I told her I can’t take it back, she would have to buy another one and this ogre yelled at me from over the phone about company policy! Over a twenty-dollar salad!” Luan shrieked.

“Over a twenty-dollar salad, this place may now close. We are all fired if we don’t fire you! Get out!” Cherrie gritted.

“WHAT? I didn’t do anything wrong; SHE placed the wrong order!” Pointing stupidly at Myk.

“Luan, the owner of this restaurant is her boss, and the order is for his pregnant fiancée who is allergic to Pineapple. The boss was on the phone when the order was placed. Now, again, get out.”

Luan gasped. She offended the wrong people and now she would be out of a job. The tears flowed down her cheeks, and she began to beg.

“I can’t lose this job, it took me months to find it!”

“Should have thought about that before you became arrogant and disrespected the wrong person.”

Luan hung her head, grabbed her bag and left.

“I’m sorry Miss, let me get that salad for you.”

The other customers had nothing to say, which was surprising but if you think about it, Myk was calm and clearly knew how to handle the situation. She didn’t need defending because she was backed by someone powerful.

Myk took the salad and headed back to the Tondale home.

“Thanks Myk.” Elle yawned.

“Elle, get some sleep you look dog tired.” Myk said.

“I know, gosh, being pregnant sure is tiresome.”

“That’s why you need to rest. Is Nate in his office?”

“Yep, I’m gonna get me a snack and head back to bed, tell him where I am.”

“Okay.”

Myk looked at Elle as she headed to the kitchen, and she longed to be in that position one day.

“Sir. Elle has gone to bed.”

“Thanks Myk, I won’t need you today, take the day off.”

“Sir?”

“Call Victor and tell him bring the team.”

“Okay, did I do something wrong?”

“No, but you need time off. So, every week, pick two days you need and do not come to work.”

Myk was silently shocked.

“I don’t understand Nate, why are you doing this?”

“Myk, when have you ever taken a vacation? I have been selfish with your time. Don’t question me on this further and don’t think you can get away with not taking time off. Get going.”

“Thanks sir.”

Chapter SIXTEEN – The Boss Is In Love

The next day. Myk had come back from shopping, she used her key and let herself into the house. She did it quietly as usual. For someone her size she was light on her feet. As she moved through the house heading toward the kitchen, she heard a loud moan and Nate called out Elle's name.

"Tsk tsk, these yungens." Myk muttered as she quietly put away the items Elle asked for.

Myk was giving Nate an update on work at Naton Corp but after not hearing a response, she glanced up from the papers she was reporting from and when she saw the look on Nate's face, she wanted to giggle.

"SIR! You haven't heard a word I said!"

"Oh! Sorry, I was ... distracted." Nate said sheepishly.

Myk tried to keep a straight face.

"Can I ask you a question Nate?"

"What's up?"

"Have you had any issues in the bedroom since you got involved with Elle?"

"None, why do you ask?"

"I know how things were when you were married to Mandy, I remember you telling me what happened the first time you saw Elle. This is a check-up question."

"Oh. We are good, she..." Nate knew Myk was discussing this with him from a medical standpoint."

Myk waited.

"She worships me when she touches me, my scars don't bother her and when she looks at me, I get so hard I can't control myself."

“Okay, so I will suggest you reduce the meds, let’s see how it plays out. Makes no sense taking them if your reactions are consistent.”

“Agreed. Anything else?”

“I’m going to get a bit more personal.”

“Okay.” Nate responded.

“Do you have any difficulties with positions? Any pains in your legs or back? Elle isn’t small and I know if she thinks she is hurting you, she will flip out.”

“Yes, I know she will flip out, the first time I pulled her onto my lap she freaked. We try different things and no, I don’t experience any pain, except when I have an orgasm, I get these ... spasms in my lower back.”

“Okay, I will schedule an appointment for you tomorrow or I can have Amari come here.”

“Do you think something is wrong?”

“I think something is right, if you can feel spasms, you may feel pain and that means...”

“I may be able to walk again.” Nate’s eyes brightened.

“Don’t get ahead of yourself, let’s go see Amari, see what he says first.”

“Thanks Myk. Ya know, Elle wanted to know what was our relationship, I told her everything, do you mind?”

“Elle is a good woman, I’m glad she asked, and that you told her. I don’t want her to feel insecure with me, it would put everything in jeopardy, but honestly, my man is better looking than you.” Myk stuck out her tongue.

“Speaking of which, when do you want to get married? I need to bring on a team people to replace you.”

“A whole team? Gee I feel honoured.”

“No one takes care of us like you do Myk, I wouldn’t trade you for all the Gold in Fort Knox.”

Myk laughed so hard she hiccupped.

“We want a small wedding, less than twenty people.”

“Set the date, we will pay for it.”

For the first time since they met, Myk’s eyes filled with tears.

“Nate! What did you do to make her cry?” Elle’s voice came from the doorway.

“I didn’t say anything bad, I just told her we would pay for the wedding.”

“Of course, we will, she takes great care of us.” Elle walked over to Myk and hugged her tightly. The two ladies hugged for a few minutes and giggled among themselves.

Nate looked on and smiled, everyone was happy.

“Elle, if you don’t mind, I would like you to help me plan the wedding.”

“I have a better idea, why don’t we have a double wedding?” Nate suggested.

“You would be willing to share the spotlight with us?” Myk looked at Nate with shock on her face.

“If Elle and Marcus are willing, sure.” Nate replied with a smile on his face.

“Definitely.” Elle squealed with delight.

Myk studied Nate’s expression and it hit her. Nate was in love and he was willing to sacrifice, fight, and claw his way out of hell for his woman. She understood how he felt because she and Marcus felt that way about each other.

Myk pulled out her cell and call her love.

“Hey baby.” Marcus’ deep voice came over the phone.

“Honey, I have Nate and Elle with me, they are willing to share our wedding day with us and they have offered to pay for us as well, what do you think?”

“Put me on speaker babe.” Marcus said gently. Myk pressed the button and waited.

“Mr. Tondale, Elle, I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart for everything you are doing. Myk sings your praises daily and I am glad she feels blessed to have you in her life. Yes, I am willing to share our special day with you but the offer to pay, I have to refuse. Myk doesn’t know this, and I was waiting to tell her but now is a good time. When my parents died, they left me with some money and it was to be specifically for my wedding, so in that aspect we are covered, it’s about three hundred thousand, so I am offering to pay for everything for the four of us and it will be my honour.”

“Oh Marcus.” Myk said softly.

“Well Marcus, we men will stay out of this. Tell you what, keep the money your parents left you, put it as a trust fund for your children. I will foot the entire bill. I can’t repay Myk for her dedication over the years, I know she had it hard and she stuck with me and you my man, stuck with her through all of it. I am the one who is honoured to have her. I will give the ladies a credit card and they can do whatever they want, you and I will sit back and watch and call me Nate, we are family.”

Marcus laughed so hard.

“Nate. I agree and I will do as you say pertaining to the trust fund. I need some advice on some investments as well, so we will go out for lunch soon. I have to run now, bye Nate, Elle. Myk, honey I love you, see you at home later.”

“Gosh his voice is so sexy, no wonder you get all starry eyed when he calls you!”

Myk actually blushed.

“What, my voice is not sexy?” Nate frowned.

“Hush, ain’t nobody sexier than you for Elle, don’t be jealous.”

“Yeah I am pretty darned sexy.” Nate grinned.

They spent the rest of the day making a few plans and relaxing.

Chapter SEVENTEEN – I can't Find Her!

Elle's pregnancy was progressing nicely. She was exercising, eating healthy under the guidance of Myk.

Nate was a proud papa, he hired several assistants for Elle and as the wedding date neared, he was apprehensive. He had received threats against him and Elle and he decided it was time to cash in some chips.

"Myk."

"Sir?"

"I have to see her."

"Nate." Myk warned.

"We can't find out where these threats are coming from, I can't have our precious cargo in danger. I don't know who to protect her from." Nate was frustrated.

"This isn't a good idea."

"I know my friend, if I had any other choice I would not do this."

"Okay but promise me, you won't..."

"I would never stoop that low. I have Elle now."

"Okay but if I suspect any folly, you know I will burn that whole place down. Elle has become a sister to me, mess with her, you mess with me."

"Let's go, Elle is at Naton, two bodyguards are with her."

Myk drove Nate to St. Philip and as they pulled up to a huge house, the man at the guard hut, looked into the car, frowned and pressed the button to open.

"Mr. Tondale, Myk." The man greeted them.

"Denis." Nate said without looking in the man's direction.

They parked and Myk helped Nate out of the car.

As they went inside Nate felt a sense of dread. The place looked the same as the last time he left there for good.

“Nate Tondale, Myk, it’s nice to see you again. What would you like to drink.”

The voice of a well-dressed woman greeted them.

“Kayla.” Nate said as he clenched his fists. Myk did not respond.

“Come now, don’t be so business like with me. We go way back the three of us.”

“Let me get to the point. Someone is threatening my fiancée and me and I want to know who it is.”

“I’m the one who is threatening you.”

Myk drew her gun before Kayla finished her sentence.” Nate raised his hand and Myk lowered the weapon but kept alert.

“Why?”

“You told me you would never fall in love after me, you told me you didn’t want children and you would never get married but here you are doing all three things and NOT with me.”

“You can’t be serious Kayla! ALL we did was SLEEP together, there was no love between us. What the fuck are you playing at?”

“I am going to take her from you Nate, I am going to take your baby away from you and then I will watch you fall so far, you will never recover.”

Nate smiled. Kayla frowned.

“You don’t know me Kayla, you think you do.”

“I know enough Nate. Now, leave my house. I will call you in a few days and give you some instructions. Follow them to the letter or I will cut that child from her stomach and make you watch. Get out.”

Back in Nate's Car

“Sir, what do you want me to do? I can go back and snuff her life out.”

“I know Myk, all these years, I didn't think she cared about me, but this... is below the belt. She is not going to stop, so I have to stop her. Call Mark, have him pull up Kayla's accounts, all of them, prepare to empty them. Tell him to also leak, that she was the one who shot Victor's son, John's father and Carlo's wife. With photos.” Nate frowned as he thought about anything else he could do to let that bitch know not to mess with him.

Elle was in a restaurant having a light lunch, her morning sickness had passed and she was always hungry.

“Good day miss, it's full in here can I sit with you?” A soft feminine voice came from behind Elle's back.

“Sure, let me clear the space for you.” Elle picked up her laptop, closed it and put it in her bag. She shifted a few things to allow the lady to have her space.

“Thank you. Your face looks familiar.”

“Oh, I used to work in a club as a dancer, and I work at Naton Corp now.”

“You are Mr. Tondale's fiancé?”

“Yes and you are?”

The lady motioned to someone behind Elle and two men grabbed her and took her out to a waiting car. She didn't struggle or scream, she didn't know these people and she wasn't willing to put her baby in danger if she could help it. As she sat in the car, her worries increased.

“So, you are the bitch Nate knocked-up. Never thought he had any swimmers. He never got me pregnant when we were together.”

Ah, now it made sense. This was one of Nate’s former lovers and she had an axe to grind. They drove for half an hour, Elle remained silent the entire time, caressing her belly every few minutes, trying hard not to let her fear show.

Elle smiled. Nate always had her back. He told her someone was threatening them, and he would do his best to keep her safe, but she must pay attention to details.

“Look Elle, I have nothing against you, but Nate lied to me, he told me we could have a future, he made promises he never kept, then he broke off all contact and left me, that pissed me off.”

“You love him.” Elle said with much disdain.

“Who wouldn’t? He is everything a woman should want in her life, a protector, someone who goes all out for his woman, good in bed.”

Kayla sighed. This part would hurt Elle, but she needed to hurt Nate where it mattered the most. He gave this woman everything he had promised to her. Without another thought, Kayla pulled an envelope from a drawer and handed it to Elle.

“This is the man you love, I have no need to lie to you. I will be back in half an hour with food and some clean clothes.”

Kayla closed the bedroom door and left. She knew Nate was a storm she could not control but Elle needed to see the real Nate, and not the watered-down version.

Elle took a bottle of water from the side table and sat down on the bed. From the first photo, Elle felt dizzy. She could not believe what she was seeing. Nate was standing in front of a man who was bloodied and battered. What

made he want to throw up was that Nate held the knife that inflicted the wounds on the man.

She forced herself to keep going through the photos and she felt worse. There were several photos of Nate with two women, one was sitting on him with her head back, clearly enjoy the act. The other woman was sitting in a chair looking on, touching herself.

Elle felt her stomach heave and she began to tremble. Again, she forced herself to look at all the images. By the time she was finished, she really wanted to throw up. She hurried to the slightly open bathroom door and slumped over the toilet bowl.

Fifteen minutes later, she got up, washed out her mouth and splashed water on her face. She went back into the bedroom and sat on the bed.

The photos were scattered on the bed and she began to cry. She cried so hard. Who was this man she was about to get married to? The man in the photos was cruel, heartless and without a soul. NO! This was not her Nate. He was gentle, loving, caring, always there for her.

The door opened and Kayla walked in with bags and put them on the dresser. She looked at Elle, frowned and then smiled. Jackpot.

“Ahh I see the wheels turning in your mind. You are questioning the Nate in the photos and comparing to the Nate you know now. He has not changed; he is just dormant, and I plan to provoke the bear and watch him self-destruct. You see, for you to see the true Nate, you have to be willing to let him go and he will come back to me.”

“You are delusional Kayla, Nate loves me and he will fight for me and our baby.”

“Oh I’M the delusional one? Dear girl, look at the photos closely, Nate and I lived the high life, we did everything together. He misses that life, I dunno

what you did to him to make him switch to such a melancholy bitch. He was a man when I knew him now he is this sappy home maker. No this will not do. I want my man back and I will take him. If you try to stop me I will make you suffer by making you watch him leave you and come to me.”

Elle said nothing, she was confident that Nate would always choose her.

Back at Naton Corp, Nate was furious.

“Nate, what are you going to do?”

“She has to die, I don’t care how.”

Myk flinched.

“This is exactly what Kayla wants, she wants to show Elle who you were.”

“Don’t you think I fucking know that Myk? You know I left that life behind after my accident but how do I protect Elle from a bitch witch like Kayla?”

“She will make you choose Nate, and the options will be so awful, you will choose Kayla just to save Elle, it is gonna break her heart!”

“I know Myk. We will leave in an hour.”

Kayla brought Elle from the bedroom and put her to sit in the living room. Nate was already there with Myk. Elle’s head was down and she looked like her soul had left her.

“Elle honey are you okay?” Nate asked softly.

She didn’t respond but the look on her face told Nate everything. She had seen the photos. He suddenly felt ashamed of his past.

“Aww look, Elle doesn’t want to talk, poor thing. Now, Nate, time to make your decision. Stay with me, or Elle and the baby die.”

Myk’s body went rigid. No, this will rip them apart.

Nate hung his head, what could he do?

“Elle, look at me.” Nate said firmly as he raised his head again.

Elle raised her head. Seeing him made her heart soar and fall all at the same time.

“Remember what I told you.”

Elle lowered her head. Her mind was filled with images of Nate and Kayla and the woman making love. The expressions on their faces would stay with her forever.

“You see Elle, he has left you already, don’t worry, eventually he will forget you and the baby.”

Elle’s heart hurt. She let out a sob. Why was this happening?

“Do you wanna know why I am doing this Elle? I fucking hate you! Look at him, his heart is breaking because I hurt you. I could cut him up into little pieces and watch him bleed to death and he wouldn’t care but noooo, I show you his life before you and all of a sudden he wants to erase OUR past so you don’t get hurt. He NEVER defended me. So, I am going to watch his world fall apart by his own words and actions.”

“Elle, just remember what I said.”

“Right! So Nate, make your choice, me or her and the baby.”

“I choose you Kayla.” Nate said with no emotion.

Elle gasped and her head came up quickly to look at him. Nate refused to look at her now, he was looking at Kayla as if he wanted her. Would he make love to her? Have children with her? Get married?

“GREAT! Myk, take Elle back to Nate’s house, he doesn’t need anything from there. Nate, come to my bedroom let’s get our relationship on the road. Elle, nice to meet you.”

Nate rolled away and followed Kayla without looking back.

“Nate! Please don’t go with her!” Elle screamed as Myk gently pulled her away. Nate didn’t look back, he held Kayla’s hand and disappeared.

“Let me GO! NATE!”

“Elle, he made his decision to save your life and that of your child, we need to go, now.”

Elle sobbed hard and she almost fell to the floor if not for Myk holding her up. She helped her into the car and drove back to the house.

Myk got her settled into the living room.

“Would you like something to eat Elle?”

“I have soup in the fridge, I will get it later.”

“Okay, if you need me, I’m across the lawn.”

“Why did he leave me Myk?”

“Elle, Nate needs you to be strong for you and the baby, please.”

Elle didn’t respond, she just lay down on the sofa and covered herself with a blanket.

A cell phone pinged. Elle reached out and took it from the table.

She saw an unfamiliar number, but she answered anyway.

Before she could say anything, the message that came through was a link to a live feed. She clicked on it and was immediately sorry.

It was Nate and Kayla on a bed.

“Oh God no.”

She had seen him less than an hour ago and he was already making love to another woman. Elle felt horrible. Did she ever mean anything to him at all?

How could he just jump from their bed to Kayla’s?

She forced herself to watch and listen. She refreshed the link and hit record on her cell.

“Yes Nate, harder!” Kayla’s voice echoed from the phone.

“You like it hard don’t you?”

“YES!”

