



Messa

BROKEN SISTERS SERIES

M. BRENNAN

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KINDLE EDITION
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Edited by Gypsy Heart Editing
Cover Design & Formatting by L.J. Anderson - [Mayhem Cover Creations](#)

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DEDICATION

In loving memory of my friend Ray Mc Gonigle . Ray was a great friend of mine whom I lost four years ago. In this book some of the stories Ray tells are true—our friend Lil Mo, did strip and traumatize poor Ray. He was a sweetheart and a very good friend. There wasn't a day I was with him that he didn't make me laugh. He is missed by all who had the pleasure of knowing him. So Ray, this is for you.

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NESSA

Broken Sisters Series

M. Brennan

Nessa is a troubled twenty-six year old whose life came crashing down when she was only sixteen. With the death of her mother and growing up with a non-existent Father, Nessa thinks she can never be loved. After losing her boyfriend, her job, and feeling like life couldn't possibly deal her anymore heartache she quickly learns it can get a lot worse when her past comes back to haunt her.

When Nessa first meets billionaire Taylor it's hate at first sight, but it doesn't take long for her to realise she's falling hard for him. Is Taylor her knight in shining armour or is he the devil in disguise?

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

ABOUT M. BRENNAN

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ONE

Ugh, stupid alarm going off. God, I swear I just fell asleep and now my alarm is waking up. I haven't been getting much sleep lately, due to my bills flying around my head. My ex, Brandon, cheated on me by sleeping with one of my best friends and left me drowning in debt. Thanks to him I was in over ten thousand euro in debt that I didn't even create. I have managed to get it down to eight but the banks are hounding me constantly which is causing my sleepless nights. I've never in my life been in debt before. I've always had a savings of at least four thousand euro, it was my security blanket. Being broke is terrifying.

I can't wait for the weekend when I can just lie in bed all day. Oh yeah, I can't lie in this weekend, I'm working then too. Great. I have to help out Stacey Saturday night by waiting at a posh do she's hosting.

Stacey, one of my best friends, owns an event business. It's going pretty well for her but this event could put her right on the map to becoming very successful. I'd say I'm being the good friend helping out when in truth it's her helping me since my douchebag of an ex.

It's been three months since it happened. I was heartbroken at the time. I was really sure I loved him, now though I know I never did because I just don't care that our relationship is over. I'm pretty sure if I did whole heartily love him I'd still be dealing with the heartache from his deception. Now I'm just pissed that I didn't see it coming and upset I lost a best friend in the process.

We were together for a year and to anyone, even me at the time, we were very much in love. But he didn't love me, he just used me and took pleasure in doing it the fucker. I should have known better than to think he really loved me, I'm never enough for people they always leave.

I remember that day pretty clearly, actually I'm trying not to forget it that way I'll be weary of all assholes and not fall for their shit again. My heart and head have now hardened or so I tell myself.

It was a Wednesday morning and I was halfway to work before I remembered that I'd forgotten to grab the important files for my boss. I pulled back up at the house I'd shared with Brandon for the last six months

and noticed his car was there as well. I thought it was strange because he'd left for work before me. Maybe he forgot something, I thought innocently.

It's strange if my friends got with a wanker I'd totally suss them out and tell them, "Yeah he's cool or ditch the loser." But when it came to little old me, I just never saw the bad.

I skipped into the house thinking I have the best boyfriend ever and I can't wait to see him, even though we had only parted an hour ago. I would only be there for a second, it didn't stop me from being happy to see him. I really was stupid and naïve.

I head in and call out to him but got no answer. I quickly grabbed my files from the kitchen, but he not in there either. I thought it was strange but I didn't have the time to go and search him out. I had already been in a rush and was running late as it was.

Once I got to the front door I heard a noise coming from upstairs. Is that the sound of a woman moaning? Nah, I remember thinking it couldn't be. I dropped my files on the hall table and ran up to check it out. When I got closer to my bedroom door I felt my blood boil in outrage and my stomach turn in sickness because it was definitely a woman moaning.

I pushed the bedroom door open and sure enough there was a woman, not just any woman though, it had been my best friend Lucy. She was bouncing up and down all over the man I thought I would spend the rest of my life with. She had been really enjoying herself if I had to go by her moans at the time.

I had been frozen to the spot and I'm pretty sure I puked in my mouth a little, especially when Brandon's eyes opened and he looked straight at me. But instead of jumping like any guy would do if he gets caught in this position he had smiled at me and it was a pretty evil smile at that. I didn't know the man in our bedroom at that moment.

I had wanted to scream and shout or even run away but I did nothing, I just stood there. It was like my brain didn't grasp what was happening. It's wasn't till Lucy had started getting louder that I realised she had been nearing her climax and here I was just standing there frozen to the spot while my boyfriend just stared at me.

At the time it had felt like hours when in reality it had only been seconds. I remember thinking, Stupid brain snap out of it or this bitch is

going to enjoy an orgasm at your expense! Which had been a sickening thought.

I couldn't help but think that I should have known this day would come considering when I love, people always leave me.

The scream of rage I had let out echoed from the walls of the house. I don't even know where it had come from but the force of it had caused both of them to jump. Lucy was off the bed with a sheet around her in a moment while Brandon had just gone back to lying down with a smug look on his face.

I remember thinking, Who was this guy because it wasn't the same man who told me he loved me an hour before. I had looked back to Lucy's face had seemed to lose its colour and she had a shocked look on her face.

"Oh God Nessa I'm so sorry! It's not what it looks like, I mean shit... I'm sorry, it was an accident."

Had this bitch been for real? We had been best friends for twenty years and she accidentally has sex with my boyfriend. I don't even know how I answered her or where it came from. "So what, you just happened to be in my house while you thought I was at work and what fell on his cock? Nah silly me, maybe he tripped and just fell right into you! That couldn't be what happened with the way you were bouncing all over his cock says you did mean to and that you were very much enjoying it. So go enjoy your ten minutes, I hope it's worth the years of friendship you just threw away."

After that I had went to walk out of the home Brandon and I had shared and I had felt like my heart was shattering. I hadn't even looked back to Brandon but his voice had stopped me from moving.

"Ten minutes Nessa? Now you know that I go much longer than that," he said smugly. "You know you beg for it. Sure you do, it was only this morning you were screaming my name."

A gasp came from Lucy but I hadn't looked to see her face as he had continued, "But it was just so hard for me to have sex with an ugly dog like you. I had to close my eyes and picture all sorts of thoughts just to get through it."

The laugh he'd let out had been pure evil, so much so that it had left me speechless again. I couldn't believe what was actually happening. My chest had been tight and I found it hard to breathe in that moment.

I remember turning to leave thinking I couldn't take much more and needed to go. My whole body was shaking and I was fighting back tears. I tried to hold them in as long as I could, I didn't want Brandon and Lucy to see me crying. That was when he had decided to hit me with the kill shot by saying, "I did what I had to do to pay the bills but your cards are full and your savings is gone—so Nessa it appears my meal ticket is used up. I mean you didn't think I really loved you did you?" His voice had been so cold.

Lucy, who had remained quiet in her own shock at the time, had realised that she'd been used by Brandon too.

That was when the tears started to pour down my face. I'd just snapped and picked up the lamp that was on my dresser and flung it across the room. She screamed and I knew I had hit him when the blood start pouring from his nose.

He had been shouting and cursing when I ran from the house. I had gone into autopilot and had gotten in my car and drove around till I ended up in Bray. I remember going to the wall overlooking the sea and sobbing. I'm pretty sure I looked like complete and utter mess but I needed to clear my head. I don't know how long I sat there, my body shaking and my tears not wanting to stop flowing.

Once I calmed down I managed to ring my boss and told him I had a family emergency and couldn't make it to work that day. Then I rang my credit card companies and bank to see how much of what Brandon had said was true. Sure enough I really had been his meal ticket, he left me with only fifty euro in my account and ten thousand euro in credit card debt. I hadn't even known my cards could add up to that amount. Brandon managed to up my credit somehow I still haven't figured out. I must have signed something for him not realising I was signing myself into debt. When I talked to the bank they told me it was my signature, unless Brandon was willing to confess to plagiarizing my signature I was stuck clearing this debt. Apparently there were letters but he must have hid them because I never saw any.

I couldn't go home that day so I rang Stacey and explained everything to her and she told me to go over to her apartment. When Stacey opened the door I broke down and cried for hours while she held me, she didn't ask question just held me till I was ready to deal with the mess my life had become.

That was three long months ago now. That night Stacey went and got my stuff from the house I rented with Brandon. Now I live with Stacey in her two bed studio apartment in Temple Bar. I love the apartment and was delighted by the offer. I wanted to start fresh and that began with trying to clear the debt Brandon left me with. I'm not making much of a dent in it but Stacey offered to cover rent till I sort it out which helps a lot.

I haven't seen Brandon or Lucy in the three months. I'll never trust someone that easy again that's for sure. Everything has been going great since then, right up till yesterday when I found my company was going under. I'm just hoping they can figure out something so I don't lose my job. I can't lose my job, I'm barely making it by as it is.

I jump up out of bed and get ready for the day ahead. For a year now I've worked as an assistant to marketing executive I call pervy Joe. He's not that bright and I often wonder how the hell he got his job in the first place. I mean my job is to be his assistant, and to everyone in the office I'm sure that's what it looks like, but really I'm the girl who does his job.

At first he started handing me little things to do. I didn't have the first clue about marketing accounts so I went online and did loads of research. Turns out I'm a natural when it comes to marketing. Once he figured that out he was letting me manage most of his accounts, while he takes all the credit for my work.

On top of that he's touchy-feely and I've caught him trying to get a glimpse down my top many times. I mean he has a daughter my age for God sake, if I didn't love my job I'd slap him!

Walking up to my building I look up. It's so beautiful, it's really tall, probably one of the tallest in Dublin, it never gets old looking at the beauty of the Liberty Hall skyscraper As I enter I notice a lot of unfamiliar faces and people rushing around and I wonder what's going on. I spot John the head of security, he looks stressed that's never a good thing.

"Hey John, looks busy here today. What's going on?"

He turns and whispers in my ear, "As of this morning we have a new owner. Apparently the deal was made a few days ago and the new owner wants to meet all the staff and he'll make a decision then if he will keep staff on or let them go."

I suddenly feel sick. "Oh really? I hope I get to keep my job. I better get up there."

"I'm sure you will be fine Nessa. Good luck."

I thank John and head towards the elevator. Once inside I hit the button for the second floor. After the elevator reaches my floor I exit and bump in my work buddy Ray. He's as gay as Christmas and amazingly sweet.

"Hey there baby girl."

"Well hello Ray. John said we have had a takeover. What do you know gossip queen? Spill it."

Ray knows everything about everything, I don't know how he gets his information nor do I ask because I'm pretty sure I don't want to know.

"Me, gossip? I have no idea what you're talking about." He laughs and then tells me that I'm right and there will be a meeting in the big conference room in twenty minutes to explain what will happen next.

"Better get to my desk then."

"Yes Pervy McPerveston is running around his office as we speak," he says amusingly.

I say bye to Ray and head down to my desk. As I look into Joe's office I see that he is indeed running around like a headless chicken. Once he spots me he waves me in. I grab a pen and pad then head in and take a seat.

"Good morning Joe. I heard there's been a take over, what do you need me to do, or do you already have a plan of action?"

"You're right there has been one and I need your help," he says as he walks around his desk. He sits on the edge of the desk and leans down to touch my knee.

Ugh, this man doesn't give up! I grind my teeth together and ask, "What can I do to help?"

"I need the figures on the Fitzgerald account. Could you walk me through how you landed the account? I'm sure I let you help on that account and I don't have time to go over figures myself. It's my biggest account, I'm sure I can impress the new owner with it," he says with a smug smile.

He's got to be kidding me, I worked day and night for a week straight to get that account together while he did nothing but take the credit for it. I forced a grin onto my face because I wanted to keep my job. "Sure Joe but could you tell them I helped? I'd like to keep my job too and if they see that I worked on this with you it could really help me."

"Look Nessa I don't think they're going to keep little people like assistants. I've been told he brought his own, so I reckon your job is as good as gone. But you should still help me out, I kept you here for a year and treated you good even though you were a bit of a slacker. I've been a good boss. You owe me."

My mouth goes agape. Surely he did not just say that out loud, did he? What the hell?

This guy is delusional. Is this really happening? He can't actually believe that after what he just said I would still help him. I take a deep breath, then slap his hand away before I stand and walk to the door. Just as I'm about to exit I turn to him and say, "You little pervy prick, how dare you! I put up with your wondering hands for a year while I did your job and let you take the credit. How about I go for your job now because we both know I'd get it over you any day of the week."

He just smiles and says, "When I'm done in there you won't have a job anyway."

I walk back across the room and slap him hard across the face, something I've wanted to do for a while. Oh that felt great!