Nate pounded into her and she was enjoying it. For the next few minutes, Nate and Kayla writhed, moaned and screwed each other’s brains out. When they climaxed, Kayla looked towards the camera and winked. The feed went dead.

Elle put the phone on the table and went to the bedroom, she packed a few things, checked to see if Myk’s light was on and left.

Back At Kayla’s

“Come to me Nate.”

“You are joking right?”

Kayla looked confused.

“What, you thought you could humiliate and threaten the life of my unborn baby, and my woman, insult me and THINK that I would sleep with you?”

“If you don’t she and the baby will die and for spite so will Myk.”

Kayla was sitting on the side of the bed at just the right height. Nate had been rolling over to her slowly and before she knew it, his arms reached out and he wrapped his hands around her throat.

“Myk, I’m heading back, how is she?”

“She was asleep when I left her, I will check on her in a minute.”

“Okay, I will be home in half hour.”

“Elle?” Myk thought she was in bed but when she nudged the door she wasn’t

there. Myk frowned and checked every single room in the house. Elle was gone. Crap.

“Sir, she’s gone I can’t find her.” Myk shouted over the phone as she went room to room checking for Elle.

“Get everyone up and FIND HER!” Nate shouted and hung up.

Chapter EIGHTEEN – Afraid and Alone

Elle sat in the park, crying her eyes out. The video replaying over and over in her head. Nate was mentally calculating where she would go. She would try to calm her head first, then make a decision. He told the driver where to go.

“Head to Queen’s Park, quickly.”

He was right. He sneaked up behind her. She was talking to herself.

“Father, please guide me. I feel so afraid and alone without him. I love Nate with all my heart. What do I do? Will he ever come back to me? My baby needs him, I need him. I don’t care what happened between them, I know he loves me, he told me to remember what he said.” Elle laughed.

“He said a lot of things but the one thing I know is that he would never deliberately hurt me. I know he had to make a choice and it’s not that he chose her but he chose the life of his family. I can’t live without him, so please, find a way to send him back to me.”

“I was never gone Elle.”

Elle stood up straight and almost fell over.

“Nate?” She sounded surprised. Wasn’t he just having sex with that woman? How is he here?

“I’m sorry this happened and that she hurt you.”

“It’s not your fault Nate, I understand why you chose her but how come you are here?”

“I don’t understand, wherever you are I will be.”

“But, she sent me a video, you were ... with her.”

“Let me see it.”

“I left the phone back at home.”

“Come with me, let’s go home before Myk panics.”

“It’s not her fault, I waited until the lights were out and snuck out.”

Back at home. Nate picked up the phone from the table and pressed the link in the message. As the video began, he clenched his fists over and over.

“Elle.”

“Yes.”

“Tell me now, do you believe that I would go from our bed into another woman’s?”

“I don’t know!”

“Please Elle, I know you are still hurting but remember what I said about trusting me.”

Elle replayed all the times he asked her to trust him, he never let her down.

“I trust you. If you said it was not you, I will believe you.”

“It was me, but this video was over five years ago. Did you not realise my legs worked?”

Elle frowned and then her eyes opened wide and she burst into tears.

“Oh my love, come here.”

Elle went to him and sat on his lap.

“I Nathaniel Tondale pledge my everlasting love to you Everleigh James. I would never share myself with anyone, only you. Do you believe me?”

“Yes. Oh Nate, make love to me please.”

“I need a shower first, come with me.”

“No, I need you now.” Elle demanded.

Nate looked into her face and gave in. He lifted himself from the wheelchair to the sofa. He was already hard for her.

“Sit on me baby, take what you need from me.”

Myk was pacing up and down her quarters. She glanced up and had seen dim light come on in Nate’s living room. She started to hurry over but as she got closer, the sight in the living room stopped her and she turned and went back. No one could see them, so she wasn’t worried.

“Oh those two.”

Over the next few days, Kayla realised the mistake she made. Nate was never hers, he was never going to be hers and now she had nothing. Nate managed to clean out every single bank account she had, he sent evidence of all her crimes to the persons she committed them against. She was now a wanted woman in the underground and that was not a good thing. She had left Barbados on a late flight but when she got on the plane, she saw two people she hated the most. They just stared at her and said nothing. She buckled into her seat and closed her eyes.

The Flight Attendant came down the aisle taking orders for food and drinks. When she got to Kayla, she lightly tapped her on her shoulder.

“Miss, would you like anything to eat or drink?”

“Yes, some orange juice and a bottle of water.”

A few minutes later, a glass of juice appeared on her pull out tray and a voice called out to her.

“Miss, your juice and water are here.”

Kayla opened her eyes and groggily said thank you.

She sipped the juice until all was gone but before she could open the water, her vision went black.

When Kayla opened her eyes again, she felt dog tired. She opened her eyes and much to her surprise, she was in a hospital room. She tried to sit up only to find out she was strapped to the bed.

“What the hell?” She exclaimed.

“Ah the lovely Kayla has awoken. Now let’s skip the pleasantries. You are going to die, but not yet. You tortured my son until he screamed for you to kill him. There are five other people waiting to take a crack at you, you won’t survive, we are too angry at you. Now, I will give you a few minutes to get your soul in order, not that you have one.”

The man she knew as her bodyguard for ten years, stood over her with a nasty expression on his face. She had taken his only daughter and paid men to rape her, then pretending to rescue her so Denis would be in her debt. When Denis left her heart sank, who else was here? She was now afraid and alone.

The door opened again and she waited for someone else to speak but she was not prepared for what happened next.

“Imagine my surprise when photos show up on my desk, showing the woman I love with a man she told me was just her friend.”

Kayla shook her head. No, not him.

“Ahh, she recognises me. Tsk tsk. Kayla, Kayla, how you must have offended Nate for him to rat you completely out like this. Did you not remember what he is capable of?” The voice rolled on.

“Oh she knows, but she felt she could control him, boy was she wrong.”

Another voice chimed in dripping with acidity.

Kayla registered each voice and remembered the horrible things she did to each family.

The tears rolled down her face and ran into her ears.

“TEARS?” A voice barked from next to her.

“This bitch is crying, well I never thought I would see the day. Well Kayla, those won’t help you.” Gosh not him too.

Denis, Maria, Brody, Victor and Sariah. Kayla ruined the lives of each one and they were going to make her pay.

Over the next week, each person took a turn, injecting Kayla, making small cuts on her body with a scalpel, pouring water on her face, depriving her of sleep, giving her doses of amphetamines. On the last day, they untied her from the bed, she was covered in her own filth. They would come in and wash her down with ice cold water and leave her in the damp room to dry.

She had no energy to move and she was afraid and alone.

“Last day Kayla, if you can manage the will power to get up and leave, we will let you go.” Denis said.

Kayla, grunted as her body found a smidgen of energy. She slowly dragged herself up and struggled to move towards the door but, the gunshot that rang out, soon after... ended her life on the perfect note. Kayla was no more. Nate distributed the funds from her accounts to the families she had destroyed. He secretly seized all her properties, cars, every asset he owned and let the families with everything. He was happy again.

Chapter – NINETEEN - Betrayed Again

“Elle.” Nate groaned as his love sucked on him gently, driving him nuts.

Elle drew him into her mouth again and felt him shudder.

“If you keep that up, I’m gonna burst.”

Elle didn’t stop and pretty soon, Nate gripped the sheets and felt his climax break him in two.

Elle swallowed and wiped her mouth. Licking her lips, she looked at her man. He was still hard.

“Ride me baby.”

Elle climbed on to Nate and positioned herself in the way he liked it.

“Why do you feel so good baby?” Nate groaned out as he put his hands on Elle’s hips and slowly pushed and pulled.

“Only for you.” Elle tried to slow down her orgasm but Nate fit inside her perfectly. He was hard and thick, touching her in all the right places.

“Nate, come with me.” Elle moaned as she felt her body tingle and start to burn.

Nate surged up into her and gripped her hips harder. He came for the third time that morning and still wasn’t satisfied.

“One more time baby, lay back and let me.”

Elle lay back on the bed and watched as Nate rolled on top of her.

Nate slid into her and his body shook with pleasure.

“Jesus. This is all mine, mine.” Nate plunged into her over and over. She wrapped her legs around his back and let him have her.

Elle yawned as the sun peaked through the bedroom window.

“Good morning my love, are you ready?”

Elle knew what he was asking and frowned.

“I’m scared but I would not change tomorrow for anything, I love you Nate.”

“I love you too baby. I am heading out with the guys tonight, Myk will pick you up, I will see you in the morning at the altar.”

“Okay, have a good day, everything is in order.”

“Okay my love, you as well.”

Later that night, Myk and all the females in their family and a few friends headed to Hydra – Nate had allowed them to have the place to themselves. The chef prepared their food and left it for them. There was one bartender on hand to provide them with whatever drinks they needed.

As they headed in, security stood guard at the door. Everyone squealed when they saw the food and décor.

“Gosh, Nate will do anything for you Elle.”

“He is a good man.” Elle blushed.

“Okay ladies, time to get this party on!” Kelia yelled.

Music blared from the speakers on Kelia’s words and much to Elle’s surprise, a man jumped from behind a door dressed in a thong.

“No, no, no and NO! I do NOT want him here!”

Kelia frowned and looked at the others.

“Aw come on Elle, he is just entertainment.”

“I don’t care! Nate will not appreciate this!”

“He won’t know! Kelia’s friend Tara said.

“I will know. Get him out now, I will pay his fees but he needs to leave!”

The stripper frowned.

“Sorry Jason, she doesn’t want you here. I will settle the bill with you in the morning, is that okay?”

“Sure no problem.”

In the back of the club, a woman was watching the proceedings and decided that Elle and Nate need to be broken up before they got married. She straightened her back and followed Jason to the changing room. She waited for him and a minute later, he strolled in.

“Wanna make a thousand dollars tonight?” The woman asked.

“Sure.”

“The lady who doesn’t want you here likes you, but she doesn’t want her boyfriend to know. If I get her to be with you, would you spend the night with her?”

Jason cocked his head to one side.

“She likes me?”

“Yes, she saw your photo a while back, that’s why we hired you for tonight. So, a thousand, you willing?”

“Definitely.”

“There is a private room, this is the key, go to it and wait. Don’t have sex with her, just cuddle, she will probably be drunk. When she wakes up, she will be surprised but when she realises it was you, she won’t care.”

“The chance to sleep next to a sexy woman like that, is a dream come true.”

“Good.” The woman handed him the money and left.

“Dana, you came!” The ladies shouted when Dana walked into the bar.

“Had some work to finish up, but yes I’m here.” She placed the gift she brought on the table with the others.

Elle was surprised. Nate had told her Dana was one of his staff members, so why was she here?

“Hey Elle, Myk, congrats on your marriages, all the best to you both.”

“Thank you.” Myk and Elle said in unison but neither of them appreciated Dana. They knew she had her eyes on Nate for years.

“Come on guys, let’s get drunk and disorderly.

“No alcohol for me please.”

“Oh, Nate brought some non-alcoholic champagne just for you Elle, he didn’t want you to be left out.”

“Elle! You’re pregnant?” A few of the ladies squealed.

“Yes I am.”

“You should have told us we would have done a baby shower.”

“It’s okay, I haven’t told anyone really, so just keep it quiet for now.”

“Okay girls, let’s open the gifts and cut the cake.” Kelia jumped up and motioned to the table.

Myk and Elle has lots of gifts to open and Elle was beginning to feel sleepy.

“Elle, are you okay?” Dana asked with a worried look on her face.

“Just tired.”

“It’s empty here, Nate had the place cleaned. If anyone wants to take a nap or sleep off the alcohol, all the rooms are available.”

“I think I will definitely take a nap. Myk, come wake me in about an hour.”

“No problem.”

Elle got up to leave and Dana stopped her.

“Here, this is the closest room.” Dana gave her a key and smiled.

“Thanks.”

Elle felt groggy more than sleepy. She stumbled a bit and made her way to the room. She used the key and entered the room. She immediately went to the sofa to sleep off the feeling.

Jason watched her stumble into the room but seeing her in the state she was in, he just watched. He didn’t want to scare her.

Elle took off her shoes and curled up on the sofa. The room was air-conditioned and Elle fell into a nice slumber.

Jason waited until her breathing evened out and went over to her. He sat down next to her, brushing her hair from her face. He kissed her cheek lovingly and ran his hand down her hips.

“I love you Nate.” Elle whispered in her sleep.

Jason flinched. She was dreaming of her boyfriend, if she loved that man so much, why did Dana say she liked him? He didn’t feel good about it, but he covered her with a blanket and lay down next to her as instructed.

At another Hydra club, Nate and his friends and family were drinking, talking and laughing. Nate was slightly tipsy and felt his phone vibrating. He pulled it out and checked the message.

Nate’s face frowned. The number was Dana’s.

‘This is the woman you chose over me, that’s what you get. Consider this my resignation.’

Nate pulled up the video feed and checked the cameras, he saw the gaggle of women laughing and drinking. Elle was not with them. He scanned all the rooms and when he found her his heart broke, she was not alone. He slumped into his chair. He felt betrayed.

What was she thinking? They were getting married in the morning. She was pregnant with his child. She knows how I feel about cheating and yet she does this?

“Nate my man, what’s wrong?” Marcus asked when he saw Nate’s face.

“I don’t know, but I’m going to find out.” He motioned to one of the bodyguards and he was wheeled out to his car.

When he pulled up to the club, security let him in. He went inside and immediately the women looked surprised.

“Nate, what are you doing here?” Myk asked when she walked over to him. He showed her the feed from the room.

“What the fuck?” Myk walked away from Nate and went to find the room, she barged in and grabbed the man by the scruff of his neck and yanked him off Elle.

Jason opened his eyes and stared up at Myk.

“What the hell?” The man asked in shock.

“Who are you and WHY are you here?” Myke asked loudly.

“A woman told me that this lady liked me, but she didn’t want her boyfriend to know and to wait for her, so I did and she came in and I lay down next to her.”

Myk walked over to Elle and felt her cheek. She was sleeping way too strongly. Myk got worried. She called for an ambulance. With all the noise she made when she burst into the room, Elle should have woken up.

Nate came into the room and noticed the man on the floor and Myk on the phone calling an ambulance.

“You hurt her?” Nate was furious.

“NO! I just laid down with her! I would never hurt anyone!”

“Who paid you?” Myk grabbed him and asked loudly.

“A woman, I don’t know her name.”

“Was she wearing a black dress, short, wine-coloured braids, with a bob in her nose?”

“Yes, that’s her.”

“That bitch, I am going to ruin her life!” Nate yelled.

“I’m taking her to the hospital, Myk, hunt down Dana and deal with her.”

Just as Nate moved to get Elle from the couch, she groaned.

“Baby, wake up.”

“Nate.” She was groggy but she would recognise his voice anywhere.

“I’m here baby, it’s okay.” He said stroking her cheek.

“I’m sorry man, I didn’t mean to get her in trouble.” The man said sincerely when he realised the woman was clearly not feeling well.

“It’s okay, look, you take off, we will handle Dana. Don’t take someone’s word for anything, do your own damn research.”

“Kelia knows how to find me, let me know how she is okay? I really am sorry.”

“Okay, get going.” Myk said.

Nate pulled Elle up into his arms.

“I feel sick.” Nate frowned.

“Throw up if you want, I got you.”

Before he could finish, Elle turned and vomited on the floor. When the ambulance got there, she was still throwing up.

“What do we have here Myk?”

“I think she was given something to make her sleep, she is two months pregnant, she has been throwing up for a few minutes.”

The EMTs checked her out and decided they were taking her to the hospital.

“We will follow in the car.” Myk said.

They all left much to the surprise of the hen party, which was still going strong.

“Kelia, you are in charge, I will talk to you later.”

At the Hospital.

“Well, she was definitely drugged but the baby seems to be fine, she vomited out most of it, we will give her a flush and watch her for the next few hours.”

Myk stood propped on the door frame, seriously scrolling through the feed from the club and when she found what she was looking for she left without a word to anyone.

Dana was standing at the airport waiting for her flight. Just then an announcement came over the loudspeaker.

“Dana Charles, Dana Charles, you are needed at the security desk.”

Dana groaned and headed to the counter, thinking her bag was overweight. When she got there, two men in suits walked up to her.

“Ms Charles, you are under arrest. You need to come with us.”

“What? For what?” She tried to struggle but the men were too strong for her.

She resigned herself to being taken but she was surprised when they didn’t go to a police station but to a warehouse.

“What the hell?”

“Did you think we wouldn’t find out Dana?” Myk said as she entered the room.

“I don’t care. I gave him five years of my life and she went to HER a dancer in one of his clubs. She is a slut and she will leave him one day for someone who can walk!”

“You stupid woman, he loves her, genuinely loves her, why do you think he made her VP of Naton Corp, she is carrying his child, they are getting married and this bit of info is why he does not want you. He is the ONLY man she has ever had. Why do YOU think you had a chance if he never looked in your direction before he knew her? Here’s what’s going to happen. You will not be going to England to see your family, you will be heading to Korea, there is a job waiting for you.” Myk turned and walked away.

Dana screamed for Myk but Myk didn’t look back. She got into the car and left for the hospital.

The two men holding Dana shook their heads as the woman screaming for help.

“Wanna have some fun with her?” One man asked the other.

“Nah, I like my women with sense. She has a good body but to do what she did to Elle... she should have thought of who Elle belongs too.”

Dana looked up when she heard them speaking.

“Fellas you don’t have to do this, I can please you if you want, just tell me what you like.” Dana said attempting to look sexy and sultry.