"You're going to pay for that Nessa!" I storm out of his office and grab my bag from my desk. I head to the conference room where the meeting is supposed to be held. I know I should probably just leave after what I just did to my boss but I'm not leaving without a fight. I put so much into this job to let one pervy prick to take it from me.

Once I get there I notice only the assistants are in the room. Maybe they are getting rid of us all. I'm still struggling to keep my calm, God I just slapped my boss! I should probably walk now, but just as I'm considering my options a woman walks in and addresses the room.

"Your bosses are all heading to their meetings at the moment. Once they are out you will be called in one by one to do a small interview so the new owner can meet you and see if you're right for his company. I have a list here of the first ten people who need to head up to the top floor. If you're on the list it means your boss is doing theirs as we speak. I suggest you make your way up there now and wait."

She pins the list to the notice board then heads out of the room. I walk over to the notice board and see that my name is on the list. I'm still trying to keep myself calm but I decide to head up. Maybe I can convince the new

owner that I'd be a good asset to his company. I reach the top floor and walk over to where everyone else is waiting. I spot Sinead, she works on the floor above me and is a sweetheart.

"Hey Sinead." She's deep in thought and jumps a bit at the sound of my voice.

"Oh hey Nessa, I was in my own little world there. I'm so nervous trying to come up with some backup plans for my interview in case something goes wrong"

"You will be fine but do tell any good ones in case I need them." Lord knows I could use any help I can get after my little stunt with pervy Joe.

She turns to me with a smile on her face. "Flashing," she says brightly.

She couldn't mean flashing could she? "Say what?"

"Flashing. You know show a bit of boob. Just pop it right out."

I burst out laughing she's mad and I hope like hell she's not serious. "Sinead please don't flash. I'm sure your job will be fine. You're great at it but if they don't keep you it's their loss. You just walk out with your head held high." And then crumble to the ground and cry like a baby, but she doesn't need to know that.

"Suppose you're right. I shall keep my tits locked up." I laugh because I reckon she might actually flash. "Good to hear."

We have been sitting here for over an hour when I hear my name called.

"Nessa Donahue could you please follow me, you're next."

As I get up Sinead tells me good luck but also grabs her boobs and tells me to try it. My God, I think she's actually gonna flash! I shake my head and follow the pretty blonde who I've never seen before into the office. The room is huge with a great view and done up very plainly yet very professional way.

As I walk into the large office and there are three men sitting at a big table. The ones on each end of the table and they are probably in their late thirties. The one in the middle looks to be in his late twenties or early thirties and holy hotness is he fine.

He has dark brown hair, broad shoulders and you can tell he works out as his muscles are bulging through his jacket. I can see a peek of a tattoo showing from the cuff of his left hand. This guy is wow, just wow. Someone clears their throat and I jump. Oops I may have been caught staring.

The man on the left speaks, "Take a seat Miss Donahue." He looks down to the file in front of him and frowns. I wonder what that's all about.

"You're the assistant to Joe Harte?"

"Yes sir, I am. I have worked for Joe a year now." Hotness looks up and his eyes are as dark as his hair but they are empty—cold even.

He looks to the man on his left. "Tell me again Jim why we are even interviewing her? I told you I want all underperforming employees gone and Mr. Harte may well have felt sorry for her but I don't. She can go," he growls out and looks back down to the page in front of him.

I think he just dismissed me. What a fucking prick! I'm shocked and really starting to think it's not my day, the temper I have been trying to calm down is bubbling right back up again. Jim looks at me with pity and whispers something in prickface's ear. When he finishes he gets a look from prickface that suggests he better agree and with that Jim breathes out in defeat.

"Miss Donohue we are very sorry but there isn't a position here for you anymore. You can head down to HR and collect your very generous redundancy package," he says and gives me a pity smile.

Gee thanks. I still haven't spoken, I'm trying make sense of it all. The pervy bastard has gone and ruined me for this job and prickface there isn't even going to give me a chance. Just wonderful.

As I stand I see that the prick still can't be bothered looking up at me and that just annoys me more. I walk halfway over to the desk and look at him.

"So that's it? Pervy Joe tells you I'm a slacker and that's it, you just take his word? I don't get a say—"

"Miss Donohue I'm sorry but—" Jim butts in but I don't give him a chance to finish. My anger has reached the boiling over point and I'm ready to let them have it.

"No you're not. You all can go and fuck yourselves! I worked hard here, I did that little fuckers work and he gets the job and I don't even get a chance."

I'm stopped in my second speech of the day when the prick laughs, he actually laughs. Even the two men on either side of him look confused. I'm barely holding it together here and he thinks it's hilarious.

"You expect us to believe you, an assistant, did the work he handed in? I don't think so you can leave now," he says amusingly.

Oh so this is just some joke to him, not my livelihood at stake? I walk closer to the table as I'm shaking with anger. I look him straight in the eye, something changes in them at that moment. I'm not sure exactly what changes in them but I don't care. I'm here to prove that I am capable of doing pervy Joe's job.

"Did he show you Fitzgerald account? I'll tell you what, ask him about any other account and he won't have a clue about them. He studied that one this morning to impress you with it. I worked on that for a week straight, putting in tons of overtime. I barely slept when I was working on it only for him to get the credit. Better yet, ask him if the client was a man or woman , you sexiest pig!"

I'm shouting again but I've said my piece and with that I'm done with this company and trying to save my job. With shaky hands I pick up a glass of water that's on the table in front of the men and throw the water inside of it at the prick himself.

With no hope of keeping this job I slam the glass back onto the table and storm out of the office pissed at him and pissed at myself for losing my temper.

Great job Nessa, now you're jobless.

I head straight home, I have had a shitty day and all I want now is a big glass of wine.

Once home I kick my shoes off and fill the biggest wine glass we have and go sit on the sofa. Our apartment has the perfect view of the Liffey, it's beautiful and calming.

I take a sip of my wine, relax and think about what the hell I'm going to do now. I'm broke. Every penny I have is being paid to my credit card company and I was so livid when I left I didn't even collect my redundancy package—not that I reckon I'll get one now. Just great I'm broke and in debt and can't see how I'll get out of it anytime soon.

I'm down two glasses of wine and still on the sofa when Stacey comes home a few hours later.

"Hey hun," she greets me I get up to get myself for a refill.

"Hey, wine?" I shake the bottle at her.

"Oh yes please. How was your day, you look stressed."

I tell Stacey what happened, every single gory detail, God, my life is a freaking joke.

"Nessa that's terrible! I can't believe it, I'm so sorry," she says as she hugs me.

"I'll be grand. I'm sure I'll find something else. Hopefully it'll be fast since I still have eight thousand euro in debt to payback."

She looks at me seriously. "Let me help Nessa."

I know she means well but hell, she's letting me live here for free—that helps so much not having to cover rent.

"No I'm good babe. Thanks but you have helped me loads." I don't want her feeling sorry for me so I change the subject. "So tell me how this posh do that is coming up. You got everything ready?"

She stares out the window and I can see that this job is really stressing her out.

"If I get this right Nessa it could really get my business out there. I could hire more staff, get bigger clients, I could do so much more."

Wow that is big. "Whose party is it that it's so major?"

She jumps off the sofa to get a new bottle of wine. "Oh my God, Nessa have I not told you it's Taylor Kessler's party. He's a big hotshot billionaire who probably owns half of Ireland. He's also scorching hot! Pity he's a man whore though, he's always pictured with different girls." She's actually swooning a little. "He's recently move his head office from Waterford to Dublin and is hosting this party to celebrate his move and to welcome his new clients. I'm so nervous."

"Wow it sounds like a big deal."

She is quiet for a moment and I can tell that she is thinking for a minute before saying, "It is such a big deal, exciting and scary all at the same time. I called in every favour I was owed to land this job. I hope I can do it justice."

I've seen her work it's amazing she just has no faith in her own talents. "You will do great. You're an amazing planner and designer."

She hugs me again. Wow she's all for the hugs today. "Thanks babe. I'm beat, I'm gonna shower and then we can grab a takeaway?" she asks yawning and I laugh.

"Sure, I'll order." I jump up and grab the menu and order for us. After we eat I decide to have an early night and head to bed. I'm beat as well and I

just want to curl up and forget my horrible day.

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TWO

I startle awake to the sound of someone banging. I jump out of bed to see what all the commotion is about and when I get to the kitchen I find the source of the racket is Stacey beating the coffee maker.

"Hey what did he ever do to you?"

She grumbles something about it being stupid. I laugh and move her out of the way. Once I click the filter in the right way it works instantly. She grumbles thanks and goes to get her bag together. She looks so worried.

"Hey, what's wrong?" I ask but I already know today is Saturday, it's her big day. The last few days have gone by pretty quickly and every night she's gotten more and more worried something will go wrong.

"I'm so worried Nessa. I need to get this right. Mr. Kessler is one for perfection, and he can also be an ass or so I heard yesterday." Shit, she sounds really anxious and this is supposed to be a stress free night so I smile a reassuring smile.

"Bitch please, you're amazing. You're gonna blow the pants off this hot billionaire." She laughs and hugs me.

"Thank you babe, I needed that. Once today is over we need dinner, drinks, and dancing. We can go out tomorrow. You haven't been out in ages and I'm horny. You have got to help me find a hot guy to release some frustration with, so don't say no." She starts wiggling her eyebrows and has a pleading look on her face. She's right, I haven't been out since I caught Brandon and Lucy together and was left to clear a massive debt. It's also been a shitty week so why not spend my last few euro on myself, I deserve it.

"Sure why not, let's do this. It can be a way of celebrating your success from tonight." She jumps up and down screaming woo-hoo then checks the time.

"Ok gotta go. Make sure to be there at five to help with the other wait staff. Thanks Ness." She kisses me and is gone in a flash.

I decide to go for a jog to pass the time until tonight. I get ready and head over to Phoenix Park to do a few laps. It feels good to jog, I always

thought there was something freeing about it. My body is burning but it feels good.

I been jogging for over an hour, I need to head back home to get ready. When I get home I decide to have a coffee before my shower. As I look out I notice how peaceful things are today, during the week people are rushing around but on the weekend everyone seems relaxed taking their time getting to wherever they're going.

Once I've finished my coffee I head for the shower. Poor Stacey's probably having a nervous breakdown by now. When it comes to her work she's very highly strung because she's a perfectionist. That's why I know she will pass with flying colours today. She has never seen her own potential.

Then again nobody but her friends has ever told her how amazing she was. Neither of her parents could be arsed, they were and still are all about her sister and how perfect she was compared to Stacey—but that only made her stronger.

When my life went to shit years ago I always felt weak and if anything bad happened I only get weaker. I just can't pick myself up like Stacey does. I admire her for her strength because her family is horrible, but she just moves on from it. Me, I'm a dweller, everything stays with me always there to remind me how fucked up I am.

Everyone has a past, whether it's good or bad it influences your future. My friends and I certainly have both bad and good and bad pasts and without us sticking together all these years who knows how we could have turned out, we keep each other sane.

THREE

After my shower I stand in front of the mirror. I never thought I was model material or anything but dog damn Brandon for having me thinking negatively of my looks. That morning with Brandon and Lucy has left me doubting my looks. Him calling me a dog has left a mark, I guess. I really thought he loved me. How did I miss the fact that he found me so repulsive? I was never one to care about my looks even after I spent two years listening to the Aunt from Hell tell me how unloved and ugly I was.

I was sixteen when my mam killed herself and with no other family left, I was sent to live with her sister. She was a bitter old woman who blamed me for my mother's death and everyday told me how ugly I was and how she couldn't stand to look at me. But my mother left a letter asking her to take care of me and she did. Once I turned eighteen though she kicked me right out. I wanted to leave before then but she said she would call social services and put me in a care home so I stuck it out.

Even after that I still got up and never thought about it but Brandon has hit something in me and I don't know how to stop it. As I look at myself I don't see the confident, no shit taker, I want to be. I feel weak, exposed.

I'm five feet seven inches with wavy blonde hair that goes halfway down my back and pretty blue eyes. I'm in pretty good shape and even though I don't have much of a bum but I have some nice large breasts. I never really thought about my looks, my mam used to tell me to be happy in my own skin don't try be something I'm not. She hated it if I would say I was too skinny or I was too fat she just said to be happy with who you are and not what others want you to be. Then again she went and left me too so maybe there is something wrong with me.

I removed all thoughts from my mind and concentrate on being there for Stacey. I get dressed in the white shirt and black trousers Stacey left out for me and head to the party.

The party is being held at the Hilton on Dame Street. I have always wanted to see the inside of this building so I'm pretty excited. It isn't too far so I decide to walk to help clear my head.

I have never been in this hotel before because I could never afford it. As I reach the doors I can see the difference in a three or four star hotel

compared to a five star hotel. It's just... wow.