The men looked at her and barked out a laugh.

“Uh Dana, you have slept with so many men, you are considered a cess pool. Did you not hear what Myk said? Nate doesn’t want you and if you aren’t good enough for him, you can be sure as hell she won’t be touched by us.”

While the man was talking, another man silently crept up behind Dana and when she was about to speak again, she felt a needle stick her in the neck and in seconds, she was dead to the world.

When she woke up, she groaned.

“Well Dana, looks like you pissed off the wrong person. Nate? Of all people? Anyway, like Myk said, you have a new job and we will keep you for five years, since you like to sleep with men so much, this job won’t bother you.”

The man nodded to someone and within minutes Dana was again drugged and taken away. When she woke up for a second time, bright lights flashed in her eyes and when she adjusted, she frowned.

Years ago, Nate had taken a government job to create a floating prison. The world was filled with sickos who hated women and when they were caught, they were transferred to the ship Karma and now Dana was the only woman on board for the next five years. She would never escape, they would keep

her mildly drugged. The first night they gave her food, some wine and then she started to feel weird and it's only when she looked down at her glass, she knew she had been drugged again. After a few minutes, she was taken to a room about ten feet by twenty feet, there was a bed, a shower and about ten bottles of alcohol on a table. She swayed as the men put her on the bed, then she heard loud voices and laughter and her body shook slightly.

“Don't worry Dana, these are the gentle ones.”

When he said gentle, Dana never thought it could get any worse, until she saw eight men the size of elephants, come into the room, naked, already hard and grinning wildly. She shrank back but it was no use. They took turns at her from eight in the evening until they were exhausted. After each round they would shower, drink some more, and start again. Dana didn't know when she passed out. The next morning, they took her for breakfast and topside for some sunlight. Dana thought she would be able to escape but when she stepped through the door, the sea breeze blew hard against her face. It was then she knew her life was over, when they were finished with her, they would throw her overboard for the sharks and no one would care. Her heart sank as she cursed Nate a thousand times in her head.

Back at the Hospital

“Hi Myk!” Elle said as she saw her friend come through the door.”

“Well don't you look recovered.”

“I vomited out my insides, my baby is fine, my fiancée knows I didn't do anything wrong and I'm getting married tomorrow!”

Myk laughed, Nate followed.

“We can resche...”

“Absolutely not! I want to be your wife!” Elle's tears began.

“Nate, you better do as she says, I can’t handle it when she cries.” Myk said as she left.

“Hey, calm down honey, everything is ready for us. I need you my love, to get some rest.”

“Stay with me?”

“Sure. Be back in a minute.”

When Nate came back, he was carrying a few bags and Myk was behind him with hot chocolate, chicken soup and pastries. Just then, two orderlies wheeled in an extra bed and settled it against the bed Elle was in.

“Thank you.” Nate said.

“Thank Myk, she was good to us.” The two men left.

“Myk, go home, get some rest, send Aaron and William to keep watch here until the morning, tell them to rotate with James and Victor.”

“Okay, see you in the morning. Night Elle, glad you’re okay.” Myk left, locking the door behind her.

Nate and Elle snuggled up and watched TV for a bit.

“Nate.” Elle said softly.

“Yes honey.”

“How did you feel?”

Nate took a deep breath. He didn’t want to upset her again but decided that the truth was what she needed.

“Betrayed, but it was a natural reaction and that is why I came to find you.”

“If you had found me cheating, what would you do?”

“Die Elle, I would never be able to handle that. Anyone else I can walk away from but not you.”

“Oh Nate, I would never. Get some sleep, we have two weddings in the morning.”

Chapter TWENTY – The I Do’s

“Okay Elle, I’m releasing you to get married but as soon as the wedding is over you come back here do you understand me? Dr Camden said.

“Yes sir.”

“Great. Nate, no alcohol, spicy foods, too much meat, or sugar. She can have a piece of the wedding cake but not much.”

“Got it.”

“We will sanitize the room and have it ready for you when you get back.”

“Thanks Amari.” Nate said.

“Baby, are you ready to be my wife?”

“More than anything. I love you Nate.”

“Love you too honey, let’s go.

There was a garden at the back of Nate’s and Elle’s home, they decided to have the ceremony and reception there, since Elle wasn’t feeling one hundred percent.

She and Myk looked beautiful in their dresses.

“I have never seen you in anything but suits and jeans, you look lovalie!” Elle whispered as they slowly spun in the mirror.

“So do you even with a bun in the oven.” Myk said as she laughed softly.

“You need to get your own bun.”

Myk frowned.

“Myk, what’s wrong? I’m sorry if I said something to hurt you.”

“I never thought I would have children but the day I met Marcus, I wanted everything. He was just starting out with his company and I was the sole

bread winner. I made sure he had everything he needed and in turn he treated me like I was a queen. He made his first million and all he could think about was that his success was because of me, he proposed the very next day. He has two other children from a previous marriage, but she never pushed him, her hand was always out and she took from him until there was nothing left and then she kept the children from him. I was not having it. I found her and threatened her, told her let the man see his children or I would put a bullet in her skull and feed her through a woodchipper and use what's left as compost. Yeah, sorry I was angry that a good man like him was being denied time with his children. I love that man with all my heart but for the time we have been together, we haven't gotten pregnant and yet he is still marrying me. How could I ask for more of him?"

"Oh Myk, I have an idea, we will talk about that later."

Just then two angry voices shouted from outside.

"ELLE, MYK!" It was Nate.

"Are you in there, are yall okay?" That was Marcus but sounding fearful.

"Go away, we are having a cry!" Myk yelled and pretended to sniffle.

"Aww baby, don't cry, what can we do?"

"NOTHING! GO stand at the altar and WAIT or we will run away!" Myk screamed in a girly voice. Marcus was really scared. He looked at Nate and frowned.

"Uh, okay, we will wait, okay? We love you." Nate said as he rolled his chair away from the door.

"Do you think they would leave us Nate?" Marcus asked like a child about to lose his mummy.

"Nope, this is a big change for them, we will wait if it's a hundred hours, today is for them."

“Okay.” Marcus sighed.

“Myk you are a wicked woman.” Elle said as she giggled behind her hands.

“I know, they will get over it. Are you ready Elle, I feel like a bucket of nerves.”

“As ready as ever, we love those men and they love us back, so let’s go make them happy.”

When the men saw their women coming up the aisle, Marcus opened his mouth wide and Nate wanted to grab himself and squeeze it til his arousal went away.

“Jesus.”

“Christ.”

Nate and Marcus said and they laughed.

The women were each other’s Maid of honour and they were beautiful. As they reached their men, Marcus and Nate reached out their hands to guide them to stand next to them.

The priest smiled as the four people in front of him looked happy. As he began, he spoke about how their lives could be, he focussed on trust, honesty, fidelity, dedication and all the good things. He also said when the trials and tribulations come, they should work them out, it wouldn’t always be easy but try hard.

As the two couple said their vows and exchanged rings, Elle felt a slight pain in her tummy. She gasped and held on to her stomach.

Nate looked over as he saw her movement.

“Honey are you okay?”

“Baby is moving.”

“Okay, hang in there.”

She nodded to the priest to continue.

Within minutes they were husbands and wives, just then, Elle collapsed.

At The Hospital

“Amari, how is she?” Nate asked nervously. His wife and baby were in trouble and as much money and power he had, he felt useless. His back began to ache with a dull pain he hadn’t felt in years. He ignored it and tried to listen to what the doctor was saying.

“Elle just needs rest, we need to change her diet, she seems not to be taking in any nutrients. I’ve done a background check on her family and there are no diseases, or traits to speak of. I would keep her here, but she is stubborn. You can take her home but she is on bed rest for a month, I will send a nutritionist and go from there. You two are still young and I know urges will pop up, don’t overdo it and as usual any signs, call me immediately.”

“Thanks Doc.”

Nate, Myk and Marcus took Elle home. Nate’s heart was hurting, he didn’t know how to handle a sick Elle, he could handle anger, her boardroom confidence, even when she cried, he knew he had done something wrong and a sincere apology after discussion would stop that but this... he was at a complete loss.

“Nate.” Elle whispered as she put her hands to her stomach.

“My love?” Nate answered as he rolled his chair to the bedside.

“Did I do something wrong?” She kept her eyes closed but the tears fell.

“No honey, from what I have learnt, pregnancy is harsh on a woman’s body and sometimes things are going on that we can’t see. You don’t drink, you eat properly and reducing the workload has removed a boat load of stress. We just have to wait it out. I wish I could help more.”

“You take care of me everyday husband of mine, you look like you haven’t had a rest, take a shower and come snuggle with me.”

Nate smiled and raised his arm to sniff it.

Elle laughed softly.

“Idiot, go, I’ll be waiting.”

Over the next few weeks, Elle did nothing but rest and eat. Nate spent less time at Naton but he still kept an eye on things.

Chapter TWENTY-ONE - Nate's Assessment

“Honey what’s wrong?” Elle asked from their bed.

Nate rolled over to her side and reached out to cup her cheek. He had taken his shower and put on a pair of cotton boxers. She could smell his favourite body wash on him, and she immediately heated up. God this man was sexy and all hers, yummy.

“I love you Everleigh, no matter what happens between us, whatever issues we face, the love I have for you is what keeps me going.”

“Nate?” Elle’s eyes teared up.

“I need to walk again, not for me because at this point, I really don’t care, but for you and our children, I need to be able to get up and get things done and not feel like a deadbeat dad.”

“No! I will not let you do this out some sordid notion of responsibility for our family. I can walk for both of us, you may die and leave us here!”

“Baby, calm down, please, I’m sorry, I don’t need you to be upset. We will talk about this again in a few weeks, that is when I need to make a final decision.”

“Why do you want to do this to us? Did I ever give you the impression that your inability to walk makes my love and dedication any less? Do I drop comments that make you feel useless?” Elle said softly, her tears now flowing down her face.

“No honey, no. Call it a man thing, ego trip, whatever but when you fainted at our wedding, someone else had to help you while I sat in the damned chair and watched.”

Elle looked at her husband and her heart broke for him.

“You were scared for us.”

Nate hung his head to his chin.

“Look at me Nathaniel Marlon Tondale.”

Nate smiled as he heard his wife say his entire name.

“You can get the operation done on one condition.”

“I’m listening.”

“We go with you.”

“Absolutely not!”

“Please my love, let me share your pain. You married us, we are your support, don’t make me stay here while you go off and let someone cut you up. Let me get my health and strength back up so I can care for you, even if is just to sleep next to you at night, just don’t leave us here without you.”

Nate realised whenever she spoke, she always said us, not him and her but her and the baby. Their baby, they were his responsibility, and he was theirs. The Tondale Trio against the world. He loved the sound of it.

“Okay tell you what, I will go for the op in a month, you will go with me, but only to sleep next to me. Everything else will be done my hired caretakers.”

“Agreed, will Myk come with us?”

“No, she will stay and watch Naton.”

“HA! She isn’t gonna like that.”

“I know but I need her here in case anything goes wrong.”

“Okay, the nutritionist will be here later today, I also need a personal trainer, Doc gave me some light exercises to do but I need the trainer to help me do it right.”

“No problem, I have to call the doctor who will perform the surgery and let him know we are coming. I will get Myk to book a hotel close by.”

Elle looked at her husband, although he was sharing his plans, she felt the scared man in her soul.

“Are you scared my love?”

“Yes and no. I’m scared of leaving you and never seeing our baby but I’ve been through over forty operations, this is just one more but now that I have you, I am second guessing my decision.”

“I don’t need you to walk Nate. Let us be your feet.”

“She is a newlywed and she and her husband haven’t even gotten to spend much time together, she will want a family some day and I will have to let her go, better to start now.”

“You are so considerate, okay, we do this and pray for the best.”

“Who are you letting go?” Myk’s voice came from the doorway.

“Crap.” Nate muttered as he turned to face Myk.

“I was telling Elle, you and Marcus need some time alone and you will want to start a family, you can’t work in the current capacity forever.”

“You’re firing me?” Myke shrieked.

“Slow down Myk!” Nate raised his voice.

“Elle and I have decided I will do the last operation, I need to be able to walk and take care of my family. You and Marcus just got married and where are you? Here, at our side.”

“It’s my JOB!”

“Okay look at it this way, you are a fantastic fighter, marksman, everything... but if one day you are protecting me or Elle and you get hit or shot. It will affect all of our lives, especially if you become pregnant and lose the baby. My conscience would kill me, you would be hurt, so would Marcus and Elle would never forgive herself, even if she were a million miles away. You are not just my employee, you are my best friend, always there for me when I need you. Now you need me to protect you, so let me do it the best way I know how. After my surgery, you will take a vacation for you and Marcus, I

will pay you for that time. When you come back, I will find a different role for you in Naton am I clear Michaela?”

Myke stepped back when she heard her given name. That meant he was serious. She felt hurt no matter how right he was.

“Don’t Myk. You know how special you are to me, to us now that Elle and the baby are here but we need you... to be safe and happy as well.”

“Yes sir.”

“Myk.” Elle said from the bed with tears in her eyes.

“Hi Elle.”

“I love you like a sister and I agree with Nate on this, you mean the world to us and dedication like yours is rare and real. Don’t think of this as a demotion but a promotion from employee to family.”

Myk smiled at her friend.

“I like the sound of that Elle, thank you.”

“Wait, hold a minute. I just delivered one of my best speeches and you smile at her?” Nate grumbled.

“Jealous much?” Elle stuck out her tongue.

“Man, whatever. That’s settled. Go home Myk, send replacements for you for the rest of today, go grab your husband from work and remind him who he is married to.”

“Sir.” Myk grinned as she left.

“Nate honey, I forgot to ask you what Amari had said about your assessment. So many things had gone on since then.”

“I know and I never said anything because I didn’t want you to worry.”

“Humph, Well go on.”

“I saw several Neurologists, the one thing they focussed on was the pain I was feeling.”

“Wait, what? When did you feel pain?”

Elle watched as Nate everted his eyes and looked at the ceiling. She felt embarrassed and put her hands to her face.

“You see, that’s why I didn’t tell you. You would never want to be with me again!” Nate was becoming angry.

“So you would rather endure pain rather than not be with me? You stupid man.”

Nate flinched at her words.

“What if you reverted any progress you had? I’m not a size 2 Nate, I don’t ever want to know that I caused your pain.”

“It only happens when I reach climax, not before. It’s no big deal. I would endure anything to feel you Elle, you know this.”

“Oh my silly husband, I love you.”

“I love you too, wanna see if it hurts this time?”

Elle blushed.

“I don’t need you to do anything, just be still, I just need to feel you again.”

Elle nodded slowly.

Nate climbed on to the bed and a familiar scent alerted him.

“You wicked woman.” Nate said as he lifted her dress, her panties had a wet spot already.

Elle blushed and looked away.

“My husband turns me on, what can I say.”

“We will take it easy, I promise.”

“I’m not afraid of you hurting me.”

Nate got on top of her as she spread her legs. There was no need for romantic words or actions, this was need but as they couldn't really act on it, Nate eased into her and groaned out so loud, Elle shivered at his response to her body. She felt honoured.

“I can't wait until you have this baby.”

“Maybe we should have thought this through.” Elle said sheepishly.

“Hell no, I can wait, I would wait forever for you.” Nate growled as she clenched him tightly.

He pushed into her and immediately came. His entire body shuddered and his arms trembled under his weight.

“Nate, are you okay?”

A groan left his lips but it didn't sound like pleasure.

“Ahh.., babe, my back, it hurts.”

“Ease up honey and lay flat.”

He did as he was told and lay flat on the bed, groaning again as his back went into serious spasms.

Elle grabbed a cell from the side table and punched a number.

“Boss?”

“Myk, help me, Nate is in pain, well we... and he...”

Nate groaned loudly.

“We will be there soon, tell him to hold on.”

Myk and Marcus arrived at the house in ten minutes, as they didn't live far.

She pushed the bedroom door as the pained groans of Nate were loud.

She put her bag on the side table and asked Elle to leave.

“No! I can't leave him!”

“Marcus take her outside please, I can't do this with her here!”

“Come on Elle, you need to relax, let her do her job.” Marcus said softly as he gently pulled her away and closed the door.

They were about ten feet from the bedroom door when they heard an awful yell. Elle froze and went to turn back but Marcus stopped her.

“It gets worse, come on.”

For almost half hour, Nate screamed in pain and then, everything was quiet. Elle was laying on the sofa, with tears in her eyes and as Myk came into the room, Elle sat up.

“Calm down, the worst is over, but we need to take him to the hospital, I’ve already called Amari and he will be waiting with the Neurology team to operate.”

“Operate? What happened?”

“He is in pain Elle.” Myk said with a smile.

“Why are you smiling? Why is he in p...” Elle stopped.

“Ahh she gets it now.” Marcus said softly as he kissed his wife on the lips.

“But he said the op would be in a month.”

“Elle, don’t you know your husband by now? He would suffer through any amount of pain if it meant your happiness in the end. He was getting worse but you were put on bed rest, so he needed to take care of you. He told me when he would get the pains and I know this is an intimate issue but his orgasm triggered the pain in the worst way this time. The ambulance will be here soon, Marcus will follow us in the car.”

“Please let me go with him.”

“Elle, I wasn’t even gonna let you leave here but I’m not in the mood to argue with a woman over her husband.”

“Okay, I will pack a bag for him.”

“Already done.”

“I will order some food for us.”

“Already done.” Said Marcus.