I head through the doors and spot Stacey at reception. She waves me over and brings me up to the ballroom. It's on the tenth floor, right under the penthouse. Once we reach the main room where the event is been held I stop at the door. I knew the room would look like something out of this world and I was not disappointed. It was decorated in cream and gold, the place looks very elegant. The colours match the massive chandelier hanging in the middle of the room. It covers half of the ballroom and I'd reckon it could kill at least ten people if it fell.

"Wow! Stacey this is amazing. I'd say you're gonna be busy after tonight." She smiles brightly at me.

"You really mean that Nessa?" Is she serious?

"Of course I do. Are you blind, can you not see what you did to this empty room? Jesus, Stacey, give yourself the credit you deserve it's freaking amazing. You're amazing."

I hug her and ask her where she needs me. She spends the next few hours going over things but she needs to change into her dress so she heads off. I make myself busy going over things and making sure they're all ready for the guests to arrive.

Before I know it, it's eight and guests are arriving. I grab a tray of champagne and start handing them out. After an hour has passed the place is pretty full and it's nearly time for dinner.

I spot Stacey across the room standing at the bar. She looks amazing in her cream dress. It comes off on one shoulder, goes right down to her ankles, and has a slit up the side. Stacey has long red curly hair but it's her hour glass shape and the fact she has an ass to die for that finishes off the dress. I walk over to her and notice she looks worried.

"Hey what's up hun? Everything's going great, why the sad face?"

"Oh you know, guest of honour is only an hour late for his own a party and I can't serve the dinner till he gets here." Well that's not good but being the good friend I am I decide not to say that out loud.

"He will be here. Calm down, you said he's a playboy maybe him and his date are getting freaky before dinner." I wiggle my eyebrows at her just for added affect and it does the job when she relaxes and laughs.

"You're right, I'm just..." she trails off and her mouth drops open a little bit. I turn to see what's got her attention and it's none other than prickface.

What's he doing here? He is looking all tall, dark, and gloomy and maybe a bit hot. A tiny bit hot. His date a petite girl who's hanging from his arm and trying to get his attention. She's wearing a long red dress with a low cut in the front which leaves her boobs on full display. Huh, maybe Sinead was right and I should have flashed them a damn tit.

I turn back to Stacey. "Close your mouth Stacey you're drooling," I say before smirking.

"Shit sorry, he's just so much hotter in person. Wow."

"Do you know him?" I ask carefully. She looks at me like I've gone mad.

"Are you for real Nessa? That's Taylor Kessler, this is his party."

Oh shit I'm gonna puke. I abused him in his office and threw water over him and then told him to go fuck himself. If he sees me working here he's going to freak. I know I'm being dramatic, he probably doesn't even remember me but I need to leave in case he does and takes it out on Stacey.

I look back over at him and his date Tits Mcgee and he's looking right at me. Once he recognizes me the corner of his lip lifts up in a one sided smile. Shit on a stick! Looks like he does remember me after all. Fuck! I've got to get out of here.

"Stacey I gotta go."

"But I need you, are you mad? You can't go, what's wrong?" Oh man, here goes.

"Your Mr. Kessler, is the prick who fired me and considering the last time I saw him I threw a whole glass of water at him it's best I leave—especially if you want to woo him. Your company needs this Stacey," I argue hoping she sees the bigger picture here.

"No way! Seriously, he's the douche that fired you? Shit Nessa, didn't you know who he was?"

"I had no clue. You know I don't read them stupid gossip mags or even the paper. Look I'm gonna head out. I'm really sorry but I have to go. I'll wait up for you and you can tell me how it all went but I have to go. Have a good night."

Before she can say anything else I run to the kitchen and grab my things and head to the elevator and hit the button for the ground floor.

I feel better already. Stacey has a better chance if I'm not here. Just as I'm about to head out the main doors I'm grabbed by the arm.

"Going so soon Miss Donahue?"

I turn round to see Taylor Kessler up close and personal he's tall, really like towering over me tall. I'd say he's about six foot two and his eyes are the darkest shade of brown I've ever seen. And he smells amazing. My God, I'd love to just lick him all over and investigate where that delicious smell comes from... Shit! When I see the smirk on his face I know the cocky bastard knows I'm fantasizing about him.

"Yeah goodbye," I answer what feels like minutes later. Lord what is wrong with me? I go to turn and walk but he still has a grip of my arm.

"Not so fast. I want to talk to you," he snaps.

"Well the feeling's not mutual. Goodbye." And with that I yank my arm free and turn to walk away.

That is until he says the only thing that could make me stop, "You know my event planner Stacey Brian." It wasn't a question it was a statement. "You two look like good friends talking at the bar. How about you talk to me for a minute and I won't ruin her career." Oh he's a smug bastard. He knows I won't leave now. I'll just to face him.

"You wouldn't," I say with no confidence at all because the look he throws me tells me he would. "You son of a-" I don't finish because with the look he gives me lets me know he's getting annoyed and I don't want to push him right now, not with Stacey's career on the line. "Fine you have two minutes," I say defeated.

He grabs my arm and leads me to a small office off to the side of the lobby. A very small office especially when this Adonis of a man is standing next to me.

"We could get in trouble for being in here. Maybe we should leave." I go to leave but he stops me.

"Don't worry about that." He's too close now.

"What do you want from me," I whisper.

"Oh I want plenty from you Miss Donahue, all in good time though."

"What does that even mean?" Jeez it's hot in here I feel like I'm panting a little. My God Nessa get a grip!

"You threw water at me," he says like he can't believe it. Well shit, he's not going to let it drop but I've got to be nice for Stacey's sake.

"I'm sorry for that but you weren't very nice yourself Mr. Kessler." I look around the room it's very small and we're very close.

"You're not afraid of me." I'm a little shocked and confused by his words.

"Why would I be? Seriously, what's this all about?"

"You have balls I'll give you that and you were right about Joe, he was fired so I'll let you get away with throwing water on me."

Wow he actually checked it out. "Really?" I say excitedly. "Are you going to give me my job back?" I'm feeling good about this.

Ha! Take that you prick! The little assistant was right. He must be feeling bad, that's why he wanted to talk. I know I'm smiling, well I was until he talks again.

"No you are not getting your job back."

Say what? "And why not? I deserve that job," I say a little too loudly.

"Because I have another position for you." Huh, maybe it's a promotion. "You intrigue me Miss Donohue. No woman or man for that matter, has ever stood up to me like you do. I don't know whether to admire you or put you over my knee."

Over his knee, who does this guy think he is? I'm in complete shock right now. Who says that to a person?

"I would like you to be my mistress for three months. I want to see what it would be like to be with you and your vixen ways in bed. I'd bet you're a really wild and great fuck. Of course I'll pay you very well."

He wants what? Is this man for real? Be his mistress! Before I even have time to reply his lips come crashing down on mine, hard. I gasp and he seizes the opportunity to stick his tongue in my mouth. It's an intense kiss that's shooting sparks right to the now wet spot between my legs. I can feel his erection against my stomach and that's when the reality of the situation hits me.

Oh shit, what am I doing? I put my hands on his chest and push, we're both breathing hard as he looks at me with a shit eating grin.

"How dare you! I'm no hooker you son of a bitch!" With that I slap him hard across the face then I storm from yet another room this week.

Once I'm home and in the safety of my apartment I climb into bed and cry like a baby. My emotions are all over the place. I haven't cried since the day I found Brandon and Lucy, it's not something I like doing but I can't help it anymore.

I'm jolted from my sleep by Stacey sitting on my bed. When I turn round to look at her she frowns.

"What's wrong Ness? You look like you've been crying."

"I'm sorry, don't mind me it's just been a hell of a week," I tell her and it's the truth. Well except for the part where I was asked to be someone's hooker but I think I'll keep that to myself for now.

"Hey don't be sorry, you're allowed to cry. You don't always have to be so damn strong, woman." I laugh, she always know to say.

"So tell me how the rest of the event went," I say hoping to God he didn't take his anger from my slap out on her.

"Oh my God. Nessa, I know he's a prick but he's so hot. He came over personally to thank me and said he would recommend me to his clients, isn't that great." She looks so proud, excited, and shocked all at the same time.

"Why do you sound so surprised, it was done beautifully and professionally. You are amazing," I tell her and mean every word. I slapped him yet he still recommends Stacey for some reason—that leaves me feeling unsettled.

Stacey tells me she's feeling wiped and heads off to bed. I toss and turn for the rest of the night. When I do finally drift off it's bright outside.

FOUR

I wake up around noon to the smell of bacon which sets my stomach off grumbling. I jump up hungry for breakfast. When I get to the kitchen Stacey is shaking her ass singing along to the radio. I laugh and she swings around the kitchen.

"Hey," she says and points to the cooking bacon at the same time my stomach grumbles and we both laugh at how loud it was. "Well I guess that answers my question."

I take a seat at the table and Stacey pours me a coffee and places my bacon butty in front of me. I quickly grab it and take a big bite.

"Mmmm this is so good," I mumble while chewing.

"You're an animal," she says causing both of us to laugh.

"I'm just so hungry. I skipped dinner yesterday. So are we heading to Fitzsimons later? I'm looking forward to a nice cold one."

And I really am after this week I need a stiff drink. We've been going there every weekend for years now, we're pretty much regulars. I haven't been there in a few months though, since I've been using every extra bit of money to pay down my ginormous debt.

"Yeah it's near one now and we're meeting the girls and Ray about three so we better get ready".

"The girls?" I question

I haven't seen the girls in almost three months I love them like sisters but I was afraid of seeing them. I didn't want them to feel like they needed to choose between me or Lucy. When we were growing up Stacey, Sam, Lucy, Jessica, and I grew up as close as sisters. We lived in a council estate in Tallaght and each of our home lives were less than great. Every day we would reassure each other that we just had to make it to eighteen and then we could go off to college get out of there.

We grew so close that if one was hurting then so were the others. I miss them girls. When my mam died they never left my side, the only reason I actually put up with living with my hateful aunt was so I could stay in the same area as my friends.

Stacey snaps me from my day dream. "Yes they are dying to see you and you have put it off long enough. You've known these girls since you

were six, that's twenty years of friendship. Lucy may not have given a shit but they do and so do you. Now go put your big girl panties on and let's do this."

I bite my bottom lip feeling a bit nervous. I haven't seen the girls since catching Lucy and Brandon. They have tried but I avoided them. I didn't want them to feel they had to choose between their sisters.

"Don't worry they can't wait to see you and I rang Ray he said he's coming."

"Ray loves a good girls night out." I laugh and stand up from the table. I better go get ready, I have no clue about what I'm going to wear.

I root through my wardrobe till I find something then head for the shower. When I'm showered I curl me hair and throw on some makeup. Once I'm done I put on my black mini skirt, a red off the shoulder boob tube and throw on my black strappy heels. I'm just adding my gold jewellery to finish off my look when Stacey comes in to my room.

"Jeez Nessa, you look hot and here's me thinking I was gonna have to dress you myself." I laugh because I knew she was thinking I was just gonna throw anything on but I want to feel good today so slutty it is.

Once we arrive at Fitzsimons we're greeted by Lenny the head bouncer, "Hey Nessa." And with that he grabs me up in a giant bear hug. "So glad you're here. Where have you been girl, did you not think to pop in and say hi?"

"Sorry Lenny. I missed you to I just had a lot going on but I'm back so better get your best staff on that door because it's gonna be a wild one," I say winking and he laughs.

"I know, I've already seen Ray, my staff is on their way." He shakes his head and this time Stacey and I laugh.

When we walk in we head to our usual table where Ray greets me first. "Hey there baby girl. It's good to see you back to your hot self," he says as he looks me up and down with nod of approval.

"Thanks babe." I look around the table and say hi to Sam and Jess, they both look great. Sam's my unpredictable, loudly wild friend and Jess is reserved and nerdish but get a few drinks in her and that can change.

Stacey has gotten us drinks, it's a little awkward at first but it's not long before Sam decides to break the ice.

"So Nessa how have you been? Care to tell your two best friends why you have avoided us for months?" I feel Stacey tense beside me and as she's about to say something I put my hand up to stop her.

"No Stacey I got this, they have a right to be pissed." I look at Sam and Jess. "I'm sorry. I lost a friend through a horrible situation, we all grew up together we're all sisters, I didn't want you to feel you had to choose between us and I just wasn't ready to talk about her. On top of that Brandon fucked me over big time. He left me with over ten thousand euros in debt and I have just been working and saving until last week when I was fired. So I'm sorry I have been off the grid, I just had a lot to deal with." It feels good to tell them that I wish I hadn't waited to tell them for so long.

It's Jess who speaks first. "Oh God Nessa, can we help? I don't have much but I can give you some off it." Yup great friends but we all have our own shit and I know Jess is practically working for free at her dad's gym.

"Thanks Jess but I'll be ok, I know you have a lot on with your dad's gym." I hug her and look to Sam who looks like she's about to kill me.

"You dumb bitch. What do you mean making us choose? Lucy slept with your man and you don't do that to your sister. There was no choice to make between the two of you." She's pissed, well now I feel terrible. These girls have had my back all along and here I went and turned mine on them.

I hug Sam. "I'm sorry guys, I was all over the place but I'm good now."

"I'm gonna scratch the bitch's eyes out." This comes from Ray who hasn't said a word since we first sat down.

I take his hand. "Thanks Ray but calm down Rambo. There will be no scratching needed. Let's have a good night and forget about those assholes."

"Fine," he huffs then shouts, "A round of shots please, Joe!" to the bartender.

"Isn't it a bit early in the day for shots?" Jess asks and we all just laugh.

"Hell no. My baby girl here needs to get legless." When the drinks get brought over Sam toasts to family and right then I realise these people are my family and they will never leave me.

The day goes by quickly with us just catching up, it feels amazing. By nine the bar is packed and we're well on our way to being legless.

My song "Rude" by Magic! comes on and I have to go and dance to it. "Oh my song! I want to dance come on."

I drag Sam to the dancefloor. We're both dancing our asses off when a guy comes up behind me and starts pawing at me. I roll my eyes at Sam and push his hands away but this dude just isn't getting it and keeps coming back.

I turn to tell him to back off when I hear a familiar voice. "You can remove your hands now, if you want to keep them that is." The guy drops his hands and backs straight off. My back is to him and I still can't believe it, I can feel him close behind me.

"You know you accused me of calling you a hooker and here you are dressed like one, way to prove me wrong." He says sarcastically. Was he serious? I turn to face him fuming.

"I don't have to prove a damn thing to you. Why are you here anyway? Did you come to abuse me or are you some kind of stalker, maybe I should be worried." He throws his head back and laughs a genuine laugh. I didn't think he was capable of laughing like that but he's so beautiful when he does.

Ugh, head out of the clouds Nessa. He is a prick quit daydreaming about how gorgeous he looks when he laughs.

"Oh Nessa, you're funny. I'm just checking up on a friend's business."

Wait a minute. "You know the guy who owns this place?"

He smirks, what are the chances. God this man drives me crazy.

Sam comes closer just as I was about to maybe beat his ass. "Hey, you ok Ness?"

"Yeah fine. Just gonna head the toilet." With that I sprint off to the toilet. I need some space from the prick before I do something else to him. I pace the toilet for a few minutes, I've got to go back out there but I really don't want to see him. I decide it's best to just get it over with so I walk out and bump right into him.

Umph. Just great. "Why won't you leave me alone?" He looks at me like he's trying to figure out something.

"I honestly don't know. I know I should stay away but I can't. Just give me one night Nessa, no strings attached."

Man this guy doesn't give up as much as I hate him I'd say he's a power house in the bedroom. I really want to say yes, one night with him would be

amazing but I know better.

He's so hot though, like really hot, like panty wetting hot. Tonight he's just wearing a white t-shirt with some dark denim jeans. I can see his tattoo better now it's a full sleeve and it's really beautiful, actually not what you'd expect to see on a business man.

I also wonder what the hell he wants me, this guy could have any damn woman he wants. I realise I still haven't answered him and I'm staring at him and his edible body so I go for something straight to the point. "No." I really want to scream, Yes take me now! But that's just my drunken fog, I hope anyway.

"Just no? I don't get an explanation."

"No you don't. You don't deserve one but I'll be kind and give you one, I'm just not into you. I'm sure you have loads of girls dropping at your feet but I'm just not interested and I don't sleep with pricks and you're the biggest one I've met by far." I smirk at him with my reply.

Ha take that! But my little speech didn't do much to his confidence because he smiles that shit eating grin again.

"Awe Nessa you're too sweet but you should know I always get what I want."

Well what do I say to that, shit. I hear people coming and use it as my getaway. As soon as they turn the corner I tap his chest. "In your dreams big boy." I wink and dart around him, I don't look back but I'm pretty sure he just growled.

I make it back to the table without him following behind me. Jesus he may be a prick but an extremely hot one and I don't know how many times I can say no to him. I am a woman after all.

"So who was that hottie?" Sam asks breaking me from my thoughts.

"That would be the prick who fired me," I tell her.

"Taylor Kessler is here?" Stacey asks stunned.

"Yup, his friend owns this place." I may as well tell them what he asked.

"He wants to sleep with me," I say.

"Seriously?" Stacey says like she can't believe it, then again I can't believe it.

"No I'm lying. Of course seriously."

"And you said no to sleep with that sex God?" This comes from Sam who probably hasn't heard the part about him firing me or being a giant

prick.

"Have you forgotten the whole firing me thing and he's also a prick who constantly insults me," I spit out.

"Well good for you saying no," Jess says. At least someone's on my side.

"Look I don't do one night stands, never did." Stacey turns to me.

"But surely for a billionaire hottie you could. Why not just try it, just have fun without the stress of getting hurt. He openly told you there will be no relationship so why not try it without the feelings, you need to get back out there Ness."

She makes sense. Maybe with someone else but not him, no way. We have a few more drinks and there is still no sign of him not that I'm looking.

"Hey guys I'm gonna head off I'm wrecked." I'm up early tomorrow so I decide to head home.

"You sure Nessa?" Stacey asks.

"Yeah. You stay and find yourself a man to help you with your frustration problem. I'm just exhausted and I've a long week ahead of me job hunting."

"Ok if you're sure."

I tell her I am and say good bye to the girls. "Where's Ray at? I want to say goodbye before I go, not that I have seen much of the little man slut tonight."

"He's at the bar chatting to that guy for the last three hours."

"I'm gonna go say bye. I'll see you guys during the week for coffee." I turn to Stacey and tell her to be safe going home.

The guy Rays talking to is very good looking indeed, not that I would expect anything less from Ray. "Ray-Ray, I'm heading out, give a girl a hug before I go."

"You ok baby girl, why are you going so early?"

"Two o'clock in the morning is not early. I'm fine though just wrecked. You have fun and don't do anything I wouldn't." I hug him and say bye.

Just as I'm about to reach the door I spot Taylor in the corner with a girl on his lap. They're not kissing but I can tell the girl is dying to. He's seductively running his hand up and down her leg. Well at least he's moved

on and won't bother me. I don't know why but that gives me a queasy feeling.

Ugh I can't be jealous. I'm just tired and drunk I need to get out of here. As I'm about to look away he spots me. He doesn't stop his hand movements on her leg. I need to leave so I just smile and walk out. I'm too tired to analyse what I think about him or what he wants not that I need to anymore.

I pull a taxi and head straight home. I'm tired and very frustrated. Damn Taylor, he's such a mind fuck. I just need to sleep him and his mental ways off. I climb into bed hope to God I can get some sleep.

The next morning I wake early, I need to go job hunting. I'm going to need a large coffee so I reckon I'll hit Starbucks to start my day. Once I'm showered and dressed I head out of my room. When I get to the kitchen I hear movement.

"Stacey gonna head out for coffee... I stop when I see it's not Stacey but some strange naked man in the kitchen. I quickly cover my eyes like I've never seen a naked man before.

"Eh sorry." I'm completely lost for words so I just say, "Gotta go!" then run out the front door. Well at least Stacey will be happy today the dirty bitch.

I head to Starbucks and order a large latte and blueberry muffin. While I wait I take my phone out and go through some job sites. Twenty minutes and half a latte later and I still haven't found anything. This is not going to be easy. Someone sits beside me, when I look up Taylor is there.

"What the hell? You are a stalker! Once is a coincidence, twice is stalking." This guy is unreal.

"What? I just came in for a coffee." He smiles at me in a mockingly innocent way.

"Sure you did," I say rolling my eyes.

He nods at my phone then asks, "Looking for a job?" The pig.

"Eh yeah I am. The prick who took over my company fired me"

"You know for such a pretty girl you have a foul mouth and if you remember correctly I offered you a better job with more money and benefits too," he says with amusement twinkling in his eyes.

"Well I'm not a hooker," I snap.

"I never said you were."

"No, but you want me to act like one." I wonder why does he want me to act like one so I ask, "Why?"

Poor guy, he just looks confused. "Why?"

"Yeah, why do you want to pay me to sleep with you? Why not do what normal men do and woo the girl and get it for free."

"For many reasons, one being I'm too busy for a relationship and I pay because I'd want you at my beck and call. I'd also require you to escort me to some business events so the money I'd pay you would cover the costs such as dresses or anything else I'd need from you."

"Well I'm sure there are a lot of girls or companies out there that could help you out." I wink at him.

"That may be true but I want you." Man, he doesn't give up.

"Well I don't want you." Then the cheeky fucker has the gall to throw my "why" back at me.

"Because I'm a flowers and chocolates girl. I believe in love and cuddles." I smile because he definitely isn't and by the disgusted look on his face it seems I may have hit the kill switch to his obsession with me.

"I want to give you the best sex of your life. I want to own you in every way I can in the bedroom, and I'm sure I could think up a nice punishment to deal with that disobedience of yours."

Oh hell no he didn't.

"I'm not a dog for God's sake. You want to have sex with me until you have your fill, then what? Throw me away when you're done."

He takes a deep breath like he has to cool down. "It wouldn't be throwing away it would be mutual and very satisfactory. You would also have a lot of money to help set yourself up once we're over." He makes it sound so simple. Have sex with the hottest man I've ever seen and get paid loads of money for doing it.

I am attracted to him, my body is on fire when I'm around him. No man has ever turned me on this much by just looking at him but I can't be that girl. I've been used enough through my life

"Look Taylor, it's not gonna happen so I suggest you move on." I have to admit telling him that almost killed me.

"You will end up in my bed one way or the other Nessa. The sooner you accept that eventuality, the quicker the fun can begin."

I stand up and get ready to leave while he looks at me like he's trying to figure me out.

"Whatever. I'm going."

"Sure Nessa, run along. I'll leave you for now but you will be seeing me soon." He emphasizes the word soon, like it was a promise.

I turn and walk out with my heart beating so fast in my chest it feels like it's going to explode. I realise this man is definitely not good for my heart.

I spend the rest of the day handing out CV and looking up jobs online. I make it home at about six. When I walk through the door I can smell that Stacey has been cooking and my stomach growls. By the smell of things Stacey made her home made curry. Oh yes! I walk over to sit at the table

"Hey slut, you're home early. How was work?" She turns around to face me.

"I didn't go in," she says and turns back around.

"Would that have anything to do with the naked dude in the kitchen this morning?" I tease.

"Yeah. Eh sorry about that. I was just wrecked and being the boss, I decided I wanted an extra day off." She sounds like she's trying to convince herself that she can do this job. Poor girl, works herself way too hard.

"It's grand. Thankfully I didn't see too much." I wink and she laughs.

"Awe come on Nessa you're not afraid of a naked man are you?" She jokes.

"No only the ones I'm not expecting to see in the kitchen." She starts laughing again.

"You think that was bad, he comes running back into the room and was like there was a girl and she ran out the front door!"

"Oh my God, didn't you tell him you had a roommate?"

"Well no, with a naked man around I try not to think of you." I chuckle.

Stacey comes to the table hands me a plate and sits down. I take a bite and the flavour of the curry explodes across my tongue.

"Mmm Stacey this is so good."

"Thanks, so how did you get on today?"

"Well I handed in CV everywhere that was looking, so I guess I can only wait now." I really hate waiting, I hope I can get something soon.

"You will be whipped up soon. Don't look so worried." I smile and continue eating. "So what's up with you and Taylor?" Well that is random.

"Nothing. He wants a mistress to pleasure him when he needs it for a short term, then he pays them to move on when he gets bored. I said no." She is quite for a second apparently deep in thought.

"Why not go for it?"

"Seriously? You're as bad as he is." For some reason I feel annoyed she's not on my side.

"Yeah but Nessa you're young, free, and jobless. You will get treated to loads of orgasms and get paid for enjoying it," she says it like it's so simple.

"I can't be used again Stacey. My mother used me as bait to try to bring my father back but after sixteen years she gave up and killed herself. I just wasn't enough for her. And then we have Brandon, he used me till he bleed me dry from every penny I had. So please just drop it, I can't let him use me for sex only to throw me away when he's done."

I'm fuming when I'm done and Stacey looks a little shocked. I know she knows about my mam but I don't think she realised how deep the cut still was.

"Ok I understand but Ness your mom loved you. Anyone could have seen that."

"Well she sure knew how to show it didn't she. She lets her sixteen year old daughter, whom you say she loved, come home from school to find her in the bath with her wrists sliced." I'm so angry I was shouting at this point and when I look at Stacey she looks shocked. "I'm sorry for shouting," I mutter.