“So what do I need to do?” Elle asked in a frustrated tone.”

“Nothing!” Myk and Marcus said.

“Bastards.” Elle grinned at her two friends.

“Just then the blinking lights filtered through the house and Marcus left to open the door.

Nate was unconscious, the pain was too much for him. They got him into the ambulance and off they went.

Nine Hours Later

Nate felt like he got hit by a mack truck at full speed. He was on his stomach. He tried to turn over but a soft voice stopped him.

“Honey don’t move, I’m here.”

She was here, his love, his lifeline.

“Elle.” He whispered.

“Yes, it’s me. What do you need?”

“Home. I want to go home.”

“Nate, you can’t, the facilities are better here, you know how you suffered last time.” Myke said softly.

“Have... Elle, now. Take... me... home.” Nate drifted back to sleep.

“Myk, speak to the doctors, if we keep him here, he won’t recover properly. Get all the equipment he needs and find a doctor we can keep on call, two nurses for the next two weeks, and an orderly. They can use the guest houses for now. Let them know I will not tolerate any negligence, lewd

behaviour or disrespect of any kind, they will be there to work, end of story.”

Elle commanded in a soft voice. She tried to stand and felt dizzy.

Myk held on to her.

“You need to rest Elle, let Marcus take you home. I will deal with everything and bring him home, you need to take care of the baby.”

“I know. Oh, hire a full time Chef and a housekeeper.”

“Done.”

“Thanks Myk.”

“Anytime.”

Elle kissed her husband on the forehead and left.

Chapter – TWENTY-TWO – It's All Gone

Elle was making some Gnocchi soup. She didn't eat much and was now hungry. She took some bread from the fridge and heated it in the oven. She had barely slept that night and she needed to keep her spirits up. She opened all the windows at the back of the house and let the air rush in. There were two guards at the front and three roaming the back. They were all armed. Nate tried his best to protect her, and she appreciated it.

She looked up and saw one of the guards leaning against the wall. He looked sick.

"Morning Victor, are you okay?"

Victor immediately stood straight.

"Good morning, yes ma'am."

"You were here when we left, why are you still here?"

"My relief didn't show up, I'm pulling a double."

"Like hell you are, call Myk and let her know, come in and have something to eat."

Victor frowned. He was an ex-soldier, no way he would abandon his post, Myke would skin him alive and then Nate would kill what's left.

"Thank you Mrs. Tondale I will be just fine."

"Victor if you don't get in here this minute you are fired!" Elle turned away and headed back to the kitchen.

Victor hesitated but he followed her. She handed him a bowl of soup.

"Who else is pulling a double?"

"Everyone."

Elle sighed exasperated. She picked up her cell and called Myk.

"Elle? What's wrong?"

“The security team is pulling a double, I need them relieved as of the next fifteen minutes.”

Myk frowned.

“Elle, do me one big favour, take the entire team and head to the safe house NOW!” Myk hung up.

Before Elle could register what Myk had said, shots rang out and there was a loud bang.

The Security team surrounded Elle as she lay on the floor. She was breathing so hard, Victor put his hand on her shoulder to try to calm her down.

“Mrs. T, I need you to calm down, we don’t know who is here and if they will search the house, please, try hard to calm yourself.”

Elle nodded as her stomach cramped. She clenched her teeth and grabbed Victor’s hand. He frowned. This was not good. They were in a bunker, fortunately, they could see the entire property and there was no one outside. Just then Victor’s phone vibrated.

“If you can talk, go ahead.” It was Myk.

“Someone shot at us, then a bomb went off, it took the guest houses and a part of the main house. We are at the west end bunker but we need to move, Elle is...” Victor looked at his pregnant Boss.

“Is she hurt?”

“She is in pain, the source is currently unknown, I don’t want to take any chances.”

“I am on my way, stay where you are.”

Elle whimpered.

“Mrs. T, hang in there, help is coming.”

“You can’t tell Nate, he will worry.”

Frank frowned. No way this could be kept quiet with the damages the property sustained and Nate was supposed to be coming home soon. There was almost nothing to come home too!

“Don’t worry about Mr. Tondale, Myk is on the way, just hang on for me.”

“I’m sorry, I shouldn’t have asked you to leave your post. I put us all in danger.”

“You think so? If we were all at our posts, we would all be dead and no one would be here to protect you. You don’t need that weight on your shoulders Mrs. T.”

Victor glanced at her again, she was out cold.

“Shit.” Frank muttered.

Just then sounds came from outside.

“Vic! Frank! ELLE!” It was Myk.

“HERE! Hurry, Mrs. T passed out!”

A loud crash was heard and the door to the bunker was flung wide open. Behind Myk were at least twenty policemen a few soldiers and several EMT’s.

“Take Mrs. T, quickly.” Shouted Victor as he moved out of the way.

They watched as Elle was put on a gurney and taken away in the ambulance.

“Myk, go with her, we will handle it here.”

“Sure.” With a loud sigh she left. It was only when she looked back at the house, she realised her quarters were gone completely. Three guest houses were blown to smithereens, but the main house looked strange, as if whoever set the explosives, knew there was a bunker and they would not be able to destroy it. An inside job. Myke thought as she drove behind the ambulance.

Funny enough, they chose to bomb the house when Nate was in the hospital which brought her to the conclusion, that they were after Elle but something went wrong.

Myk stood at the door of Nate’s hospital room, wondering how she would break the news to him. She shrugged, this man demanded honesty, but this was Elle, he would turn the world on its head to find out who harmed her and his baby. She softly pushed the door and immediately a look of shock and surprise plastered her face.

Nate was sitting up in bed, three men were standing around him, all with guns, all aimed at him. Nate was smiling, there was no show of fear as he lifted the teacup to his lips.

“Good morning Myk, it seems we have a dilemma.”

“Good morning Sir, I would be a fool to disagree. So! James, Win, Terrance, explain to me why you are here before I have to kill all of you.”

Terrance chuckled, this woman, she had more balls than most men. He always admired her, maybe even loved her but she never paid any attention, and he didn’t hold it against her simply because she never lead him on.

“We had a security breach on the compound and all arrows pointed to Naton Corp.”

Myk grunted loudly.

“So let me get this straight, stop me along the way if I falter in my assessment of this ridiculous situation. You had a breach, it pointed to Naton, and instead of doing your fucking job, you blew up his house with his wife who is now in the hospital room next to him?” Myk wanted Nate to get angry and shoot

these men, with her help ofcourse. She didn't bother to glance at Nate, she could feel the anger radiating from him.

"We didn't know she would be there Myk."

"So, again, incompetent. I will personally make sure your agency pays not only for a new house but his hospital bills, it's a good thing that my boss just fainted and their baby is just fine, otherwise I would have to kill all of you where you stand. Tell me I'm lying." Myk was furious.

"Now, now, let's not get carried away. Nate knows the dangers of providing software to the Government. He signed a contract." Win spoke.

"His contract states he is to provide the software, if protocols are followed and short cuts are not taken, all security measures will stand up against anything. Some idiot, in the agency probably messed up and pointed to Naton to take the heat off them. Now, I am going to ask yall boys very nicely to leave, I am not in the mood to sit in a police station explaining where there were three dead men in my boss's room while he was recovering from an operation."

"We can't do that." James said.

"I won't ask again." Myk said as she quickly pulled her gun out.

"You can't shoot all three of us at the same time." Win said. A bit sceptical at this point.

"She can, trust me." Win said.

"Do as she says, and by the time you get to your car, I want the money to replace my house. If there is one thing I pride myself on is my reputation to my clients, it's how I make my money. You need and I say need ... to check your own people. That software gives access to government funds for every agency in the US, Caribbean, England, France, Germany... you get my

point? I don't need to hack into my own software to get the money, I could have done it when I installed it and yall would never see me coming. Now get out before I give Myk permission to kill you." Nate said as he drained his cup.

All three of the men, looked at each other, holstered their weapons and left. James quickly made a call. The person on the other end was livid.

"You did WHAT? Get back here NOW and bring those two assholes with you! Naton Corp can destroy us with the touch of a button and you blew up his house with his pregnant wife in it? You better have a good explanation for your actions or you won't be able to get a job sweeping the streets!" The call ended with a soft click.

"What did he say?" Win asked.

"We messed up I think." James said, realising they may have been misled in a vendetta against Naton Corp.

At the Agency

"Who put you up to this?" The man in the black suit asked as he stood before his three best agents.

"The Director Sir." James said, feeling no obligation to lie.

"I see, well let me inform you of something your measly pay check does not come under the need to know category. The Director, was Nate's best friend at College, but he slept with his girlfriend, along with a few of their classmates. Nate dropped all of them when he found out the truth after denying it for so long. He actually walked in on her and four friends. He never spoke to them again. He raised his brother, built Naton up from scratch but the Director has had to claw and fight his way to the position he holds now. When the decision was made to hire Naton for the software, the

Director was against it but his pay check was measly compared to that of the decision makers. He has had a grudge against Nate for years and he has roped your three idiots into it and you will take the fall, because you are dispensable to him!”

The guys felt their worlds spin. It never occurred to them that they were being set up. Gregory Johnson was their boss, they did as they were told, did not ask questions and now, their jobs and lives were on the line.

“Sir, we just followed orders.” Win dared to speak.

“I don’t give a fuck! Don’t you understand, Naton Corp is responsible for the transactions of billions of dollars all across the world and he can take it ALL away. He does NOT NEED TO HACK HIS OWN FUCKING SOFTWARE!”

The man yelled.

“Crap.” Terrance grumbled.

“Now you are getting the picture and you three are responsible for pissing him off. He loves that woman more than he loves himself and he will come after you and I won’t be able to save you. So, make a decision right now. You either do right by Nate or suffer. I will let Nate deal with the Director. I wash my hands of his demise which I know will come soon. Now get OUT.”

Chapter – TWENTY-THREE - Jeff is Back

Mandy was sitting at her desk in her home office. Nate had helped her set up her own business. She provided Admin services for companies all from the comfort of her own home. She could clock her own hours, and remain at home when the baby came. She was coming along nicely but her nights were filled with thoughts and dreams of Jeff. She loved that idiot with all her heart and she wished things had gone differently.

She heard her cell ping and when she looked at it, her heart skipped several beats as she put her hand on her tummy. It was Jeff.

“Well well, if it isn’t Jefferson Orlando Tondale.”

“Mandy.” His tone was icy for some reason.

“Attitude so early in the conversation? Tsk tsk, try again Mr. Tondale.”

“Is the baby mine or Nates?” Jeff was angry.

Mandy gasped. She felt hurt.

“Wow, I think this is where I hang up and ask you to never call me again.”

“I loved you Mandy, why did you have to be with him?”

“He was MY HUSBAND Jeff, I cheated on him with YOU! Don’t you understand what we did?”

“OF COURSE, I FUCKING DO! Answer me, is the baby mine or his? I just need to know so I can move on with my life.”

“The baby is yours Jeff, we can have a paternity test when he or she is born.”

“I want to believe you Mandy, I couldn’t take it if the child were his.”

“He has always treated me well, even after he found out about us. He helped me get my business set up, took care of my parents’ hospital bills and he made a few investments for me as well. Where the HELL were you? What did you do? You left me!”

“I’m sorry Mandy, I had to clear my head.”

“What do you want from me Jeff, be honest.”

“I need you Mandy, you and our baby. I want to get married and spend the rest of my life with you. I’m sorry I hurt you with my actions, please forgive me.”

“You need to go to your brother, and ask him to forgive you, you and I are now tied together by this baby, but he is the only brother you have.. Do that and I will be willing to start fresh with you.”

“Will you come with me? We can fly down to the island tomorrow and be back by weekend.”

“I have a few jobs to finish up, so I will have to take my laptop with me.”

“I will come get you in the morning.”

“Uh Jeff, how do you know where I am?”

“I always know Mandy.” Jeff said in a sexy voice that flooded Mandy’s body with an unrecognisable heat.

“I see.” She cleared her throat.

“See you in the morning Mandy, I love you.” He hung up.

“That went better than I expected.” Mandy said to herself as she got up to pack. The next morning, Mandy took her bag and set it down by the front door. As she moved away the doorbell rang. She turned to open it and there he was.

Her heart jumped at the sight of him. He and Nate were almost identical but a few years apart. Good looking and sexy as hell but Jeff had that natural gentility that Nate didn't while Nate had the persona of a grandma bear protecting all her family and she would kill everyone in her path. The only person Nate was gentle with, was Elle and rightly so. Elle was a good woman.

“Jesus Mandy.” Jeff said as he impulsively grabbed himself and squeezed.

“Jeff you naughty man.” Mandy whispered, glancing down at his hand.

“I'm sorry, I didn't come here for that.” Jeff groaned as he closed his eyes.

“Well first thing you need to do is come in and close the door, can't have my neighbours bear witness to such a scene.

Jeff hurried in and closed the door behind him. He opened his eyes and looked at the woman he loved.

“How are you? How is the pregnancy coming along?” He gazed at her stomach, now well rounded.

“Great, the morning sickness is gone, and my appetite is healthy, thanks for asking.”

Jeff suddenly felt useless. He lowered his head and shoved his hand in his pocket.

“Jeff.” Mandy whispered.

“Yeah.” He replied.

“If you swear to me that you still love me with all your heart, I will be a good woman to you, give you a family, share everything with you.”

Jeff suddenly dropped to his knees and bowed his head. He pulled his hand from his pocket and held out a small green velvet box in his hand.

“Jeff?” Mandy whispered his name in shock.

“I Jefferson Orlando Tondale, love you with all my heart, will you marry me Mandy? Make me an honest man, love me and our child for eternity?”

“Oh Jeff.” Mandy said as she approached him.

She took his hands and gently pulled him from the floor. Looking into his eyes, she saw love, sincerity, need, lust, she saw the man she fell in love with and slowly nodded.

“Is that a yes?” Jeff asked, hope flaring in his heart.

“Yes, I will marry you.”

Jeff’s mood turned in an instant.

“Where is your bedroom?” He asked as he lifted her into his arms.

“Through that door.”

In a few steps he pushed the slightly opened door with his foot, took them in and kicked it shut. He gently lay her on the bed and covered her body with his, taking care not to press on her belly.

“I love you Mandy, forgive me for everything I encouraged you to do, I promise I will be a good husband to you and a proper father to our baby. Can I make love to you now?”

Jeff didn’t realise all the while he was talking, Mandy was unbuttoning his shirt. When he finished, she yanked it off him.

“Stop talking baby, I need you like right now. It’s been too long.”

Jeff and Mandy made love until they were both exhausted. It was only when his cell alarmed, he realise they had an hour and a half to make their flight.

“Baby, we fell asleep, we need to clean up and get to the airport.”

“Okay, tell my body that.” Mandy groaned. Jeff was an experienced lover but his urgency and need was like never before. He made love to her several times, not ever feeling satisfied.

As they arrived at the airport, Jeff parked and called his assistant to come get the car. They barely made it to check in when the flight was called. They went through Customs and Immigration and boarded the plane. Canada was a great place to live but Mandy had always loved island life, it was different than the rest of the world. She would take her man to see his brother and make amends. She knew Nate loved Jeff and all it would take was a sincere apology and all would be well.

At Naton Corp

Nate sat in his office when his cell beeped. It was Mandy.

“Hey Mandy is everything okay? How is my niece?”

Mandy laughed softly.

“Nate you fool, we are fine. I... umm have a favour to ask.”

“He found you and you want to bring him home to see me.”

“Yes.”

Nate sighed. He loved his brother but the betrayal was a lot for him to swallow. Was he willing to forgive?

“Please Nate, do this for me. He loves you and wants to be a family again. He proposed and I said yes but on the condition that he come to you and make things right.”

Nate glanced at Elle who was smiling sweetly at him. He got hard instantly and groaned.

“Is Elle there with you Nate?”

“Yes how did you know?”

“Oh please brother-in-law, she is the only woman who you make those sounds for.” Mandy laughed and glanced at Jeff who was watching videos on his tablet.

Nate laughed as well. Squeezing himself.

“It’s true. Look, I’m at the office, when you touch down call me and let’s have dinner.”

“OH Nate, thank you, this means so much to me. I will see you soon. We are about to take off.”

“Have a safe flight.” Nate said as he hung up and wheeled slowly over to the love of his life.

“Nate.” Elle said as she felt him lift her head by her chin.

“I need you.”

“Okay.” Elle knew her man, he never shied away when it came to her. He showed her his love every second of the day. She didn’t want to make love but when she heard his voice, her body betrayed her.

Nate surprised her though, he didn’t want sex. He had... other ideas. He knew she was uncomfortable this late in her pregnancy and she was only doing it because he wanted to. So, he took her into his lounge and guided her to the bed.

“Stand there, don’t move.” Nate said as he started removing her dress. Her belly was big and it made him even harder to know that he did this, his baby was moving and cooking inside her. He felt a surge of pride.

When she was naked, he pushed her to lie down on the bed and he got himself out of the chair. He positioned himself between her legs as he kissed her tummy. She giggled and rubbed his head softly. She didn’t expect that

he would move further down and when he kissed her core, she almost burst into flames.

“Nate.” She struggled to control her arousal, but he was relentless. He spread her legs and used his mouth and tongue to drive her mad. Within minutes, he heard her voice.

“Nate, I’m coming.”

It broke her, she felt dizzy, wrung out and boneless. She tried to look at Nate and she felt the bed shake. Then... she felt a warm liquid on her leg.

“Nate?”

“I’m here baby, just give me a minute.”

Nate rolled over on to his back and tried to control his breathing. He needed that badly.