"It's fine, but you obviously still have some issues regarding this and that worries me Nessa. I knew you were upset with her when you didn't cry at her funeral but I thought you would get past the anger stage and actually grieve, you still haven't and that frightens me." She looks worried. God, why couldn't I keep my trap shut?

"It's been ten years, I'm passed it," I say through gritted teeth. I can't talk about this anymore.

"Ok I won't push but please stop holding all this in talk to me or someone else."

I don't want to fight anymore so I tell her I will think about it and head off to my room. I hate thinking about my mam. The morning she died I

heard her on the phone talking to the sperm donor, fighting about how it wasn't fair on her and how it wasn't fair on me and how she couldn't do it without him. They talked on the phone every few months but a few months before her death they talked more. Every time they finished she would go to her room and cry for hours.

I never asked about the sperm donor because he couldn't give a shit about me, but I could tell she had loved him very much. She would try to bring him up in conversation but I'd just wave her off.

Two months before she died she told me his name and I fought with her telling her I didn't care and didn't want to know about him. What she didn't realise was how I hate him more for the hurt he had caused her than for not being there for me. She never got over the fact that he wasn't around or coming back.

I wasn't enough for her, and I wasn't enough for him, and I didn't cry at her funeral nor will I ever cry for any of them because they never spared me a thought.

Thinking of my mother just drains me so I curl up in my bed and think about what the hell I'm going to do next.

FIVE

The next week goes by pretty slowly. Not having a job sucks and I haven't received any offers, which worries me because it's now Friday and the bank will be looking for the next payment and I don't have it.

I decide to ring them and try to explain about my situation and try to get them to give me an extra week to make my next payment. When I get off the phone I'm more confused than ever, as they told me my cards have been paid off. I also have ten thousand euro in my bank account. I told them there is no way but they don't care because the debt is clear.

When I inquired about who paid them they told me an anonymous source. The only person I know with that kind of money is Taylor fucking Kessler. Why the hell would he do it, actually scratch that I know why and I'm gonna kill him. I grab my bag and coat and head down to Kessler enterprises.

When I walk through the door I spot John.

"Hey John."

"Hey Miss Nessa. What has you here today?" he asks but looks worried and he should be.

"Look John, I need a favour."

"Oh Nessa please don't ask me to risk my job." Poor John, but I'm still getting by him.

"I won't. Just look that way for one second."

He looks confused and looks to his left and with that I dart around him and into the elevator then hit the button for the top floor.

When I get there Barbie sees me and tries to step in front of me. Obviously word has gotten to her that I was on my way. Good they should be concerned.

"Don't bother I'm going in there and you're not gonna stop me," I growl at her. While she's considering her options I dart round her and go straight through the big doors.

There are two men in the room, Taylor and Jim the man I met at my interview. It's him who speaks first.

"Miss Donahue you can't be here." He then turns to Taylor. "I'll get security."

Taylor looks at me and I raise my eyebrow at him.

"No, it's fine. Jim could you give us a few minutes, we can continue this later."

"Are you sure?" he asks confused. Taylor gives him that scary look he likes to give which is like the mother of all evil eyes. Poor Jim. He just grabs his things and leaves.

"Nessa, now that you cancelled my appointment care to help me fill the time." He winks.

"You're a pig," I snap at him but he just smiles.

"Yet you can't seem to keep away. Are you stalking me Miss Donahue?" The man is infuriating, I just want to slap him!

"Why did you clear my debt and don't even try to deny it."

"I wasn't going to deny it. Let's just say all the clothes and shoes whatever you bought is on me and feel free to repay me." /the bastard! I'm in shock, seriously what the fuck is he trying to do?

"Shoes and clothes! Are you for real? Do I look like I wear thousands of euro in expensive clothes, you narrow minded prick." He goes to open his mouth but I put my hand up to stop him. "Don't ok, just don't. Just take your damn money back and leave me the hell alone!" I scream the last bit, my emotions are all over the place. I feel like I'm saying it but not meaning it.

"Oh stop being dramatic Nessa and calm down. It's no big deal." Was this man for real?

"No big deal. I just spent the last week leaving CV all over the place not to hear a damn word back, to try and clear a debt I didn't create. All for you to just come swooping in and pay it off and say it's no big deal. I don't want your money and how the hell did you get my account numbers and find out about the debt in the first place?"

"I have money Nessa I can get any anything I want," he says cockily.

I am fuming at this stage. "Well you can't have me, I'm not for God dam sale." I'm practically screaming and his face changes from amusement to anger.

"Fine I get it. I will leave you alone. Now get the hell out of my office!" he shouts back. I wasn't expecting it so I jump with the fright of it and run

from his office. Just as I slam the doors behind me a tear slides down my face. I wipe it away quickly and when I look up John is there.

"Come on Nessa, let's get you out of here."

"Oh go to hell the lot of you!" I snap at John and storm past him. I don't mean to take it out on John I'm just fuming.

Once I'm outside I decide I need a drink, I don't care if it's only four o'clock. I head to Fitzsimons.

I greet Joe the bar man and ask for a double jack and coke. When he brings it back I take a big sip.

"Hard day Nessa?"

"Something like that. Just keep them coming please." He just nods and walks off.

I'm struggling to understand why Taylor has this effect on me. I mean I think I hate him but I feel sad at the thought of not seeing him again. It causes my chest to tighten, with that thought I drink more. What is wrong with me? The man has been nasty from the moment I met him yet here I am hurt because he told me to get out. Yup I'm pretty fucked up.

By eight I'm pretty drunk and Joe has cut me off. I decide to head out for some air which probably wasn't my best idea because soon as I hit the air I feel dizzy and fall straight onto my knees. The pain that shoots from them causes me to whimper. My head is a little foggy.

Town is busy tonight there are people everywhere I need to get up but I only end up going from my knees to land on my butt.

"Nessa." Oh it can't be, please it just can't. "Nessa what are you doing down there?" But it seems luck isn't on my side because it is Taylor.

"Leave me alone." I really don't want him to see me like this.

"Let me help you Nessa."

"I'm fine, go away." Just when I think I can't be more embarrassed she comes up to us.

"Taylor stop helping the homeless and come on." She purrs at him. I think I'm gonna be sick.

"Go with your slut Taylor, leave me be." I try to push him away but seriously I can barely lift my arms and I'm slurring pretty badly.

"Who are you calling a slut?" Jeez she's a dumbass too.

"I'd have thought that was obvious." I smirk and look at Taylor and wow there's two of him. "Your standards have dropped." Ha take that!

"Are you going to let some hobo talk to me like that Taylor?"

"Yeah Taylor are you?" I mimic.

"Nessa," Taylor growls as he stands up. He drags his new whore off somewhere and I think, Yes he's gone! But I don't want him gone do I? Considering the pang of jealousy that running through me I'd say no. What the hell is wrong with me, why can't I find a nice man who's just nice? I shake my head I can't like him.

"Can't like who?" Taylor is back. Shit, did I say that out loud? I look around and see no sign of the girl and I smile in victory. "What is that smile on your face about?"

"Nothing. Why are you here, why won't you just go?" He doesn't answer just bends down and picks me up in his arms, like I'm as light as a feather. I have no fight left so I just snuggle into him and close my eyes.

When I awake I'm being put into bed and Taylor is standing over me with a glass of water.

"Drink this Nessa, it will help with the hangover you're sure to have in the morning." He smiles and it's really beautiful when he does that. He sits on the edge of the bed. "What happened Nessa?" he asks as if he gives a shit.

"That's none of your business. I'm just the slut who turned you down. You should have left me back there and gone with your new whore."

"Yeah you looked like you were doing a wonderful job of doing that and she wasn't my whore." He sighs. "And I don't think you're a slut."

"Yeah whatever Taylor. You treat me like one then tell me you don't think I'm one." I'm slurring so bad I don't think he even knows what I'm saying.

"You're drunk Nessa. Sleep and we will talk tomorrow." With that he gets up and leaves. I turn over and a pain shoots through my knees. They are gonna hurt like a bitch tomorrow, I remember thinking just as I drift off.

When I wake the next morning I'm blinded by the light in the room. When I get my eyes open I notice a few things, the room is huge and it's not my room. Where the hell am I?

I look down to see that I am fully clothed. That's got to be a good thing hasn't it? Just when I am starting to freak Taylor walks in the room wearing only a pair of sweatpants low on his waist, his v showing.

Oh lord have mercy on me, this man is just too much. I think I am going to need a fresh pair of panties. Oh good God he has sweat dripping off him and oh man it's such a beautiful sight. My whole body is responding just at the mere sight of him. I also notice a few more tattoos on his chest but before I get a proper look Taylor coughs.

"Close your mouth Nessa, your drooling." Oh shit I been caught.

"I am not." Denial could work.

"Sure you weren't," he laughs.

"W-what am I d-doing here?" I stammer because I really can't talk with him looking a freaking half naked God in front of me.

"I'm just going to have a shower. How about we discuss this over coffee when I'm out." He starts to walk into the bathroom. He stops and turns round. "Unless you want to join me?" Right now maybe... I can feel my resistance starting to wane.

"Screw you!" Blurts out of my mouth before I even knew what I was saying, which has him laughing as he goes into the shower.

Once I hear him in it I jump out of bed which causes a God awful pain to jolt through my knees. What the hell did I do last night? I need to leave, I can't be around him my mind goes funny and I can't think straight. I quickly grab my things and leave. I get a taxi outside and head straight home.

As I'm coming through the door I see Stacey pacing in the kitchen. "Where the hell have you been? I have been going out of my mind with worry." Well shit.

"I'm sorry. I was at Taylor's."

"What were you doing there?" she questions. Now here's the bit even I don't know.

"Eh well see that's a bit foggy right now. I was in Fitzsimons having a drink. I may have gotten drunk and he may or may not have helped me." I think I just made her madder.

"Why the hell would you be drinking on your own and why the hell would you drink so much you couldn't remember? That's not you Nessa." She snaps at me.

"I'm sorry for worrying you Stacey, I just had a bad day and needed a drink."

"What happened yesterday?" Stacey says a little calmer while she pours me a well needed coffee. I tell her about my debt being paid and going to see Taylor at his work. I tell her what I can remember, which isn't much.

"Wow Nessa, what is this thing between you two, do you have feelings for him?"

Ha, she's having a laugh right? Me, like Taylor? Yeah right.

"The only feeling I have for him is hate," I declare but even as I say it I know she doesn't believe me. Shit, even I don't believe me. I don't know what it is about him but I'm drawn to him. Well my body is and that's the only part of me he wants, my treacherous body. I stand up and hiss in a breath.

"What's wrong?" Stacey asks concerned.

"I don't know. I think I may have fell on my knees they're pretty sore. I'm going to go soak in a bath." She gives me a sympathetic smile as I go to walk away. I stop and turn back to her.

"What's wrong with me Stacey? I'm the one who saves every penny and works hard. Now I'm just lost, no job, and nowhere to go in life. I feel like I don't know whether I'm coming or going anymore."

She walks over to me and takes me in a hug that holds so much love.

"There is nothing wrong with you at all. You just had a shitty ex and a sleazy ex-boss who threw you under the bus. None of these things are your fault. You're just having a rough patch, everyone goes through them." That makes me feel a little better but my luck seriously needs to change. Hopefully I can get a job soon, too much time to dwell on my problems will be the death of me.

"Or maybe you're getting your damn period. You're a strong woman but they normally knock you a little," she says like she just uncovered something top secret.

I laugh but the strong part is wrong, I'm not strong, I'm weak and I'm struggling with how to change that.

"You could be right," I tell her to stop her from worrying, she doesn't need to know what inner demons I'm fighting.

I fill the bath and step in, my knees sting when the hot water reaches them. Fuck, it must have been a bad fall. Thankfully I didn't feel it too bad at the time. One knee isn't too bad just grazed a little bit but the other one has a cut. Man I'm never drinking again.

Once I'm done soaking I rinse off with the shower. I wrap a towel around me and head to the kitchen for a plaster for me knee. When I near it I hear Stacey talking, she actually sounds like she's giving out about something.

I turn the corner to see Taylor sitting at the table, when I walk in he looks up right at me.

"What are you doing here Taylor?" I shriek. He looks up and down taking in my body, it's then I realise I'm only wearing a towel and it barely covers my ass.

"What the hell happened your knee?" he snaps angrily. What the hell is his problem?

"How did you know where I lived? Actually no don't answer that." I sigh. "Your stalker abilities are starting to worry me." He just smiles then looks to my knee again.

"You should bandage that." He nods to my knee.

"I will. Care to tell me why you're in my apartment?"

"How about you go get ready and come to lunch with me, we can talk all you want there." I go to answer but he stops me. "Oh come on Nessa, it's just lunch."

I'm not in the mood for having a battle so I agree and go and get ready. My knees look awful so I go with jeans and a casual pink blouse, finishing with my white converses. I leave my hair down and put on some light makeup.