“Are you okay? You didn’t finish with me, did I do something wrong?” Elle asked worriedly. He had never done this before and she was feeling insecure.

“Shhhh baby, I’m fine.” Nate moved up to lay next to her, reaching over to cup her worried face.

“You only did this for me, I didn’t want to make you more uncomfortable.”

“Did I show any sign of rejection? I didn’t mean to.”

“Hey, it’s okay honey, you are carrying our precious cargo, I was being a needy greedy bastard but I took one look at you and I couldn’t help it. I’m fine trust me, just needed to let off some steam.”

“Who upset you?”

“Mandy called, she and Jeff are back together, getting married, and they are on a flight heading here. I invited them to dinner.”

“You still love your brother, and this is a good thing. I love you for being who you are.” She scooted over to kiss his lips and with that kiss, she felt her own body ignite again. She climbed on top of him and the next thing she knew, she was screaming his name again. This time, she slumped uncomfortably on top of him and went fast asleep. Nate chuckled and helped her to a better position. He got some warm water from the bathroom and took his time wiping her off, then he dried her and covered her with a blanket and turned the a/c on.

Nate cleaned himself up, put on some fresh clothes and headed back to his office, closing the door on his way. He would let her sleep as long as she needed.

He called Myk.

“Boss?”

“Jeff and Mandy are meeting us for dinner later, but Elle is really exhausted, order some food around 6 and have it brought here. Head home and grab a nice dress for Elle, she forgot to bring one over this morning. Our guests should arrive around 5, get them from the airport and bring them here.”

“Done. Are you okay?” Myk sked when she heard Nate’s tone. She could tell he wasn’t really up to meeting his brother.

“No, but not to worry, I will work it out in my head before they get here.”

“Okay, I will leave now.”

Myk pulled up the car to Naton Corp and parked in Nate’s designated space. She sat in the car as Mandy and Jeff got out. Then she decided she would accompany them.

“Is there a problem Myk?” Jeff asked.

“Yeah but the boss said he would sort it out.” Myk made no effort to hide her disappointment in Jeff.

“Look, I made mistakes okay, but I am trying to make up for them, don’t kick me in the nuts, you wear some heavy boots.” Jeff said as he pulled Mandy to his side.

“Jeff, Mandy, listen carefully. I love Nate, he is my best friend and brother, if you aren’t going to be sincere when you see him, don’t go in there. He is happy now and if you do anything to interfere with that, I can make all three of you disappear, ya feel me?” Myk walked toward the elevator and pressed the button. She wouldn’t kill them, especially an unborn child but she could make their lives miserable.

“Myk.” Mandy said.

“What Mandy?”

“How long did you know before you told him?”

“Six long fucking months, does that make you feel better?”

Mandy gasped.

“You told him when he found Elle.” Mandy said knowingly.

“Yes. I knew about you two before Nate came into the picture, I didn’t expect you to say yes when he asked you to get married. You could have told him, he never would have asked. You and Elle are a few weeks difference in pregnancy but I knew your child wasn’t Nate’s.”

“Oh.” Mandy said.

“We are here.” Myk said as she stepped through the elevator doors and headed to Nate’s office.

As they stepped in, Mandy looked around for Elle.

“Where’s my pregnant buddy?”

“Asleep in the lounge, dinner will be here soon but we can start without her.”

Nate said as he looked up at Jeff.

“Jeff.”

“Nate.”

“I’m sorry.” They both said at the same time and laughed.

“It was my fault, I should have come clean about Mandy when you asked her to get married. She really needed the money and I didn’t think we would last. I love her, always did and when ...” Nate raised his hand to stop him.

“Do you love her Jeff? I mean truly love her and are willing to accept my baby inside her?”

Jeff flinched as he stepped back. Then, he straightened his shoulders and stepped forward as he looked at Mandy who had her head down.

“Yes, I will love her and the baby.”

“Then my brother, let’s eat and be happy. I appreciate you coming here to apologise. I was wrong to send you away without listening, but I was angry. Now, that is the past and *your* baby, and mine will have play dates and grow up just like we did.”

“No Nate, not like we did, you sacrificed everything to make sure I ate and went to school, I betrayed you and you still love me. Our children will be better than us and carry on the legacy you created for us. Thank you brother.” Jeff stuck out his hand, Nate grabbed it and pulled him down for a hug as he always did.

“Wow, never thought I would see this but I am happy.” It was Elle at the doorway of the lounge. She had quietly gotten ready while they were chatting.

“Elle, my pregnant buddy.” The ladies greeted and made fun of themselves that they could only sideways hug.

“Wait, I just realised Mandy calls you her pregnant buddy, you two are friends?”

“Geeze baby, how late are you with that breadcrumb. When Nate came home that night he found us, we talked, like never before, we understood each other, where we went wrong. When I met Elle, my heart was at peace, I had my baby, and he had Elle. Seeing the two of them made me realise he would never be mine and I was not sad. She and I talked almost every day, I got so many things off my mind that I could never tell you or Nate. So yes, we are definitely friends.”

Nate held out his hand and Elle took it, sitting in his lap. He groaned softly.

“Jesus Nate, could you hide and do that?” Mandy laughed. Elle blushed.

“What am I missing?” Jeff asked.

Mandy looked at Nate for permission. Nate nodded.

“Jeff, the night we got caught, Nate had just met Elle, the reason he sought her out was because of his reaction to her. He always reacts to her that way and it’s how everyone knows, is that he lets out a groan.”

“You mean...”

“Yes Jeff, the thing you asked Mandy, I was never aroused with her but one look at Elle and it was all over. I knew I had to let Mandy go, she suffered enough at my side.”

“Alright, enough of this horny talk, I am hungry. Myk?” Elle said, starting to feel Nate grow under her, she squirmed a bit and he pulsated against her. God this man was insatiable, and she loved it.

“Everything is set up in your lounge Elle.”

“Great, let’s go.”

Jeff pushed Nate in the wheelchair and Elle and Mandy linked hands and left. All was right in the world... for now.

Chapter – TWENTY-FOUR - The Take Down Part ONE

“Nate, I’m sorry, if I knew this was going to happen, I would have told you.”

“I know Marland, but Gregory is going to die. If I have to call in every single favour to get rid of him I will do it. He threatened the wellbeing of my wife and unborn child, I am going to take everything he owns and then watch him burn. Stay out of it, you have always been a good friend to me, I don’t want you implicated.”

“I would take a hit for you Nate, you know that!”

“Not this time, but I do need a favour from you.”

“Anything.”

“I want to use funds to trick Gregory, he is so greedy he won’t see it’s a fake.”

“Whatever you need, I’m not even asking for permission, do it.”

“Thanks, I’m sending you on a two-week cruise. Take Kerian and the kids and have fun.”

Marland laughed.

Nate smiled at his long-time friend. He was glad he still had a few.

“Get going, when this shit hits the fan, I need you far from here.”

“Make him pay Nate.”

“Definitely.”

Nate watched as Marland left his study and closed the door. Just then the woman he loved more than life itself, walked into the room caressing her stomach.

“Well look at you. I wish I could crawl all up inside you right now.” Nate said in a deep sexy voice. Elle blushed as she walked up to her husband and kissed him softly on the lips.

“Not sure I can handle your crawling at the moment.”

“I know, I’m just teasing, how are you feeling?”

“I am good honey, Amari gave me the all clear, so I am just taking one day at a time. The baby will here soon. How are you doing? In any pain?”

“A little pain but I’m fine. My physical therapy will start in a week. My recovery is going well but...”

“You are afraid you still may not be able to walk again.” Elle said.

“You know me so well. Yes I’m afraid but I am willing to accept if I can’t, all I need is you and our baby.”

Elle caressed his handsome face and climbed onto the bed with him.

“I love you so much Elle, never forget that.”

“How could I? You show me every day.”

“Myk will take you to buy another house, the government is paying for it since it was their man that blew up ours. So we have to start from scratch. I will sell the land from our old house.”

“I saw some online, I wanted to show them to you.”

“No need, whatever you choose is fine. When we finalise the sale, Myk will have the security set up, then you can decorate as you see fit.”

“You don’t want to input anything?”

“No honey, I trust you. Spend whatever you want, I don’t care.”

“You never have Nate.”

“I don’t need to check behind you Elle, from the first night I met you, you have shown me your true self, you have never tried to cheat me. You save money where possible, and I not only appreciate but I respect that in you. I know you aren’t going to buy a house for 100 million and even if you did, I wouldn’t care. So, do what you need to my love.”

“Thank you for trusting me.”

“You are worth my trust.”

“I have to get to the office, I heard you plan to take down Gregory.”

“Damn right.” Nate was immediately angry.

“I want to deliver the final blow.” Elle said.

“Deal.”

“I’ll go now, see you in a few hours, love you.”

“Love you too honey, bye my baby.” Nate said as he rubbed her tummy.

Back At Naton Corp

The entire company was abuzz when they saw Elle. The staff had grown to love her, and they had feared for her life. They had sent flowers, fruit baskets, cards, and she appreciated it all. As she sat in her office, pondering, her cell rang.

“Naton Corp Vice President James speaking.”

“Well if it isn’t Nate’s whore.” The voice on the other end spoke, laced with Venom.

“I’m sorry, you dialled the wrong number.”

She hung up and called for Myk.

“Hey Elle, what’s wrong?”

“Gregory just called me, he said I was Nate’s whore.”

Myk walked over to her desk, opened a drawer and pulled out a touch tone cell and turned it on. She put it on the desk next to Elle’s and waited for the software to load.

About five minutes later, it was complete. Just then Elle’s cell rang again and both phones lit up.

“Answer the other one Elle.”

Elle picked it up and answered.

“Naton Corp Vice President James speaking.”

“Bitch do NOT hang up on me again. Your husband is going to die a slow and painful death, you will sit and watch and then I will cut his baby from your stomach and watch you die while I do it.”

“No one is scared of you Gregory, you are a coward and Nate is a hundred times more man than you are. You think you have power? Well, we will see who comes out on top and it definitely won’t be you.”

“For a slut dancer you sure have a lot of confidence, I think I will have a little fun with you before I rip you apart.”

“I see why Nate stopped contact with you all those years ago, you are a dickless fag and you will burn. Have a good day sir.” Elle hung up and began breathing hard. She took a few deep breaths to calm herself. She looked up at Myk and smiled. The game was on.

Nate created a business profile and send out a post for companies to bid on a 475-million-dollar construction project. He had plans drawn, rules and regulations, requirements, everything. To the average person it looked too good to be true, he also listed bank account information to prove he had the money to pay, within minutes over two hundred companies expressed interest but these were dummy accounts. As Nate scrolled through the requests for into, the one he wanted to see, popped up. It was Gregory.

Gregory had seen the post while he was scrolling the internet for projects he could make money from. It never occurred to him that not only was it fake, but that it was designed specifically for him. He immediately called his assistant.

“Charlie, get the file on the Sakura Project we did about 10 years ago. Check the post on Projects Web about the guest houses and format the old project to suit the numbers.”

“Yes sir.” Charlie said without hesitation. She was basically his lackey, willing to do any and everything for the man she was in love with but never saw her as anything but a good screw when his wife didn’t want him. She found the file on her laptop and began editing it. Late into the night she was still working on it. Gregory had left to go to lunch but ended up in several meetings. When he got back to the office, Charlie was still there.

“Waiting for me?” Gregory said with a snicker on his face.

“Maybe.” Charlie replied as she saved the document. She got up, walked past him and locked the door. She knew the routine.

Gregory, unzipped his pants, yanked himself a few times and waited as she took her panties off. He bent her over her desk and within ten minutes, he was done. He went to the bathroom, cleaned up and left without a word.

Charlie got up, cleaned up herself and went back to the document. Around 9:30, she saved it, backed it up and emailed it to herself. She picked up her bag and headed down to the underground garage.

“Hello Charlie.” A voice startled her from behind a pillar. She reached for her pepper spray.

“No need for that, I’m just here to talk.”

“What’s up, I haven’t seen you in years.”

“Well since you betrayed me, I never had any reason to say anything to you.” The person said.

“I was wrong, it never should have happened, do you have to hate me for the rest of my life?” Charlie screeched, her voice echoing through the vast parking area.

“Calm down, we both made mistakes but at least I found out what kind of person he was. Either way, truce, I am here to save you.”

“I don’t need saving Myk.”

“Oh yes you do, you are about to fall into a financial trap and Gregory will be at the head of it. He doesn’t care about you Chars.”

Charlie lowered her head. When she looked up the tears broke her big sister’s heart.

“Chars, I love you, I always will but you need to listen to me, if you never want to see me again after this, that is up to you but I beg of you, hear me out.”

“Okay Myk, let’s go somewhere.” Charlie said as she turned to open her car door.

“Not tonight, I will find you at home tomorrow, no one can know I was here.”

“Okay but...” Charlie turned around but she was gone.

Charlie got into her SUV and left.

Chapter – TWENTY- FIVE - The Take Down Part TWO

The next day, Charlie decided to go into to work late. She headed down to get some breakfast and almost caught a heart attack when she saw Myk at the table drinking tea.

“Why am I not surprised.”

“Hey sis. I don’t want to repeat myself so, do what you need to and have a seat.”

Charlie got some peppermint tea and a bagel with ham and creamed cheese. She sat down and waited.

“Gregory tried to kill my boss, the wife not Nate. He is going down and he will take you with him if you don’t do what I tell you. The proposal you are preparing is for a fake job, Gregory is being set up, his account will appear as if he took the funds from the government account and he will be arrested and thrown in jail.”

“Where do I come in.”

“He will try to pin it on you so he can get away.”

“He won’t do that, he loves me.”

“Seriously Chars, he has been having sex with you in his office for five years, has he ever taken you on a trip, a date, bought you a gift? He gives everything to his wife and children, why can’t you see that?”

“He is leaving her, he told me so.”

“He has already bought tickets for them to Puerto Rico, he will take them wherever he is going after they meet up. You are not in the plans. He will transfer some of the money to you and take the rest. You will be under suspicion, and he will be off drinking Mai tais.”

Charlie was shaking her head. Myk knew she wouldn't believe anything she said even though it was the truth. Well... almost. Her sister was so dedicated to Gregory his words were gospel and it would get Charlie killed.

"Look ya know what, do what you like, I have given you a heads up, you will learn the hard way. I am done, I hope this turns out the way you want it to. Good by Charlene." Myk got up and left.

Charlie got up, did the dishes, put on a pair of jeans and dress shirt, and headed to the office.

She knocked on Gregory's door and went in. He was on the phone. She waited until he was finished and then approached him.

"What's up Charlie, I thought you weren't coming in today."

"My sister came to see me, I have some info that will interest you." Charlie took a seat told him everything Myk had said, and he was furious. He tore up the proposal she had printed and started to spout venom.

"That fucker Tondale, he wants to play, well then let's play. Call all the agents who work in the Caribbean, tell them I want Nate, his wife and their child dead. By tonight. Then book a return flight for me to Puerto Rico for a week." Charlie gasped softly. He was leaving, just as Myk said. It was then she realised her mistake. She had betrayed her sister again and now, the man she loved, was betraying her.

"Take me with you." Charlie said.

"Out of the question."

"I guess when you meet up with your wife and kids, there is no room for the office whore right?"

"Charlie..." Gregory said in a no-nonsense tone.

"Don't bother Gregory, I will be just fine. I should have realised we never do anything together and you will never leave her, I guess the joke's on me

twice. Have a good life, I hope Nate takes your head off. She grabbed her bag and left the agency for good.

As she got into her car, she called Myk.

“I’m sorry Myk, once again, you were right and I was wrong. I just walked off my job, I don’t know what is going to happen to me.”

“You will be fine, everything is playing out as planned.”

“What do you mean?”

“I knew you would tell him Charlie, you never listen to me but that is not what we need to focus on right now. I gave you an address years ago, you put it in a pocket in your purse, go there, don’t tell anyone. I will come get you when it’s over.”

When Myk hung up, Charlie searched her memory, she had taken the paper out and went to the location just in case she needed it. She quickly recalled where it was and headed there. She pushed the front door and went inside. “Hey Charlie, glad you could make it, have a seat, get some food.” A man said as he took a seat at the dining table. Charlie took one look at the food and vomited.

Myk had told Charlie that Nate would deposit funds directly from the agency account to Gregory’s account, but much to the surprise and dismay of Gregory, his funds just disappeared, along with all the money he had stashed in different accounts all over the world. It was gone, all of it. How?

Gregory let out a loud yell, swiping everything from his desk onto the floor with a crash. He began to shake. Nate was ruining his life and he had no idea how to stop him. He had asked Charlie to call all the agents and now he had no money to pay them. Shit. His cell rang.

“Hello.”

“Mr. G, I don’t see any deposit in my account, what’s going on?”

“Do the job, the money will come.”

“Okay, but you know if it doesn’t...” The caller hung up.

His cell rang again. This would be happening all day if he kept answering his phone.

“G here.”

“Where is the money?”

“Finish the job first, the money will come.” He hung up.

The man on the other line scowled, the scar on his face, itching as he relaxed. No way he would be doing the job, he didn’t trust Gregory. He packed up his gear and headed back into the mountains, at least there, he knew only wolves and bears were trying to kill him. Gregory sent out a text to all the agents – “No contact.” He figured that would stop the calls and questions. A few of them would take the risk without the money, hopefully by the time Nate and his family were killed, he would have solved that problem. His thought his wife and children were already in Puerto Rico but what he did not know, what that Myk had intercepted them on the way from the airport and now had them in a safe house.