When I go back Taylor is still at the kitchen table messing with his phone with a frown on his face. "What's wrong, one of your women cancel tonight?" I smirk but he looks at me with a frown.

"Can we please drop the bitch act for one lunch?" Oh he's got to be kidding.

I smile sweetly. "Sure, if you can refrain from being a prick." He just smiles. "I'm sure that can be arranged."

"By the way you look beautiful." He's just saying that he doesn't really mean it, I tell myself hoping maybe he might really think I'm beautiful. No

point in thinking he actually likes me.

"Eh thanks," I whisper and head towards the door where he's standing.

"Don't sound so surprised. I told you I could be nice." Yup he was just being nice. That didn't sting a little at all. Get a grip Nessa.

We head out and walk down to Temple Bar and he brings me to the Rustic Stone Restaurant. It's really nice inside, cosy.

Once we're seated I look through the menu and order a burger and fries. What, I'm starved. Taylor raises an eyebrow at me and orders the same. "What I can't order a burger?"

"Course you can. I'm just surprised."

"I suppose your normal model dates order salads," I say sarcastically.

"I thought we were being nice," he says smirking then adds, "You're not jealous are you?" Ugh, I need to learn to keep my mouth shut.

"Of course not. I'm simply pointing out how I'm obviously not your type and you can leave me alone now." Ha take that.

"But Nessa you are my type. You surprise me at every turn and I'm starting to think I like surprises." Well shit. "So you want to tell me what had you in that state last night?" Yeah you, ya big prick, I want to shout but then he would know he gets to me.

"Nope it's really none of your business, so don't let it concern you." He gives me that evil eye he likes to give out.

"But it does, so I'd like to know." He's not gonna drop this anytime soon.

"Why does it bother you so much anyway? I drank too much end of." This is beyond stupid. "Look if it means that much to have sex with me I'll do it if it will get you to back off," I snap. Where the hell did that come from? Shit! I know I totally caught him off guard too because he chokes on the water he just took a sip of.

"You want to sleep with me now?" he questions. No, not really because I don't think my stupid heart can handle it but I can't keep playing these games either so maybe this is for the best. Just sleep with him and move on.

"Well it's what you want and I for one, am tired of these games. So let's just have sex and then we can go our separate ways."

He looks a little shocked but says, "Fine."

I childishly can't let him have the last word so I reply, "Fine." We sit in silence while we eat. We don't say anything all the way back to my

apartment either. If I had of known agreeing to sleep with him would keep him this quiet I might have said yes long before.

Once we reach the door to my apartment I turn to walk in.

"Nessa." When I look back he looks troubled.

"Yes."

"I'll pick you up at eight tonight."

I just nod and walk in. I don't have a clue what I'm doing. I have only known him a short time but I have a feeling sleeping with him is not going to make things better. He paid my debt so I suppose sleeping with him will make us even.

SIX

When I get into the apartment Stacey is vegged out on the couch.

"Hey, how was lunch with the hot billionaire?" I laugh because she hated him earlier.

"Oh hottie now is it? I'm pretty sure I heard you giving him an ear full earlier. What exactly did you say by the way."

"Oh this and that, I was worried about you last night and he had you all along."

"It was my fault I suppose, one might say he was actually doing a nice thing."

Yeah right, but hey you just never know with Taylor—he's that hot and cold it's just too hard to figure him out.

"Yeah well I didn't say anything a worried sister wouldn't have said." Which translates to she was probably gonna kick his ass, ugh.

"Stacey you didn't need to do that." I cringe. "Oh don't worry he took it on the chin. So how did lunch go?"

Best just to tell her straight out.

"I've decided to sleep with him." That gets her attention. She sits straight up on the chair.

"You what! I thought you said you couldn't." And I'm still not sure it's a good idea but I won't tell her that.

"I know but it's just sex and I'm sure I will enjoy it. The bonus is that he will leave me alone after it." She thinks for a second.

"And that's what you want, for him to leave you alone? Are you sure about this Nessa?"

On one hand yes I wanted him to leave me alone but I'm not sure how I feel now. Taylor is an enigma off a man, his walls are built way too high for me to climb and I'm not in a good place to even try. Between his hotness and his smart mouth he keeps the hate balance going so I'm hoping I can get through this one night and then say goodbye.

Stacey's still looking at me waiting for an answer. "Well you were the one who told me to go for it and now I say yes you're questioning it." I don't mean to sound mean but I do.

"Yes, I know I did hun and I'm not having a go but you said you couldn't and I just want to make sure you're ok to do it."

She's right of course but I want to do this... I think. When I said it back at the restaurant I was half joking but seeing his reaction only fuelled my need to see it through.

"Hey I'm fine. You were right—I'm young, free, and jobless plus he's hot. I'm sure I'm going to enjoy every second." I wink for added effect.

I'm not entirely lying, he is hot and when I'm around him the sexual tension is unbearable. Being attracted to him is something I don't have to worry about. I'll be wet and ready after about five minutes. Jesus, just the thought of seeing him with no shirt on and I think I might combust. With Taylor paying my debt I do feel a little whorish though. Considering that's what he asked me to be probably isn't helping, I'll put that to the back of my mind for now though.

"Ok so when's the deed happening?"

"He's picking me at eight."

"Really? Jeez, that's quick. Don't you need time to maybe think on it, are you sure you're not rushing into this?" I love that she's looking out for me but she's really not helping, I'm nervous and unsure as it is.

"Yes now quit being my mam and help me find some sexy lingerie." She smiles at that. "I have some nice sets I got from Ann Summers last year, I was thinking maybe you could help me choose which one to wear tonight."

She jumps up. "Ok let's go make you a sexy, beotch." I jump up and we head to my room.

We go through my underwear drawer and I come across a strapless pink Iona bra. It has sexy lace cups and a beautiful guipure detail. It comes with matching garterbelt and panties which also have a lace detail with a mesh frill.

I was thinking how perfect they are just as Stacey spots them and shouts, "Wow that's some sexy ass stuff! They are perfect, you will have him eating out the palm of your hands!" Yeah somehow I think she could be wrong but at least I'll look good.

"Now what are you going to wear over it?" Stacey asks breaking me from my thoughts.

"Shit, I don't know."

"Let's have a look."

We spend the next hour going through my wardrobe till we find a black strapless dress. It is tight on top but puffs out from under the chest, like a princess ballerina dress but it's cute. We add a belt with a gold buckle and some gold jewellery. With my socking and garters I'm look sexy as hell.

Once I lay it all out I check the time, it's getting late so I hit the shower. I shave every inch and moisturise. I leave my hair down, curl it, then I put on some make-up. Once I'm dressed I finish my outfit off with my black four inch heels. It's almost eight, I'm done getting ready and my nervous are gone.

I head down to the kitchen where Stacey is. Her mouth drops a little as she says, "Wow Nessa, you look seriously hot." She heads over to the counter and comes back to hand me condoms.

"Good thinking. Thanks." He does this often, I'm sure it's better to be protected, I think to myself but even as I think it I start to feel queasy.

Jeez brain, stop it already.

I look to Stacey who's wearing a worried expression. "Nessa I don't want to nag but are you sure?" Just then the doorbell rings and thank God, as it saves me from having to answer her because I'm close to backing out.

I go answer it. When I pull the door open Taylor is standing there in a navy t-shirt and dark denim jeans, his tattoos on full display. This guy is seriously hot and I'm pretty sure I'm soaking wet already.

He's like two different men—the tattooed bad boy and the rich CEO. Taylor clears his throat.

"You look edible."

"It's just an old dress I threw on, not that it really matters what I wear it's not gonna be on long anyway," I say as I walk past him.

"Funny Nessa but I was thinking we could have dinner first."

"Don't feel the need to feed me, we can just get straight to it." I know I'm being a bitch but I need to feel in control and around him I seem to lose every ounce of my control.

"Nessa," he growls. "Just stop. Let's have dinner and talk a bit."

"Fine if that's what you want. I want you to feel like you're getting your money's worth." I just can't stop the word coming out of my mouth. It seems I have no filter as I carry on. "I mean I thought you didn't do dates and this is starting to feel like one," I say smiling sweetly.

His anger is coming off of him in waves. I don't know why I'm baiting him it's just asking for trouble. "I don't. I'm just feeding you so you have energy for what I want later. It has nothing to do with you but all about me."

Well that told me, it kind of stung a little but I deserved it. "Fine," I snap as we get in his car.

We're not driving long when he pulls up to the Hilton. I'm a little disappointed, I don't know why I just assumed we would go to his place.

"Why are we here?" I question.

"Because this is where we are going to spend the night. Come on Nessa, you didn't think I was bringing you to my place and we could make sweet love all night, did you? That's not what this is."

Oh hello prick. Welcome back. This is good, because right now I really hate him.

"No I didn't think that but thanks for making my pretty woman fantasy include the Hilton. I love this place never stayed before so I'm excited." I try to sound convincing but I'm really not feeling all that comfortable with being treated like a whore. Oh wait, I am a whore!

Oh man what have I got myself in to? Before I have time to think the car parks and Taylor is opening my door.

"This way," he says as he puts his hand on my back. I swear I can feel his touch all the way to my lady parts. Oh I'm going to hell because I may be a whore but I have a feeling I'm gonna get great enjoyment out of it. Especially if I'm feeling this way with just one touch.

We get in the car park lift, he enters a code and we end up in the penthouse. It's like something out of a film, I'm definitely living out a pretty woman fantasy. I just stare at everything like a child on Christmas morning. Taylor goes over to a small bar which is situated in the corner of the large room.

"Do you want a glass of wine?" I do need a drink.

"No thanks, would you maybe have a beer?" He looks at me like I have ten heads.

"A beer?" Seriously, what's the big deal? Larger gets me drunk quicker than wine and I need to be a little drunk to go through with this.

"Yeah a beer. What's so wrong with that?" He gets himself together.

"Nothing which one would you like? If I don't have it I'll send for it downstairs."

"Don't go out of your way, any beer will do." He nods, pours himself a whiskey and brings me over a bottle of Heineken.

"Thanks."

"Dinner should be here soon."

"Ok." I really don't know what to say now. I'm so nervous, I'm fidgeting with my hands when Taylor talks.

"Relax Nessa nothing you don't want to happen will happen tonight."

I go straight on the defensive. "I am relaxed," I say with a huff and he laughs. Boy can he run hot and cold.

There's a knock on the door. A man brings in a tray of food and sets it up at the table, which is facing out the window to a nice view.

"Come sit Nessa." I get up and take a seat over at the table

"This looks nice."

It's only lasagne and a salad—a very posh version but it looks good. Things are too quiet and what better way to break it than to annoy him. I smile at that thought.

"This all looks very romantic Taylor." He growls. Score one for Nessa!

"Just shut up and eat Nessa. You will need your strength." Jeez that's twice he's said that, what the hell does he have planned? How am I gonna eat now?

"Let's talk a bit," he says a little more calmly.

"What do you want to talk about? I thought this would be pretty straight forward." I'm goading him and I know it, but my mouth has a mind of its own at this stage.

"It is, but can't we just enjoy a nice meal?"

"Sure thing," I say as I start picking at my food. "So do you bring all your mistresses here?"

"Nessa."

"What? You wanted to talk, I'm making conversation." He takes a deep breath.

"What I do is none of your business." Well that told me, so I change the subject.

"Do you have family?" Something in his eyes changes—it ranges from anger to something softer then I can see the wall going back up.

"That also doesn't concern you." He's not parting with anything.

"So you wanted to talk but you won't talk about anything. What's your deal?"

"I just have rules Nessa. You're not a permanent part of my life so you don't need to know my family or anything about me actually." His voice is so cold. Normal people would just shut up, tonight though my mouth just doesn't have a filter.

"Why are you like that?"

"Like what?" he asks like he hasn't a clue what I'm on about.

"Cold. You're so cold, you hide everything. They're only simple questions I was asking trying to be nice." I was totally being nosey but he doesn't need to know that.

"I hide things because they're no one else's business." Well that's fair.

"So what about this whole mistress thing, why not have a normal relationship?" He looks like his head might explode at this stage, I'm actually feeling a little scared.

"Because I'm no one's knight in shining armour. This isn't a fairy tale. I don't need a white picket fence and two point five children to be happy. A good fuck is all I need now drop it." He's growling again and I can't drop it just yet, I love winding him up a little too much.

"But you could be. Why not date a girl and see how things go?"

"Why give false hope. I don't do love and couldn't be arsed with a relationship. They only complicate things. I like a good fuck with no emotional feelings."

"Why are you like that?" He looks a little confused again. Poor guy.

"Because I don't want a relationship. Does there has to be a reason?" he questions.

"Yes. Things happen in life to cause us to feel certain ways about things, what happened to you?" He pushes his plate away and stands up and walks over to pour himself another whiskey. When he turns back his eyes are blacker than I've ever seen them.