“Where is my husband?” Mrs. Johnson asked softly. She knew something was wrong, but her husband always kept her in the dark about his work.

“Do you really want to know or are you quite satisfied with living off your husband’s bad deeds?”

She gasped. Then, she looked defiantly at Myk.

“Tell me.”

“Your husband is involved with espionage, human trafficking both children and adults. He is in charge of several prostitution rings that cater to only high

ranking officials and dignitaries. He has embezzled government funds over the last ten years, and is currently under investigation for putting a hit on a pregnant woman simply because he does not like her husband. Need me to go on Delia?”

“So basically, you are telling me that I’m married to a monster.”

“That about sums it up. He is going to die by his own hands, it’s up to you to go down with him and either leave your kids orphans or to die right along with you.”

“He has money in accounts all over the world, I saw some documents one time I was in his office.”

“We already emptied those, what else.”

“His father left him an inheritance, he can spend a limited amount each year, the account is in my name.”

“What else?”

“Charlie his PA, she has a sister, Gregory has a thing for her, Charlie knows but she thinks she has him under lock down.”

Myk was seething. Gregory had a thing for her and her sister knew?

“Okay, here is the deal, you have two choices, leave this country and start a new life someplace far, or meet up with Greg and spend the rest of your life looking over your shoulder.”

“I want to leave, how safe will I be when he finds out I betrayed him?”

“He is going to die Mrs. Johnson, there is no doubt in my mind about that.”

“Okay.”

“There will be a man coming to pick you up. He will drive you and the children until you find a place to settle down. Do not take any planes, use any of your old information.”

“What will I do for money?”

“Get a job, lay low, your family’s new identity will be given to you when you reach your destination along with some cash to last you a year. Any legitimate funds your husband acquired, will be forwarded to you.”

“Thank you.” Mrs. Johnson opened her mouth to say something but closed it.

Myk cocked her head to a side and waited.

“How do you get through something like this? I’ve just betrayed the man I vowed to love, cherish and honour for the rest of my life.”

“I don’t know Mrs. Johnson and I can’t begin to imagine how you feel right now but he betrayed you first, he decided to let greed overshadow any love and dedication he had for you. He did not have to be this way, he chose it. You on the other hand, have to start a new life without him in it and I sincerely hope, that you and your children, aren’t scarred too badly. Life is too short to be bogged down with other people’s mistakes. I doubt very much you will see your husband again. Have a good day.”

Chapter – TWENTY-SIX - The Final Take Down

“Are we ready Myk?” Nate asked as he stared at the monitors.

When Gregory sat down, eager to meet with the Director of EJ Corp, he marvelled at the décor of the place, it had a feminine touch to it. Was the owner a female? Maybe he could score a little on the side and strike it rich all in one go. The door behind him opened and frowned as a very pregnant woman walked past him and made her way to the head of the table.

“Good morning, sorry to keep you waiting. Give me a minute and we will begin negotiations.” The lady said.

“No problem take your time.

The woman sat down and Greg shifted in his seat. The woman was good looking and she had an air of professionalism about her. She opened her portfolio and began to read, totally ignoring him. Just then she looked up and caught his gaze.

“So, I understand you wish to have the contract for our project. You are a government worker, how will you be able to afford the initial supplies to get this project started?” The woman asked in a soft but commanding tone.

“I already have the start-up funds to proceed, the agreement stated that the contractor has to be able to fund the first part on his own and will be refunded after the first stage. The funds are guaranteed by your bank as they hold the funds solely for this purpose.”

“I see, but there is a discrepancy with your figures. You stated after the first stage more materials will be used, hence the increase in price. How did you arrive at this when the second stage is exactly the same as the first one.”

“The start date is right before the hurricane season is due to begin, there will be delays, maybe weeks at a time depending on the situation at the time.”

“So instead of recommending a change in the start date, you encourage us to start right before the rainy season, so you can get more money, in case of delays?” Greg suddenly felt uncomfortable. He didn’t think anyone would notice his additions.

“I am not wrong in my calculations.”

“No you aren’t but... why should we hire someone who is just out to make money. Your additions will cost us a further 9 million US dollars, not even Barbados. There is no justification for this, and I believe we are unable to see the reasoning in this.”

“What?” Greg stood up angrily. Mandy pushed a button under the desk and waited.

“I’m sorry but we cannot give you the contract.”

“Look bitch, I spent millions on equipment and workers who are already on standby, and you are telling me I can’t get the contract?”

The door behind him opened and much to his dismay, not only did Nate wheel in, but also Elle, Myk, Jeff, three agents and Marland. What shook him to the core was his wife standing behind them in tears.

“WHY ARE YOU HERE?” Greg yelled at her. She flinched but said nothing.

“Greg, I would suggest you tone that down before things worsen for you.” Nate said firmly.

“What the fuck is going on here?” Greg said his entire body shaking.

“It’s simple Greg, we set you up, and Charlie told you what we needed you to know. We also told everyone you have to do your bidding about the way

you do things. You don't care about anyone, not even your own family. Everything you do is tainted by your greed and lust for more money than you can spend. EJ stands for Everleigh James, that's me." Elle spoke softly.

"Look bitch..." Greg started.

"GREG! Stop! Is this how you really are? All these years you have been lying to me. Stealing from people, doing shady deals and hurting people. Prostitution? Child trafficking and endangerment? Elle is pregnant! You hired someone to kill her? What kind of man are you? Twenty-two years, I gave to you and this is how you repay me? By hurting people? How will our children look at you?" She rubbed her stomach and Greg's eyes opened wide. Was she pregnant?

"I'm leaving tomorrow, they told me I could go away and never see you again but I had to see for myself the person you turned out to be. I will never be with anyone else, but I don't want to be with you either. Good bye Greg." She turned to leave."

"Is the child mine?"

She laughed.

"Of course not, goodbye."

Greg slumped in the chair. He shook his head in distress.

"I admit to everything, every single charge I admit to. Please don't leave me." He said to his wife as she reached the doorway.

She looked at Nate for advice.

"Greg, you tried to kill my wife and unborn baby. How am I supposed to take that?" Nate was furious and began to shake in his chair.

Elle touched him on the shoulder to calm him down.

"Why Greg?" Delia asked him.

“Nate took everything from me. It was payback.”

Nate was confused.

“What did I take from you Greg?”

“Kerri.” Greg said through gritted teeth. He glanced at Delia and knew he had hurt her once again.

“This is all about KERRI?” Delia lunged at her husband, ready to claw his eyes out but Myk grabbed and held on to her tightly.

“You sleep around on me, gave me god knows how many infections, you got your PA pregnant, yes I know all about it, you even have thing for her sister but I knew and I loved you through all of it and you try to destroy this wonderful man’s life and family for someone who died over fifteen years ago?” Delia screamed.

“It was HIS fault she died!”

“No Greg, she committed suicide because she was just as weak as the men she slept around with including you. She denied me a simple kiss but she slept with almost all of my friends. Did I not walk in four of you? Did the same friends not send me videos of yall having sex, so tell me how is her death my fault?”

“She loved YOU, only you! She was going to leave me for you but when you found out about the life she was living you LEFT EVERYONE! You made a fortune and the rest of us suffered every day, taking scraps for food. She died carving your name into her arm!”

“Wow Greg, I didn’t think your delusion was this bad. When Kerri died, I hadn’t seen her since the day I found out about her. I couldn’t care less who or what she did after that, your loyalty is misplaced. You blame me for walking away from her and you. You have a wife who loves every bone in

your body but yet you blame me, for the way a young girl died. Ain't that a bitch. I am done with you.”

Nate turned to Delia.

“You are free to go Delia, this man is not worth your life or that of your children, love him from afar, the number of people looking for him is exponential. He will take you down with him.” Nate looked at Elle who was rubbing her tummy.

Elle took Nate's cell from his hands and redialled a number. When it was connected from the other end, she said a few words.

“Gregory Johnson is done.” She hung up kissed her husband on the cheek and left.

“Delia I'm sorry for everything.”

“I doubt that very much Gregory, goodbye.” She turned and walked away.

Everyone left except Greg. He sat at the desk and contemplated his next move, he had to get out but there were two men standing at the door. He got up to leave, they moved to stop him. It was then he knew this was his last day on earth.

Outside Elle, Mandy, Jeff, Delia, Myk and several bodyguards waited for one sound. Just then a loud gunshot whizzed through the air, it entered the window and hit its target right in the temple. Within minutes a crew came in and stripped the façade and revealed several containers that were retrofitted just for the purpose of this meeting. When they were done the only thing left was a dead man, sprawled across a table with a hole in his head. The next morning as the sun came up, the news hit the headlines – Defence Force DIRECTOR GREGORY JOHNSON FOUND DEAD on an empty lot in St. George.

Chapter – TWENTY-SEVEN

As Charlie stared at the newspaper, she felt someone in the room with her.

“What do you want Michaela?”

“Not a damned thing. Just wanted to see your face.”

“Why? To see how I messed up my life, betrayed you for a man? Who cares, I don’t need you.”

“Got that shit right, I wish you and your baby all the best, don’t call me for anything.” Myk shrugged and left.

Charlie flung herself on her bed and cried for the rest of the day. She heard a knock through her daze and went to answer the door. The moment she opened it, she felt a hard slap across the face. She stepped back a few feet and put her hand to her cheek. Looking at the woman in the doorway, she understood.

“Leave me alone with my misery Delia, I have nothing to say to you.”

“Greg has AIDS, did you know that?”

Charlie gasped. No she did not.

“I don’t have it, do you want to know why?”

“No point but tell me anyway.”

“He loved me, he didn’t want to infect me. I was sick before he got it and we hadn’t touched each other in over a year.”

Charlie quickly calculated when he started sleeping with her. Less than a year ago.

“Ahh now she gets it. Poor little Charlie, she thought she had Greg in the palm of her hands, little did she know she was just a warm spot for him to pass on his diseases. Do you know what his Will states? In the event of my

death, whether it be murder, suicide, disease or natural causes, I bequeath EVERYTHING, to my wife and only love, Delia Shayna Johnson.”

“What? He said he would leave something for me and the baby!” Charlie cried.

“Foolish girl. Men don’t care who they hurt! Greg was my first, the only man who has ever touched me and yet he cheated on me, what makes you think you were special? The positions you let him put you in? The places he had sex with you in public after a meeting or while at a party? You were nothing to him.” Delia turned to leave.

“Wait.” Charlie said.

“What?”

“Can you give me something for the baby at least, please?”

Delia’s heart hurt, she wasn’t a cruel woman but thinking of Greg and this woman while she stayed at home and played housewife made her want to throw up. She turned again to face Charlie who was quietly crying.

“Greg was worth at least thirty million, I will give you one million but you have to relinquish all rights to his child. The child will grow up as a Johnson and you will never try to find them.” It was a sincere threat but Delia just wanted to get a response.

“Fine.”

“I will find you when I am ready.”

“I would say I’m sorry but I thought he loved me and you were a horrible person to him. I listened to everything, did everything he asked.”

“Charlie, look at me.” Delia said softly.

Charlie looked at her.

“I sincerely hope you don’t have any diseases left by Greg. I will still take the child but if you want to turn your life around and be a good person, your own person. I will help you.”

Charlie opened her mouth wide and nodded vigorously. Delia’s heart had softened. She understood Greg had brainwashed the girl in order to foster her misplaced loyalty but that in itself was a betrayal. Much to Delia’s surprise, Charlie ran towards her and hugged her tightly. Delia sighed and held her for a short while.

“Oh Charlie, the things we women have to go through. Get some rest child, you look like shit and that is exactly how I feel.” Delia let her go and left. Charlie smiled and knew that with Delia’s help, she would live a good life and be a stronger woman,.. like Myk. Myk, her only sibling, the only family member she had left. She had betrayed her and she needed to make it right.

“Elle, where is Nate?” Elle was breathing heavily; her water broke while she was in a meeting.

She grabbed Myk’s hand and squeezed it.

“He’s picking up my brother at the airport.”

“Okay, deep breaths, I’m taking you to the hospital I will call when we get there.” Just then a voice was heard.

“MYK! Are you here?” It was Charlie. Myk grimaced, she did not have time for this.

“Come on Elle.” Myk ignore her sister.

“She’s in labour? I will go with you.” Charlie said, genuinely worried about Elle.

“If you are going to cause trouble stay away.” Myk kept walking Elle towards the elevators.

“I won’t, this is your job, I know how much the Tondales mean to you.”

Elle groaned and she got into the elevator and it lurched. Myk pulled out her cell quickly and called Nate.

“Myk.”

“Elle is in labour, taking her to the hospital.”

“I have her brother, we will meet you there.”

At the Hospital

Elle screamed as the contractions wracked her body.

“Almost there baby, I’m here, we can do this.” Nate held on to her hand as she pushed hard.

“The head is out, Nate, wanna see?” Nate peeped over and saw a tiny head, he grinned and looked back at Elle, who was panting but smiling.

“Take a deep breath Elle and give me one last big push.” The doctor said.

Elle clenched her teeth, closed her eyes and pushed as hard as she could, she felt the baby move and slowly come out of her. Then she wanted to see. Something was wrong everyone was quiet. The doctor was rubbing the baby up and down, the nurse cleared his mouth, and the doctor smacked him on the butt. The baby coughed and did not cry.

“Doctor, is something wrong?” Elle asked fearfully and grabbed Nate’s hand.

“Not a damned thing, the child can’t be bothered with us. Nurse get him cleaned up and back to his mama for feeding. Good job Elle, you did great, one last push and we will get you sorted out as well. Nate, a word with you outside when I’m done.”

“Amari, what’s wrong?” Nate asked as he and the doctor met outside.

“Not sure yet but the child was... well I thought he was stillborn, he may be unable to speak, hence the lack of crying.”

“Oh.” Nate glanced at Elle through a crack in the door.

“I’m sorry Nate.”

“Is this my fault? Did I pass on a disability to my child somehow?”

“I can’t say that unless I look into your family history and Elle’s as well, look, let’s not get ahead of ourselves. We will keep him here for a week and see how he shapes up okay?”

“Okay.”

Nate went back to see his wife and the nurse was just about to put the baby in her arms. Elle was crying when she took him. She reached out one hand to Nate and only when she realised he did not take it, she looked up at him. What? She was looking *up* at her husband. Up. No no, why was he so tall?

“Nate?” Elle stared up at him, totally confused.

“Hey baby.” Nate grinned. He had been hiding this from her for months now and he needed to be strong when he took the final step, she had no clue.

“You can, you... how, when, Nate!”

“A few months now, but I needed to be stronger, so I worked hard. Are you happy?”

“Are you?”

“I’m married to the best woman in the world, she just gave me the perfect son and my legs work. Yeah this is what happy looks like.”

“I love you Nate, see your son. She turned the baby to see his father but he was more interested in the smell coming from his mother. He turned his head towards her breast and opened his mouth. Elle laughed and shifted the gown to feed him. She sighed with content as his sucking relaxed her.

She looked up again, Nate was so tall, she always knew this but God he was sexy. Oooh now that he could stand up, they could... Elle blushed.

“Woman, if you don’t want me to get you pregnant right this minute wipe those thoughts from your mind.” Nate groaned.

“I was just thinking of all the positions we can try now oh husband of mine.” She turned to face him and her nipple pulled from the baby’s mouth and much to the happiness of his parents he let out a loud wail. Guess the doctor was right about waiting.

“Welcome to the world Jahved Nathaniel Tondale.” Nate said proudly.

Charlie and Myk stood outside watching the happy family. Charlie sighed.

“So, what do you want?” Myk asked in a nonchalant tone.

“Can we go somewhere and talk, please?”

“Let’s head to the cafeteria, I’m hungry anyway.”

They made their way and found seats. Myk turned away to place an order.

“Do you want anything?” She asked her sister.

“Just a mauby and four coconut bakes.”

The cashier nodded that she heard and waited for Myk.

“I will have tea and a saltfish bake.”

“That will be \$12.75, you can select your tea from the caddy.”

The girl handed Myk a tray with a saucer and a teacup, she motioned for Charlie and handed her the same. They got sorted out and went back to their seats.

“You have fifteen minutes Charlie, use them wisely, I don’t have the time to babysit you anymore. You need to grow up.”

“I’m sorry Myk, for everything. You are the only family I have left, this baby wasn’t planned, especially with someone like Greg. I didn’t know he was

such a horrible man, when he spoke to me he was kind and gentle. I never thought someone like him would even look at someone like me.”

“Someone like you? Charlie are you stupid? You are young and beautiful, you get the highest scores in whatever studies you take on. You don’t need validation from anyone.”

Charlie opened her eyes wide. She never knew her sister felt this way about her.

“Why do you look so surprised?” Myk asked.

“I thought you looked down on me.”

“Charlie, who sent you to school? Paid for your education, made sure you ate? Who beat up guys if they even glanced at you? You were mine to protect and I did it because I love you. I warned you about Greg and you told him everything I said. How do you think that makes me feel? I don’t owe you anything, I will help you out with the baby for the first year and then you are on your own.”

“Don’t leave me Michaela. I’m nothing without you.” Charlie cried.

Myk sighed in frustration and sipped her tea.

“What do you want out of life Charlie. I got you the job you have, since Greg is dead, they will reshuffle. If you want to work for the next Director I can put in a good word.”

“I want to start a business, Delia has committed to helping me.”

“Now that is a woman, against all odds she is helping her husband’s outside child and lover.”