"What happened to you Nessa? You're so full of this wisdom you must have been through something yourself." Wow that caught me off guard.

"Nothing happened me, I'm just wise like that." I try to joke it off.

"Well nothing happened me. I'm not broken, I just don't want a relationship so fucking drop it already." Oh I have hit a nerve and I know it going by the look on his face I'm better off quitting while I'm ahead.

"Whatever." He sits on the couch, leans back, then looks over to me.
"Come here Nessa."

Oh shit. "Why?"

"Stop talking and questioning everything and just get your ass over here."

I get up out of my chair and slowly walk over to where he's sitting on the couch and stand in front of him. He is still leaning back while he looks me up and down.

"The dress is nice but you can take it off now." My stomach tightens. Can I actually do this? Maybe I could just leave now and pay him back some other way. "Get out of your head Nessa and strip." Or I could just stay and do as he says.

"You're bossy," I sulk.

"Just do it Nessa."

Well shit, looks like I'm doing this. With that order I take my bits of jewellery off first. I'm shaking a bit and I hope he can't see it. Once I'm done that I take off my belt. This is not very sexy, I have too many bits and pieces on. Soon I have them all off and I slide the dress off until I'm just standing in my bra, panties, and my garterbelt. I don't feel so in control anymore and that scares me.

When I look at him I see pure desire in his eyes and that gives me a little confidence. I move closer and look down, I can see his arousal straining against his jeans.

I try to take another step but he stops me by reaching out and caressing my thighs with his hands. It feels nice and even that little touch shoots desire directly to the heated area between my thighs. His hands come around my legs to the back of my knees where he pulls me onto his lap, directly onto his throbbing cock.

Oh that feels so good. A moan comes out of me from the delicious contact. There's not much material between us and I can feel myself getting wetter by the moment.

I wiggle a bit because I need friction, something, anything. I'm so horny, I have never felt like this during sex before and the fact I haven't had sex in a while isn't helping. God this man drives me crazy. He still hasn't said anything and I'm not sure I can talk right now. His hand moves to open the

clasp of my bra. Once it's removed my breasts feel heavy and my nipples are hard.

Oh God I wish he'd do something! Just then he takes my nipple in his mouth and I arch up and moan at the feeling of his mouth finally on me.

"Are you wet for me Nessa?" I can't answer I'm feeling to many things right now.

"Answer me," he demands.

"Yes God damn it."

He takes my other nipple into his mouth and oh God this feels so good

"You're very responsive to my touch. I like that." I move again and he hisses. "Stop doing that. I don't think I can hold on much longer and you grinding on me is not helping."

His hands move down my stomach and just when I thinking he might give me the contact I really need he stops. I look at him, his gaze is intense. I'm holding my breath in anticipation when he crashes his lips on mine. It's a hungry kiss filled with urgency. He nips my lip and then his tongue invades my mouth.

I could come like this. He stops to take off his t-shirt. Once that's off I'm laid on my back on the couch while he removes my panties and gaterbelt.

He spreads me wide open and I gasp at his sudden movement and as the air hits my sensitive flesh. He hasn't taken his eyes off me.

"You're so beautiful." This was all he says before his tongue hits my clit and I scream. God it feels so good I feel like I'm going to come any minute.

"I'm gonna come," I say panting.

"Not yet," he growls.

"I can't wait, I have to come." I haven't had sex in a while and I know I can't last much longer with his teasing. I need this.

"Not yet Nessa," he growls.

"Oh God!" And just like that his mouth is gone. "Why did you stop? Please don't stop!" Yes, I'm begging but I don't care I'm burning with arousal he's sparked.

"Oh I'm not stopping but I want the first time you come to be with me deep inside you."

I close my eyes. My body is feeling too many things, I feel like I'm going to explode from the sheer force of my desire. When I look at him he's half naked standing in just his boxers before me. It's a sight I want to

imprint in my head forever, but all too quickly he pulls his boxers down showing me his massive length. Before I even have time to get a good look at him, he's putting on a condom and climbing on top of me.

This is all happening so quickly. I'm stopped in my thoughts when I feel him nudging at my opening.

"Are you ready for me Nessa?"

"God yes, please Taylor." With that he thrusts into me.

"You're tight Nessa, I like that." I know he's waiting for me to adjust to his size. I didn't get to see much of it before but I can feel how big he is.

"Please move. I need you to move." He pulls nearly all the way out then plunges back in again.

He starts pumping in and out and I'm feel like I'm ready to explode again. I start moving my hips to match his pace and tighten my legs around him, wanting him to go deeper. He slides his hands in between us and pinches my clit at the same time he takes my nipple in his mouth. That's all I need to surrender to my orgasm.

He keeps pumping throughout my orgasm and it only takes a few more times before he grunts as he spills into me.

I'm seeing stars. I've never had that before, sex was never that earth shattering.

We stay like that for a while just breathing hard until he leaves to get rid of the condom. When he comes back he gently picks me up and takes me to the bathroom which is like the size of my apartment.

He turns on the shower and sets me under it then gets in next to me. I feel him start to rinse my hair and wash down my back when he reaches for the shampoo I feel his arousal against my back.

So soon? Oh lordy I am in for it tonight.

He puts the shampoo in my hair and then rinses it. Once that's done his hands start to roam my body. I jump when his finger reaches my clit, it's so sensitive.

"I can't, it's too soon."

"You can and you will." He keeps rubbing in a circular motion. He slips a finger in me and I arch back and moan.

"Oh God I'm gonna come. Stop, I can't take it." I'm saying it but I don't want him to stop. Lucky for me he ignores me and I come all over his hand screaming his name.

I feel a little dizzy but I decide to return the favour so I turn around and move to get on my knees. His breathing is hard when he sees what I'm gonna do.

"You don't have to do that." No I don't but I really want to taste him. I'm still a bit shaky as I get on my knees. When they connect with the hard shower floor pain shoots through them. I hiss out a breath but I'm not going to let it stop me from doing this.

I can see how big he is now. Sweet lord how did that fit? I put my hand around his shaft and start to slowly pump. He draws in a long breath and grunts. I take him in my mouth and his hands shoot forward and into my hair.

"Nessa that feels so good." Once he says that I keep moving, I bring my hand up to play with his balls. I can feel he's close but before I can finish him off, I'm lifted onto my feet.

"No, let me finish," I plead and he laughs.

"Turn around and put your hands on the wall for support. You're gonna need it because this is gonna be fast and hard."

I do as I'm told and before I know it I feel full again. I'm starting to like this feeling. He starts pumping hard and fast as his hands are digging into my hips. I feel like I'm gonna come but surely I couldn't three times in a row? As if reading my thought he reaches around to caress my clit while he is still furiously pounding into me. It doesn't take much till I'm coming and he's not far behind me as he collapses on top of me. I'm completely drained, I can barely keep my eyes open.

I feel him pick me up and once out of the shower he dries us both then takes us to the bedroom and puts me in bed. I don't remember much after that but cuddling into the man who doesn't do cuddles as he whispers, "Goodnight Nessa."

I wake the next morning feeling sore all over. I stretch out enjoying the soreness as it reminds me of the night I had. As I roll over I realise I'm alone in the bed and frown. I thought I felt something pass between us last night. I saw a side to him I've never seen before, he was so gentle. I was right when I said he wasn't good for my heart because last night's Taylor was one I could really like. I get up and put on his t-shirt from yesterday and go search for him.

I find him sitting at the table reading the paper, he's dressed in a suit. Surely he's not working on a Sunday. "I know you're a busy billionaire but I'm sure even you have a day off." He doesn't even look up from the paper, something feels off.

"You can get dressed and leave now."

"What?"

"You heard me Nessa. You can leave now. Consider last night payment in full. Worth every penny. Thanks," he says with a wink and goes back to looking at his paper.

I just stand there speechless for a second then turn and walk into the room. I grab my things and get dressed quickly. I feel numb. I need to leave now. I walk straight out and don't look back.

Once I'm outside the hotel I feel tears start to drip from my eyes but I wipe them away quickly. He doesn't deserve my tears.

I make it home and jump straight into the shower. I need to wash his scent from me. After I'm showered I dress in my pjs I head for the kitchen.

"Hey you're home. When did you get in?"

"A while ago." I answer a little sadly.

"You ok? You seem off." Damn her for knowing me so well.

"I'm fine, just tired long night and all." I smile weakly.

"So did you rock his world?" Yeah rocked it so much he wants nothing to do with me.

"I don't really want to talk about it right now, Stacey. I'm sorry I'm just tired." She looks worried now but I just can't talk about the best night of my life with a man who I may have strong feelings for that just kicked me out less than an hour ago. By the look on her face she's going to ask more questions that I'm just not ready to answer.

"Just don't ok."

"Ah shit Nessa, do I need to go break his legs or something?" I laugh because she probably would.

"No it's fine. I knew what I got myself into. I guess I'm just not made for the one night stand thing. I'm good though babe, I promise." She's not convinced but has decided to drop it anyway, thank God.

"So what you up to for the day?" I ask trying to lighten the mood.

"Oh I've a date with Jeff in a few. I'm gonna go get ready." She gets up to leave but turns back. "You have work tomorrow by the way, so be ready

to leave at eight."

"Work?" I question.

"Yup. I have got loads of new events and I'm understaffed. I have to hire a few and you're the first one and I don't want to hear anything about why you can't. You need a job, I need staff, it's that simple." I jump up and run over to hug her.

"Thank you." I smile my first genuine smile of the day.

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SEVEN

I've been working with Stacey the last month and it's going great. She's letting me take over the marketing and promotion of her company and I freaking love it.

I've just got in and I am exhausted and my feet ache. There was a wedding today and it was mad busy. It will be Halloween soon and I haven't decided if I want to dress up yet so I'm going to relax and have a look online at some ideas.

Stacey's staying at naked dudes as it's Friday. She's been staying there a lot on weekends. They seem to be going good—she doesn't seem all that invested but she's happy, that's the main thing. Stacey told me his name is Jeff but I prefer naked dude.

I haven't heard from Taylor or seen him. I kind of miss him at times but quickly try dismissing it. I don't like thinking of him because it leaves an ache that even I don't understand. I was with Brandon for over a year and he did worse things to me but the cut Taylor left seems deeper some how. I hate when my thoughts turn to him, ugh!

I drop my bag on the table when a shiver runs through me. Something feels off. I look around and notice all the draws in the kitchen are open. I start to freak a little but before I even have time to blink I'm hit hard on the head and the room goes dark.

I feel fuzzy and when I try to open my eyes the brightness of the room stings. My head is pounding. I can hear beeping, what is that? I'm know I'm starting to panic because my heart is beating fast and it feels like it's going to come out of my chest.

"Relax Nessa, you're ok. Can you try to open your eyes?" It's Stacey speaking and I relax a little and try opening my eyes again. Everything is so bright and my mouth is dry. I peel my eyes open it and it takes a minute before Stacey comes into view, her worried expression isn't helping me figure things out.

"Drink please."

"Hold on Nessa, just wait for the nurse." I nod. I feel so groggy. I'm about to freak out again but the nurse walks in. She's a small woman with a sweet face.

"Welcome back Nessa. How are you feeling?" she asks sweetly.

"My head is sore and I really need a drink," I croak out.

"Well you were hit pretty badly on the head and there is a good size bump with a cut so take it easy. You have been out for two days now. You have had everybody worried."

Two days, what the hell? I try to remember what happened but nothing comes to mind.

"The doctor will be around to check you over in a few minutes. You can sip over this water while you wait. Just sip, we don't want you getting sick," she orders.

"Ok." I agree and Stacey brings me some water. When I try to sit up a shooting pain goes through my head.

"Take it easy Ness. Let me help." She helps me sit up and I sip the water feeling a little better.

"What happened?" I ask.

"We got broken into and you must have disturbed them and they hit you on the head." Oh my God that's a little scary.

"I'm so sorry Nessa. I should have been there." Was she for real?

"Would you stop. I'm glad you weren't there, we both could have been hurt." She nods but she has tears in her eyes.

"Nessa, I have something to tell you and I'm not sure how you're gonna take it. Well, I'm not even sure this is the right time but I don't want you to get any surprises." This can't be good she looks really worried—am I going to die or something?

"What is it?" She puts her head down. "Spit it out already," I snap feeling irritated.

She takes a deep breath. "The neighbour across the way found you and called the ambulance. When they got you here they checked your id and called your next of kin." She stops.

"Jesus, Stacey, what is it? You're worrying me now."

"You're next of kin is your father and he was here." I can't breathe. Everything is going fuzzy and I'm dizzy. That can't be right, surely she has it wrong but everything goes dark before I have time to grasp what's happening.

I can hear my name being said, I open my eyes to a doctor leaning over me shining a light in my eyes and shit it's bright. I flinch trying to get away

from the blinding light.