“Greg lied to me about her, anyway that is water under the bridge. I want to open a Concierge school and use the contacts I have made over the last few years to get clients.”

“That is a great idea, I will do what I can to help. Time’s up I have to go. You know how to find me.”

“I love you Myk, do you still love me.” Charlie looked up.

“Oh Charlie, don’t you know? You are my baby sister, who else am I going to love?” Myk said as she put the tray and plate on the garbage counter.

Chapter – TWENTY-EIGHT – Best Decision

Charlie sat in the cafeteria for an hour before she decided to head out. She had things to do, a baby to prepare for and she would not waste another thought on that loser Greg. She stood up and turned to leave and crashed into a solid wall. The wall let out a huff and held her arms to steady her as she stumbled.

“Oh gosh sir, I’m sorry, did I hurt you?” She asked.

Evan chuckled. How the hell could someone so small hurt him?

“No miss, I’m just fine, what about you, are you okay?”

“Yeah, I’m okay, sorry again. Have a good day.” Charlie turned to leave but the strong hands gripping her arms, didn’t budge.

“What’s your name?”

“Uh Charlie.”

“I’m Evan, my sister just gave birth, I’m here to see her. Can I take you out to dinner tonight?”

Charlie’s eyes opened wide. No, she wasn’t ready for this. She shook her head and tried to get away.

“Evan, thank you but my life is way too messed up right now to even think about going out with a man. I’m sorry.”

Evan frowned. The woman looked like a frightened mouse. He loosened his grip and smiled.

“Just dinner, at least I will make a new friend.”

“Wait did you say your sister gave birth? Elle is your sister?”

Even looked surprised.

“Yes, her husband picked me up from the airport and we headed here. How do you know Elle?”

“My sister Myk works for them.”

Evan immediately let her go and right away Charlie realised that he knew about her and what she had done. She couldn't stop the tears.

“That is the look I was expecting. It was nice to meet you Evan.” She turned and left.

Evan kicked himself. He didn't want to let her go, she made mistakes, betrayed her sister but Gregory was a master at getting people to do what he wanted, it wasn't her fault. He watched her go and thought about how he could get in touch with her. There was something about her that pulled at his heart. She needed someone who could back her up, be strong when she was weak and Evan decided that man would be him.

He bought something to eat and headed back to the happy family. He pushed the door to the private room and smiled. Elle was sitting on the bed, Nate was standing next to her and they were smiling down at their son. Evan took out his camera and snapped a photo. Elle looked up.

“Big brother.” The tears began, she hadn't seen him in over five years. He left to find himself and gain financial stability. He would send money back for his family whenever he could but he never felt it was enough. When Nate heard what he was doing, Nate called in a few favours and Evan was now his own boss with a flourishing company – EJ Corp. Yes, this was the name they used to trick Greg, hence why he knew all about Charlene. He and Elle were a twin.

“Hey sis, looks like we have a new addition to the family, well hello Jahved, it's your favourite uncle Evan.

“Don't let Richard hear you.” Nate said.

“Mom, dad and Richard will come see us when we take him home. How long are you here for?” Elle asked.

“For good, I’m setting up EJ Corp here, moving the entire business. Tired of living away from my family, looking to set down some roots and have a family of my own.”

“It’s about time.” Elle said as she smiled. She looked at his face and immediately knew something was wrong.

“Who is she?”

Evan flinched. Only his sister could call him out.

“Don’t be angry.” He looked at Nate and sighed.

“I met a young lady in the cafeteria, she bumped into me and my heart squeezed. When I told her why I was here, she asked if you were my sister. I asked how she knew you, she said her sister works for you and Nate.”

“Absolutely NOT!” Elle almost shouted.

“Honey, calm down.” Nate said as Jahved started to fuss at her voice.

“It’s okay Elle, I know she isn’t the ideal woman for me but I can’t ignore this. I asked her out and she refused, told me her life was messed up and she wasn’t ready. I will wait for her to do what she needs, and I will try again.”

Elle was silent, she had no right to say who he went out with.

“Evan, if she is the woman you want, who am I to say no? I’m sorry for my outburst. I just don’t want you to get hurt.”

“I can handle it, been there done that. If it doesn’t work out, I can say I tried and move on with that acceptance.”

“Okay, but let her know if she hurts you, I will punch her out.”

“No you will not.” Nate chuckled as he kissed her on the forehead.

“So what’s next for you two.”

“Take care of our son.” Nate and Elle said at the same time.

“The two of you are sickening. I’m out. I will bring the others over when you settle back at home.”

Evan left the mushy couple and headed out to the parking lot. Nate had given him a car until he decided what he was going to buy. As he pressed the key fob, he saw Charlie heading towards her SUV. Just then he spotted a man out of the corner of his eye heading towards her. He changed direction and headed to her. Charlie was in a daze and did not notice either of the men coming towards her, she searched her bag for her keys and was totally oblivious. She felt someone grab her and throw her violently to the ground, she hit her head and immediately blacked out.

Evan reached behind his back and aimed his gun at the man’s head.

“Well, what do we have here? Put her bag down and I promise I won’t kill you.”

The man scowled and turned to run. Evan changed direction and aimed at his leg. One well-placed shot was all it took to bring him down. He put his weapon back, slowly bent down and picked Charlie up and took her inside. The nurses helped him get her on the gurney and wheeled her away.

He called Nate and told him what happened.

“Jesus, she can’t catch a break. I will let Myk know.”

A few days later, Charlie slowly opened her eyes. Her brain was foggy and it took a few minutes to register where she was.

“Hey sis you’re awake.” It was Myk.

“I... what happened?”

“You got attacked and Evan stopped him but you hit your head when you fell.” Myk was afraid to say the rest. Charlie noticed and put her hand on her belly.

“It’s gone isn’t it.”

“Yes sis, I’m sorry but you hit the ground really hard.”

Suddenly Charlie smiled. Myke lifted an eyebrow in confusion.

“The baby was never meant to be, he or she was conceived in dishonesty and a one-sided love and loyalty that was severely misplaced. I can start fresh.”

“Who is he?” Myk asked.

Charlie laughed softly.

“Elle’s brother asked me out, I told him my life was messed up and I wasn’t thinking about going out and now...” Then she remembered how he let her go after finding out who she was.

“What did he do?” Myk asked about to get upset.

“No, no. We bumped into each other, and he asked me out then when we realised who we were he abruptly let me go. I can understand why, and I don’t blame him at all.”

“I see.” Myk would be having a conversation with Evan pretty soon.

“Don’t.” Charlie said when she saw an emotion flicker across her sister’s face.

“Uh huh.” Myk kissed her forehead and left.

Evan was sitting in the family lounge. Myk walked over and sat next to him.

“I like her, I know all about her, I don’t care, I have to follow my heart. Yes, I hurt her feelings today, I will make up for it. You can’t stop me so don’t try.”

Evan said as if he were ordering burger and fries from a menu.

“As long as you are clear, hurt her and Elle will be one brother less.”

“I can’t promise you that Myk, you know how relationships are. We do our best but shit still happens. Look at Nate and Elle and all they have gone through so far. You are a married woman, don’t tell me you have never said or done anything to hurt Marcus and vice versa. I can only promise that I will treat her with respect, give her everything within my power and ability to give. I haven’t been in a relationship for a while, but my parents taught me to be a man. I can’t give any more than that.”

“Fair enough. Give her some time, she is still hurting and well she just lost her baby. Even though she is trying to be positive and wanting to start fresh, she will make mistakes.”

“I understand.”

“I realise you didn’t seem surprised about the baby.”

“Nate gave me her file when he asked me to dummy EJ to take down Greg.”

“I know you are a good man Evan, don’t let her down.”

“I will do my best not to. Can I see her now? The police are waiting for my statement, and I have to go to the station.”

“Yeah, I will be back to take her home tomorrow after Elle and Jahved are discharged.”

“I can do that; think she will let me?”

“Ask, it will either be a yes or no. Call me if she says no.”

“Deal. You are a good sister to her.”

“Always.”

“Charlie?” Evan whispered as he pushed the door.

“Evan?” What are you doing here? I thought...” She trailed off, not wanting to say he left her because of who she is.

“About that. I’m sorry I brushed you off earlier, I wasn’t thinking straight. How are you feeling?”

“I’m good now, ready to get out of here and start my life the way I should have before.”

“I’m sorry about the baby.”

“Thank you but they weren’t meant to be.”

“Myk is allowing me to take you home tomorrow, it would be my honour to do this.”

Charlie looked confused. Was this the same man who dropped her like she was acid?

“Look, I’m moving back to Barbados and bringing my company with me. I’m going to need help; would you be willing to offer your concierge services? I will pay whatever you ask.”

“We can discuss this when you take me home, I don’t want to discuss business here, is that okay?” Evan smiled.

“I would still like to take you to dinner, get to know you better.”

“Why?”

“Everyone has a past; we do shit, learn from it, and move on. I am ready to move on, with you if you want. I am not a hearts and flowers man but if that’s what you like I will do it for you.”

Charlie was surprised. Was this too soon after Greg? She looked down.

“Charlie, take your time and think about it, no decision needs to be made today. Get some rest, I must go to the police station. I’m sure they will want to see you when they find out you are awake.”

“Oh yeah, the man in the car park. Why do you have to go?”

“I shot him in the leg after he threw you to the ground, I didn’t get there in time, I’m sorry.”

“You saved, me, thank you.”

“My pleasure, can I come visit you later?”

“Yes, can you bring me some fruit and soup? The food here sucks royal.”

“Take my number, call me if you think of anything else you need.”

She reached for her cell and handed it to him. He put his number in and handed it back to her.

“Thank you for giving me a chance Charlie.”

She nodded slowly as her body heated up under his gaze. Oh boy. Evan saw the look on her face and smiled. Then he took a chance and leaned down to kiss her forehead.

“Get some rest, I will be back later.”

The cops came to take her statement and then they left. She felt as if her life was one piece of drama after another, but she no longer felt any pressure to be anyone but herself.

Around five, Evan appeared with food, toiletries, clothes and a smile.

“Thank you Evan.” Charlie smiled and took the soup. Evan packed away the other things and sat next to the bed.

“I need to get something off my mind Charlie.” Charlie froze.

“Don’t worry. Just be honest with me and everything will be fine.”

Charlie nodded and resumed eating.

“Did you love Greg?”

“I thought I did, but when I realised he was willing to leave me and his baby here to take the fall for his wrong doings, my stupidity hit me like a ton of bricks.”

“Well let me tell you now. I do not want a yes woman, neither do I want a woman who just does what I ask. I love a woman who can think for herself and will respectfully put me in my place, do you understand me?” Evan, almost growled.

Charlie stared at him blankly.

“I need you to be this for yourself honey not me. Never let me walk over you or disrespect you. Call me out when needed, I won’t always like it but I would prefer it.”

“Okay.”

“Good. Are you in any pain?”

“No, I’m fine thanks. Tell me about yourself.” She almost whispered as she inhaled Evan’s scent. She felt her lady bits clench. NO! Stop that!

“Not much to tell, I grew up poor with my brother and sister, we are all now successful in our careers and I am looking to settle down.”

“I see.”

“I’m pretty wealthy and with your help I can maintain that for years to come.”

“I don’t care about your money Evan, let’s make that clear so please don’t use it as a bargaining chip.”

Evan smiled, he threw that tidbit out to see her reaction, he was pleased.

“You were testing me.” Charlie looked at him.

“You will never know.”

“HmMMMM.”

“Careful, when you make sounds like that, I get the wrong idea.” Evan growled in a deep voice.

“You are the wrong idea. We just met, don’t push me.” Charlie whispered.

“Honey, if I could make love to you right this minute, I would.” Evan dropped his voice so low Charlie felt it reverberate through her body.

Charlie gasped.

“Shhhh, I’m not afraid to speak my mind, get used to it.”

“Why me? I made a mess of my life!” Charlie almost yelled.

“When you bumped into me I felt a spark, when we figured out who you were, yes I was disappointed but... I could not ignore my feelings. It’s as simple as that. No hidden agenda, no fuss or flare.”

“I’m nobody special Evan.”

“Whatever Charlie. I’m not the kind of man who waits around for people to figure out what they want from me, you have three months to get to know me and make a decision, I will take it from there.”

Charlie remained silent. She reached over to the side and pulled a bunch of grapes and began eating.

“What time are you picking me up in the morning?”

“I will be here around 8am, everything is settled.”

“Okay.”

Charlie looked over to Evan and realised he was staring at her.

“Do you know that you are a beautiful woman Charlie? I could drown in your eyes.”

Charlie kept eating but a smile crept on her face.

“I don’t want to disappoint you Evan.”

“Unless I say you have, don’t worry about it, I keep telling you we have all made mistakes.”

“What mistakes could someone as sweet as you have you made?”

“You may not be able to handle it, so be very clear on your wanting to know my dark secrets.”

“Tell me.” Charlie said confidently as she got comfortable.

“I went to prison for almost killing my wife.”

Charlie gasped but continued waiting for the story. Evan sighed.

“We agreed to have two children after we got married. She got pregnant within a year after we bought a house. What she did not tell me was that she married me for my money, and she didn’t want to ruin her figure with a child from me. She was seven months pregnant when she went drinking and crashed the car into a streetlamp. She hit the steering wheel and it forced her into an abortion. She did not have a scratch, cut or bruise on her, but my baby was gone. I flew into a rage and threw her against a wall when she came home from the hospital and was going out to a party with her friends, she acted as if our child meant nothing to her. I took her car keys, hid all the credit cards and cell phone that I had given to her. I wanted to discuss this situation but no, she wanted to party. I pushed her up against the wall and began to choke her. She pulled a small knife I gave her for protection. When I felt the stab, I hit her hand hard, snapping it like a twig but she had already stabbed me several times. I lost consciousness and woke up in the hospital in handcuffs.”

Charlie sat frozen, silent, contemplating all that she heard. She held her head down and waited for Evan to continue.

“The police took both our statements and took me to jail when the hospital released me. I was there for three months before some evidence came to their attention. There was a video of Sophia purchasing drugs from a man, and also the footage of her drinking in the bar with her friends, her pregnancy clearly evident. The doctors confirmed that she was already killing the baby with her behaviour and the accident just finished him off. I was charged with

assault and stayed in prison for a further three months. I came out and decided I had to get my life back. I started my own business and with Nate's help since he met Elle, it's much better. That's me in a nutshell. I don't need you to dissect my life, or pity me, see me for the man I am now and know that I am not perfect. If you give me the chance, I promise I will do my best to treat you the way you should. If I am not giving you what you need, just tell me I can handle it."

Charlie looked up with tears in her eyes.

"I see, I will leave now." Evan got up and left.

The next day Charlie got up and packed her stuff and waited for Evan to take her home but much to her surprise, Myk pushed open the door.

"Morning Charlie, are you ready to go?"

"Morning Myk, yes."

"Aren't you going to ask?"

"No, clearly I'm not important enough for him to do what he volunteered for. Doesn't matter. Let's go."

"Charlie, Evan is not your average guy, when he called and asked me to pick you up I asked what you did, he almost took my head off. He likes you but your reaction to his past hurt him." Myke took Charlie's bag and opened the door for the orderly with the wheelchair.

When they got home Charlie sat in the living room and stared at the wall. She picked her cell up and looked for Evan’s number. She dialled and he answered immediately.

“Hello Charlie, how can I help?”

“Can you come over to my house? I need to speak with you if you allow me to.”

The call was disconnected. Five minutes later a knock was heard and Myk opened the door. She wasn’t surprised, said goodbye to her sister and left. Evan walked in and closed the door. He propped on the corner of the kitchen counter and waited for Charlie to speak. She patted the seat next to her.

“Are you sure you want me so closely to you?”

Charlie flinched.

“I guess I deserve that, please, sit.”

Evan made his way over and sat down.

“I’m not a strong person, I fall in love easily and people always end up hurting me. I lost a baby that should not have been in existence, but I grew to love him or her anyway. Now here you come, making promises someone who claimed to love me made before and it’s hard for me to believe you. I’m sorry, I made you feel bad yesterday, but I wasn’t crying because of your past I was crying because if I had met you before, maybe my life and child would have had a fighting chance. I want to try but I am not ready. Give me some time, please.”

“Charlie honey did I not say there was no rush, did I not tell you we would take the time to know each other. I want to be with you and as for not being a strong woman, you are still here. I want you to be my business partner, Myk said you are brilliant when it comes to concierge services, you have contacts that may benefit me in the long term.”

Charlie's eyes opened wide, she was shocked by his offer.

"I, I don't have any qualifications, I was hired because Greg thought I looked good when he had big business meetings."

"I will pay for you to go to school and get whatever you need."

Charlie leaned over and kissed Evan's cheek.

"Thank you for believing in me."

"Honey, you have an entire family who believe in you, just believe in yourself for a change okay?"

"Okay."

"I've ordered breakfast for us, it should be here soon. Do you need anything else?"

"Not right now, I just want to get my health back and start to work on myself as a person ya know?"

"Oh yeah I do know but I'm curious... aren't you afraid of me now that you know my past?"

"No. I lost my baby and even though the father wasn't the cause, he was the source of so much misery in my life and I know if he had done anything to harm my child I would prolly shoot him myself. I understand your hurt, rage, pain and I hope I never become that person to you again."

"You couldn't harm a fly Charlie, let me do the shooting."

"Can you teach me?"

"I can teach you many things love, trust me." Evan's voice suddenly went deep and low, his face turned warm as he glanced at Charlie's lips. Charlie felt the room grow hot and her stomach clench. Her desire was eminent and as Evan chuckled to himself, Charlie blushed and hung her head.

“Hey, nothing wrong with having feelings, never be afraid to share or show them when you are with me.” He lifted her chin with his hand and kissed her lips softly. He immediately groaned.

“I am officially giving you six months, before I make love to you and please do your very best not to tempt me before then.”

Charlie laughed and agreed. They spent the rest of the day talking, Evan ordered lunch and then dinner later. As the sun set, Charlie felt worn out, she had been through a lot and her eyes slowly closed as she nestled in Evan’s arms on the sofa. He watched her for a long while and knew he was making the right choice.

Chapter – TWENTY-NINE – Family

There were now six members of The Tondale family. Elle declared that Sunday was a day for everyone to be together, talk, share ideas, everything. The others agreed and they were currently at Nate’s house.

“So Nate, how is the company doing?” Mandy asked.

“It would be fine if Elle were back at work. Every time she is away, things go haywire.”

“A few more weeks honey, I told you to let me work from home but noooooo, so suffer for a few.”

Nate grumbled something under his breath but smiled. He glanced at his sleeping son and smiled even bigger.

“We have to talk to you about something Nate.” Jeff said.

“Sure what’s up?”

“I... want you to be my best man. I know I messed up but you are my only brother, we have been through so much from when we were little. You gave up many things to make sure I was cared for, even your ability to walk. I need you to be there for me just one more time.” Jeff said genuinely.

“Just tell me when and where.”

Jeff smiled so wide his eyes disappeared. He rushed over to Nate and got down on his knees. He used to do this when he got into trouble and needed Nate to forgive him.

Nate felt his heart burst open.

“Hey, you are too old to be on your knees now brother. Come on get up.”

“I love you Nate, that ain’t gonna ever change.”

“Of course not.” Jeff bent down and they hugged.

“Geeze, and they say we are emotional.” Mandy scoffed and smiled.

The reunited brothers spent the rest of the day talking and making financial plans.

Mandy was due and she felt uncomfortable most days. Jeff wanted to delay the wedding until after the baby was born, she was dead set against it.

“Nate! Could you PLEASE drill some sense into your pigheaded brother?”

“Hell no, I learned from my mistake with Elle, she delivered on our wedding day, who was I to say no?”

“UGHHH.” Mandy glared at Jeff and Nate.

“Mandy, I understand what you are going through, follow your heart but your baby will do whatever he or she wants.”

“Thanks Elle, I feel better about it now, no thanks to these airhead men!”

Jeff and Nate opened their mouths in shock.

“What did we do?” They both declared at the same time, making everyone laugh.

“The wedding date stays Jeff.”

“Whatever you want honey.” Jeff replied in mock fear. All he wanted was for her to be safe and happy.”

Just then Jahved made a soft sound. Nate got up and checked him. He picked him up and went to the nursery to change him. Elle’s eyes followed him all the way until he disappeared, her smile said everything.

“Aww look at her Jeff, she is totally smitten.” Mandy said with admiration.

“Well you only recognise it because you look at Jeff the same way.” Elle replied with a grin.

Mandy looked at Jeff and blushed.

“We have come a long way. Everything was difficult with me being married to Nate and I couldn’t sort my feelings out.”

Jeff looked at her in surprise.

“You never told me that.”

“How could I?” Mandy replied.

“By opening your mouth and telling me!” Jeff growled.

“Jeff...” Elle warned.

Mandy teared up and Elle frowned.

“Jeff, think about it. She was involved with you and married to your brother. You were conflicted as well and could not keep away and you couldn’t tell Nate either, you aren’t being fair to her.” Elle said softly.

Jeff ran his hand over his face.

“I know, I know, I’m sorry babe.”

“What did you do now Jeff?” Nate said as he put Jahved back in his basket.

“We were talking about how far Mandy and I have come, I got upset.”

“We all make mistakes bro, let it go.”

“Not you, you are perfect in Elle’s eyes.”

Elle snorted and Nate laughed.

“He is nowhere near perfect and we both know it, neither am I.”

“What could he have possibly done to hurt you?” Jeff asked.

“Nate has a jealous streak, and trying to tame it has been, for lack of a better word – difficult. We would be in meetings and his jealousy always got the better of him. I remember one time, he had sex with me just before a meeting so the potential client would smell him on me. I was so embarrassed. The client noticed and it confirmed it. He clearly knew Nate very well. He gave us the contract anyway but it was hard I tell you.”

“Jesus Nate!” Jeff snorted.

“Yeah I know, my heart was hurting. I was still trying to wrap my head around you and Mandy, my trust levels were pretty low but the second Jahved came

into this world, I just knew, we would be okay. People forget relationships require work, and it takes two.”

“Yes, I was as much to blame as he was, I could have gone to him and demanded his attention, but I didn’t want to get rejected again.”

“I love Mandy with all my heart, sometimes I think I’m not good enough for her but then she looks at me and nothing else matters.” Jeff said.

“Well we are all one big happy family, we need to trust each other and not feel so alone.” Elle said.

“Agreed, I think I need a nap.” Mandy yawned and covered her mouth but when she stood up, she felt a rush of liquid between her legs.

“NO WAY!” Jeff said excitedly.

“Will you SHUT UP and take me to the hospital!” Mandy yelled as the first contraction hit her like a ton of bricks.

Nate sat quietly as the scene unfolded, remembering that he went through the same thing recently.

Jeff shut his mouth and lifted Mandy into his arms and took her to the hospital. Nate gently picked up his son, held out his hand to his wife and they followed in the car.

Several hours later, Mandy could be heard screaming from her room, she didn’t want to go to the delivery ward.

“Sir if something goes wrong with the baby, we need to be prepared.” The head nurse said as Mandy shook her head.

“She doesn’t want to go, do what you need to, I will take responsibility for everything and will pay for any inconveniences.”

Mandy screamed again. Jeff held her hand and kissed her forehead.

The delivery was hard, but finally he came out on his own and when the doctor smacked his butt, he frowned and let out a loud wail. Jeff stared at the small human. His eyes filled with tears as his son cried.

Nate patted him on his back and looked at his nephew. He held Elle's hand, kissed his son on his forehead and said... "Welcome to the family Jared."

Chapter – THIRTY – 1st Christmas

In a few weeks, the Tondale, James and Branch families would be celebrating their first Christmas together. The men were responsible for getting the tree and the ladies volunteered to do the shopping for gifts and the cooking.

Charlie and Myk were getting along better, Marcus and Evan had merged their businesses and were even more successful.

As Christmas day grew closer, Charlie became more nervous. Evan had said he would wait for six months, that was in three days and it was also their first Christmas with the entire family. Every moment they spent together was filled with hints, innuendos and tons of flirtation. Even on the other hand was calm as ever. He watched Charlie squirm as he kissed her each time, gently pushing her body against his. He always managed to pull back but the next time he touched her, she would know she was his forever.

“Babe, are we still on for dinner tonight?” Evan asked as Charlie sat in her office across the corridor from his.

“Yeah, I just have to head home and get ready.”

“Great I will pick you up at six thirty.”

“Okay.” Charlie bowed her head and all sort of dirty thoughts flitted through her mind. Gosh she felt like a virgin.

Evan closed the door and almost grabbed himself. He had everything planned and hoped it would go well for Charlie, she had enough issues in

the past, but she was proving to be an asset to the business and she was generally a wonderful girl, all he had to do now was to fully gain her trust and ask her to marry him in six months.

Charlie left the office around four pm and headed home, she was almost there when her call rang, and she put it on speaker.

“Charlie here.”

“Chars help me.” It was her best friend Max, and she was crying.

“What’s wrong, where are you and what happened?”

“I was raped.” She whispered.

Charlie quickly pulled her SUV over.

“Max honey, tell me where you are now.”

“I’m at the Sapphire Hotel, room 1204. Hurry.”

“Be there in fifteen.” Charlie said completely forgetting her date with Evan. She turned her vehicle around and headed to the hotel. When she got there, she went to the front desk and asked for room 1204. The front desk clerk told her in no uncertain terms that she was not allowed to go unless invited by a guest.

“Miss Kelia, I understand your rules but my friend called me and told me she was in the room and she was raped. If I have to call the police and have them let me in I am willing to do that. If you can call your manager and have someone escort me to the room that is fine but either way, I am going to get my friend.”

Kelia immediately picked up the phone and called her manager. Within minutes a tall woman with a figure to die for, rushed over to greet Charlie.

“Miss, I am Kamara, the Manager here, I will take you to your friend and we can go from there.”

“Thank you Kamara, I don’t mean to be any trouble and thank you, I just hope she is okay.”

Kamara and Charlie rushed to the room. Kamara used her Master Key to unlock the door and the scene before them was disturbing to say the least. There were several young girls sprawled across the floor, clearly high on something or severely drunk. Kamara immediately called the police.

Charlie searched frantically for Max and when she found her, her heart broke into pieces. Max was in the bathtub almost submerged in water. Her wrist was slit. Charlie screamed and rushed to find something to stop the bleeding.

Evan was in good spirits. He was going on date with a sexy, sweet and sensual woman and nothing could bring him down from his high. He put on a pair of dark grey slacks, a brown belt with shoes to match and a navy-blue button-down long sleeve shirt. He grabbed his keys, wallet and headed to his SUV. He got to the restaurant early and he was taken to a private room that Nate had booked for them.

Half hour later, Charlie was not there. Evan checked his cell, there were no calls missed or otherwise. He began to worry and decided to call her. Her phone went straight to voicemail. He left a message and decided to order a drink. Another half hour passed and still no word from Charlie. Worry began to morph into frustration and slowly progressed to anger.

Evan got up and told the manager he was leaving and would reschedule for another night and would pay the charges for the inconvenience.

“No need sir, Mr. Tondale owns the place and he said to give you whatever you need, when you need it, just call and let me know personally what your

plans are, and we will be glad to arrange them for you. Have a good night sir.”

Evan left and headed to Charlie’s house. He arrived at her house and saw that her vehicle was not there. He called her twice more before he left and headed home.

Evan was tempted to call Myk, but he didn’t want to worry her until he knew Charlie had not stood him up. He tried her phone a few more times, leaving message for her to call him and let him know she was okay but... nothing.

Evan drove around Bridgetown, not noticing all the light displays. He saw families taking photos by the fountains, the swing Bridge and the huge Christmas tree. None of it mattered if he didn’t have Charlie to share it with him. He left town and headed in the direction of home and empty house he wanted to fill with little feet. He currently hated it there.

As he was passing by one of the more popular hotels on the South Coast, he saw a woman getting into a car with a man dressed in a suit. No, it couldn’t be her. Evan froze at the traffic lights in utter shock. He wanted to get out and confront her but decided if she didn’t want to be with him, he would not force her. The lights turned green and he simply drove on and headed home.

The next day, Charlie was exhausted. She had stayed with Max all through the night and around 7am, the doctor told her to go home and get some rest, Max was sleeping and would be happy to see her when she woke.

Charlie dragged herself into her house and then realise she had not heard her cell ring all night. She was so caught up with everything that happened with Max and the other girls, she totally forgot about Evan.

“Oh no, Evan.”

Charlie grabbed her cell from her bag only to realise the battery had died. She got the charger and quickly plugged it in. Wishing for a faster boot up. As soon as it got enough charge, she heard the familiar pings of new messages and missed calls. She plugged in her headset and dialled Evan, prepared to face his temper but it went to voicemail.

Charlie called again and left a message for him to call her back. She took a shower and headed to work, again prepared for his anger but when she got there, he wasn't there.

“Good morning Marly, has Evan been in as yet?” She asked his PA.

“Morning Charlie, no, he left on the 8am flight to Miami for a meeting, he will be gone for two weeks. Didn't your calendar remind you?”

“I had a situation last night, battery died, it probably hasn't updated yet. Mo worries. If you hear him before I do, have him call me please.”

“No problem.”

Much to the surprise of Charlie, Even did not contact her for the two weeks he was gone. She knew he was upset but this was very bad. She had been to see Max every evening after work and stayed until late, then she headed home to an empty house. The date he said he would make love to her was gone. He broke his promise to her, and she was beginning to think he no longer cared. So, as usual, she picked herself up and the first thing on her agenda was to resign from Nave & Marcus Associates. She told no one she left but Marcus knew and he told Myk, who called her sister.

“I figured he would tell you. Look, I’m better off by myself, if Evan doesn’t want me, I’m fine with that, don’t worry about me.”

On Christmas day, the ladies were preparing the food, it was around 4am and the Tondale Estate kitchen was abuzz with chatter. The men were on the other side putting the finishing touches on the tree and placing the gifts. Evan was sitting by the window, not saying a word, just sipping some hot chocolate.

“Bro, what’s the matter?”

“She stood me up for another man and I can’t let go but I can’t confront her either.”

“What? Whatever gave you that idea?”

“I saw her coming from the Sapphyre Hotel with a man, she got into his car and left.”

“Uh, Evan, I think you are mistaken and you have wasted two weeks you can never get back. Did you not speak to Charlie all this time?” Said Marcus.

“What do you mean? What do you know?” Evan sat up quickly, almost spilling his cup into his lap.

“On the night you saw her, her friend and a few other women were drugged and raped. She was probably on her way to the hospital or police station and that man was probably a detective.”

Evan stood up, put the cup on the table and ran towards the main house. He burst into the kitchen and all the ladies screamed in fright.

“EVAN, what the hell man?” Myk yelled.

Evan has his eyes on one person and the look on his face told everyone he would not be leaving until he spoke to Charlie who had a fragile look on her face.

“Charlie, either talk to me in private or talk to me right here, your choice but you will talk to me.”

“Hey, you can talk to her like that?” Elle stood in front of her brother, clearly pissed.

Charlie gently grabbed Elle’s arm.

“It’s okay Elle. Evan, let’s go to my room. Be back in half hour girls.” Charlie turned and walked away; Evan followed. When Charlie entered the room she was using, Evan slammed the door and grabbed her arms and kissed her hard. Charlie responded and moaned into his mouth. He pulled away and just stared at her.

“Charlie, please forgive me. I have been an idiot and I hope I have not ruined my chances with you.”

“What did I do to make you not even want to talk to me?”

Evan hung his head.

“Did you go with another woman?”

“NO! I would never! I waited for you all night, I went to your house and on my way home I saw you leaving Sapphyre with a man in a suit and I just assumed...”

“That I stood you up for another man, oh Evan. You were hurting all this time?”

“Yes, I thought you didn’t want me, or that I was pushing you for something you didn’t want or were not ready for.”

Charlie reached up to cup his face and pulled him down for a kiss. Within minutes, Charlie and Evan were naked in each other’s arms. Evan was hard as a rock and Charlie’s eyes opened wide the moment, he dropped his boxers.

“I’ll be gentle.”

“I don’t need gentle, I just need you. Make love to me Evan.”

Back In the kitchen the ladies were almost done. They had discussed with Charlie how she felt about Evan and they all decided that men need a swift kick at time and that if it was meant to be, it would work out.

They teased her about everything and she laughed in return. When Evan burst into the room, she knew it would be okay.

The sun was beginning to come up, the aroma of food was drifting throughout the house. Charlie shifted and before she could open her eyes, Evan was all over her, again, for the fifth time. He couldn’t get enough of her. She was perfect in his eyes.

“I’m sorry I made a mess of things Charlie, I will do my best not to mess up again.”

“I should have found you and tried to talk to you but I didn’t want to hear you reject me.” Charlie moaned as Evan pounded into her, signalling the conversation was over.

Charlie and Evan took a shower together and she went to his room to bring his bag. He saw the small velvet box he had been carrying around and decided romance be damned, he would ask her right now.

“Charlie honey.”

“Be out in a minute.” She replied from the shower. Evan took the chance and dropped his towel and headed to her.

Charlie felt a warm body engulf her from behind and rested against it.

“Charlie, will you marry me? I know it’s not the most romantic proposal, but I need you as my wife.” Evan said as he slipped the ring on her finger and kissed her neck.

Charlie turned in his arms with tears flowing down her face and nodded. Evan quickly lifted her up and plunged into her, sealing the deal.

Half hour later, they got dressed and went downstairs. It smelled heavenly. “Merry Christmas guys, there are ham slices with honey in the toaster oven, Sorrell, passion fruit, guava, lemonade and mauby drinks are in the chiller and salt bread in the tin. We are heading over to exchange and open gifts, the housekeeper will stay and make sure the food doesn’t burn.” Elle said excitedly.

Elle grabbed Charlie’s hand and opened her eyes at the engagement ring. “OH Charlie! Congrats, I’m so happy for you.” Elle hugged her and punched Evan in the shoulder.

“Love you too little sister.”

“I’m glad she said yes, now you can get back to being a nice guy.”

Charlie blushed and went to get breakfast for her fiancé.

“See you in a bit, hurry up!” Elle said as she left.

Over the next few hours, everyone opened gifts, laughed and talked about past Christmases and expressed love, kindness and understanding of everyone present. Nate stood up with a glass of wine in his hand. He looked down at his son and smiled.

“I want everyone here to know that I appreciate each one of you. I am blessed with a wonderful family, and I would not change any of you for all the tea in China.”

Everyone laughed and raised their glasses.

Amaris Ricci – Hydra Series - Betrayed – Book ONE

Charlie and Evan got married six months later. Elle and Nate had two more children. Mandy and Jeff added three more children to their household. Myk and Marcus struggled to have a child and just resigned themselves to being happy with each other, but little did they know, a storm was coming and their lives would be turned upside down.

Next Book in this Hydra Series – Myk – Book Two.