"Welcome back Nessa. I'm Doctor McGrath," he says with a smile.

"What happened?" I say and look around the room. I see Stacey talking to the nurse, tears running down her face. When she spots me awake she rushes over.

"I'm so sorry Nessa." Poor Stacey, she's always blaming herself.

Before I can answer her the doctor speaks, "It seems you may have fainted Nessa but with your head injury I can't but sure. I'm going to run a few tests and I'll be keeping you here for a couple of days of observation. Please try to rest while you're here and try not to get worked up again." Then he looks to Stacey. "And maybe no shocks for a while," he says and smiles gently. "I'll come back later to check on you."

"Ok, thank you doctor." Once he leaves Stacey takes a seat beside me.

"I'm sorry. Jesus I didn't... I knew you would be a little shocked but you scared the hell out of me Nessa," she says shakily.

"I'm fine now. It may just have been a bit too much to take in with what's happened. How the hell is he my next of kin and why would he come now—he had twenty-six years to bother?" I ask truly confused the panic is gone and now I'm pissed. Why has he decided to show up now?

"I honestly don't know. Maybe it's because they rang, but I told him you wouldn't want to see him." I can see that she is still feeling like this is all her fault.

"Stacey none of this is your fault so please don't blame yourself but can you do me one favour," I say hoping to God she can.

"Sure Nessa, anything."

"Please don't let him come near me. I don't want to see him," I say in almost a whisper as she gets up and hugs me.

"I'll tell the nurses station you don't want him in here."

"Thanks." My stomach growls which causes us both to laugh.

"Hungry much?" She laughs.

"Yeah I'm starved. What's a girl to do to get some food around here?"

"The nurse said you need to eat some soup first so I rang Joe he has your favourite veggie soup ready for me to collect. When Jess and Sam get here I'm going to go grab it." Joe is the bartender and manager at Fitzsimons and he knows just how much I love his veggie soup.

"Oh man how about you just go now, I'm drooling here thinking of it. I'll rest my eyes till the girls get here."

"I don't want to leave you on your own just yet."

I roll my eyes. "Please bitch, the only thing gonna happen me right now is I fade away with hunger so please go." I bat my eyelashes at her.

"Fine I'll go but please rest." Oh thank God! I'm pretty sure if she said no I'd start eating her.

"I will, now go," I say making a shooing motion with my hands. She laughs as she leaves.

I'm feeling a little tired and my head is pounding, yet my stupid brain won't stop with the questions. Why the hell had the sperm donor come here? It's all so messed up. He had twenty-six years and now he just turns up like it was nothing. Ugh my head is too fuzzy to deal with all this.

I've decided I can't wait for this year to end because it hasn't been my best. So far this year I've caught my ex with one of my best friends, lost my job, had sex with a sex God who's a prick who treated me like a high class hooker, got wacked on the head and now my long lost Father whom I hate, decides to make an appearance. Seriously thank God there is only a few months left to this year because I can't keep dealing with this shit.

There have been good parts as well. I moved in with Stacey, which is great and I have a job I love. So maybe somethings are just meant to be and I do believe, what is meant for you won't pass you. Although in saying that I don't want a Daddy so I'm hoping that's not meant for me and will go right past me—like get on a plane to the furthest country away past me. I'm stopped in my thoughts when Sam and Jess arrive.

"Well look at you. Sleeping beauty has awoke." Sam greets and I laugh which kind of hurts a little. Man what the hell was I wacked with?

"What, you bitches didn't actually think you were getting rid of me," I say jokily but Jess makes a sad face.

"You scared the hell out of us Nessa, even Sam was worried," she says sadly.

Sam butts in by saying, "I was not." But I'm not convinced. She was totally worried, which means I must have look pretty bad to get her worried because she acts like nothing ever bothers her.

"It's ok, I'm fine. Head of steel me. How about we hug this out," I say as I hold my arms open and they walk over.

"Really, why do you all think hugs help with everything? just so you know I don't really want to hug you," Sam groans but she hugs me tightly.

"That's because they do and I know you secretly love them, but don't worry I won't tell a soul." I wink at her and she lets out another groan. She hates lovey dovey stuff but right now me being in hospital means she has to deal with it and it's fun watching her squirm.

We talk a while and I love chatting to my girls they know how to take my mind right off everything.

"So any hot doctors?" Sam says wiggling her eyebrows.

"Eh well, I've kinda slept the last two days so I couldn't tell you. I'll be sure to keep a list when I can get out of this room." I laugh and I realise I actually need to pee but when I wiggle a little I feel something. I look under my blanket and see a tube. Oh hell no!

"What's wrong?" Jess asks when she realises I'm starting to freak out.

"Please can one of you go drag a nurse in here? I need to pee and oh God they have a tube in and eww please hurry," I beg and Sam jumps up.

"I'll go," she says laughing.

I growl, "Do not look for hot doctors Sam. I want this out now!" She just salutes me.

"Yes boss."

Oh God this is so wrong. How did I not feel this before? I've just sat here and not known. Gross.

"Relax Nessa, they will have it out in a second." Easy for her to say.

The nurse comes into the room with a concerned look.

"Everything ok?" she asks. No, its not but I try be nice.

"I need to pee. Could you please remove this thing in me?" I say crankily while she smiles at me. What the hell is she smiling about?

"Nessa you got hit pretty hard on the head. Your body slept for two days, it needs to adjust. You're gonna be a little weak so I suggest we leave the catheter in till tomorrow," she says sweetly.

Oh hell no. She can smile sweetly all she wants but this thing is coming out of me now.

"No thanks. I'm fine I want it out now," I say with force. She looks like she's having trouble deciding so I help her with her decision. "Look I don't care if you think I shouldn't take it out. You need to take it out or I will do it myself. I can't keep this thing in, it's freaking me out." I smile just for an

added touch. "Please, the doctor says I can't be under stress and this is causing me an awful lot of stress."

She huffs a bit but decides to give me my own way. She shoos the girls from the room and Sam being Sam, huffs something about seen it all before. The nurse gets gloves and removes it. I can breathe a sigh of relief now.

"You're gonna be weak on your feet so you will need a little help to the toilet. Please don't fight me on this, I don't want you having a fall," she tells me sternly and I just nod. She helps me to the toilet and when I relieve myself it stings like a mother fucking bitch.

I get back in bed and the girls are all there, Stacey's back with food—thank God. Once I'm in bed and comfy, Stacey sets my soup out and I dig in.

"This is so good." I probably look like a starved animal right now but hey, I'm kinda feeling like one. When I look up to the girls by their faces it's confirmed I look like a starved animal. "What?" I say as if I have no idea what they're looking at me like I have ten heads.

"You have a little something right..." Sam says as she points to my whole chin area and laughs.

"Leave me alone." I joke sulkily and they all laugh. Once I'm done with my soup I yawn. I'm pretty tired now.

"Why don't you get some rest Nessa," Stacey says.

"I slept for two days I don't want to sleep." Even as I say it I know my stupid body disagrees and I yawn again.

"Well we have to head to work so rest and we shall see you tomorrow," Jess says.

"You go too Stacey, I'm sure you have stuff you need to do." She was shaking her head before I even finished talking.

"No, I'll stay," she says. I love her for wanting to stay but the nurse told me she's been here since I've been admitted. She has a business she has worked hard to build; she can't just put that on hold to watch me while I sleep.

I put all the force my tired body can muster when I tell her, "Stacey go and don't come back till tomorrow evening. Rest and check on work. I'm fine, if I need anything I'll call." She goes to say something but I stop her. "No, I'm not hearing it. Please just go. I love you all but there is not much

you or anyone can do sitting here. It's not like I'm going anywhere, so just go." She sighs in defeat.

"Fine, but know I don't really want to leave," she says concerned.

"Eh I'm in hospital, pretty sure I couldn't be anywhere better. Now, come all of you and hug me then get the hell out of here."

Just as they're leaving Jess comes back over and hands me a bag.

"Almost forgot there are some magazines in here. I know you're not into them but that's all they had in the shop. Maybe they could help you pass some time." She's so nice. I thank her and the girls leave. I fall straight into an easy sleep before the door even closes behind them.

I awake during the night to a weird feeling of being watched but there's no one in my room. I'm freaking out a little so I press the button for the nurse. Jeez what the hell is wrong me?

The nurse arrives and tells me no one has been in my room and that I probably just had a bad dream but it doesn't help calm my nerves.

I can't go back to sleep and end up lying there for hours. At seven I have breakfast brought in, which wasn't that nice but I'll take what I can get. Stacey will bring me something nice; I think to myself but decide to text her just to make sure. Plus I need some pj's and stuff for a shower. I stink. I can't stand smelling my own stink.

When I look at my phone I have a few messages from both old and new work buddies and I decide to fill some time replying. I see Ray's name come up and click open.

Baby girl please get better. Love you loads. I will come and annoy you later. xxxx

Awe he's a sweetheart but also a gossip queen considering half my old job has texted. I reply telling him I love him too and can't wait for his visit and just like that I'm bored again.

Awe man I need to get out of here. I remember Jess left a bag with some trashy magazines in it. I don't like reading them but I'm that bored.

I flick through them till I come to a page that causes my heart shatter a little. There is a picture of Taylor and a leggy blonde at some movie premier in America. His arm is around her but he's not smiling, then again does the prick ever smile.

Why is it still bothering me? It's been a month since I have last seen him and I hate him for that morning, yet I can't stop looking at him. It's dated two weeks ago and the caption reads;

"Taylor Kessler with a new woman on his arm. Just another one of many or could this be more?"

I'm still staring at him when someone walks into the room. I'm so fixated on the picture that I don't look up.

"You shouldn't believe what you read in them stupid magazines." That's Taylor voice. I look up and back down at the trashy magazine. What are the chances? I don't answer straight away because I can't believe he's here and when I do it's pretty bitchy.

"I don't care what's in these. I was bought them and decided to flick through to pass the time. If you ask me it's all trash as well as most of the people in them." Ha take that! I'm aware I sound pretty childish but I don't care.

"Nessa," he says my name in a pleading tone and I don't understand why he sounds that way. It actually pisses me off.

"What do you want Taylor?" I question angrily.

"I just came to make sure you're ok." Was this fucking dude for real?

"Well I'm fine, pretty great actually, so why don't you go fuck yourself and leave me the hell alone." I'm so angry. Why is he here and why does he have to look so damn sexy.

He's wearing a navy suit, no tie with the top two buttons undone. Oh man he looks hot. Shit did I just think that?. Stupid brain considering he's the prick who kicked me out like a whore. I can't understand why I'm still drawn to him.

"Nessa I just wanted to check and see how you are and maybe talk a little so less of your lip would be great." Oh no he didn't. Who the hell did he think he was?

"Talk are you kidding me? The time for talking may have been the morning you kicked me out, not a month later when you find out I'm in here. I don't need nor want your pity so leave Taylor." I'm so angry at this stage I just want to get up and beat him.

He growls, "I'm not here out of pity. I just want to talk to you damn it."

"Well did it ever cross your mind that I don't want to talk to you." Why won't he leave already. He lets out a long breath in a very dramatic sigh.

"I don't know how to do this, ok." Huh?

"Do what? You don't have to do a damn thing but leave so you should get on that." This man is just not going to leave.

"Can you just give me a damn minute woman, I'm trying to say something."

Eh how about no! My head is starting to hurt and I smell bad and I just want a painkiller and a wash, that's not too much to ask is it? But no, I get a God damn fight with the man I'm sure I feel something for but don't know what. To be honest I'm pretty sure I hate him but there is something else—when he's around I don't know if I want to punch him or hump his leg. I can't think straight right now. He needs to leave.

"Look Taylor, I've been hit on the head with God knows what by God knows who, so my head is just not able to deal with your shit right now or actually ever. So can you please just leave?" I'm shouting at this stage and my head is hurting.

"Fine I'll go, I don't want stress you out. I really did come to talk and to make sure you're ok. I've been worried and couldn't stay away any longer. We are gonna talk later, Nessa. Understand that." Ok he's just not going to give up.

I'm fuming when I look down and realise I'm still holding the magazine. I throw it at him. "Go back to your blonde and leave me alone!" I shout which cause pain to shoot right through my head. I grab my head and bend over trying to lessen the pain. It hurts like hell. Before I know it Taylor is beside me.

"Jesus what's wrong? I'll I get the doctor." He sounds terrified. I'm saved from answering when Stacey arrives.

"What the hell did you do to her!" she shouts at Taylor and presses the button for the nurse.

"I'm fine, I just got a pain in my head. It's easing though, I must have moved it the wrong way or something." When I look up I notice Taylor has backed up a bit but he is still looking really worried.

"You can leave now," Stacey tells him. He looks like he wants to say something but with the look she throws him, he nods and leaves.

The nurse arrives and tells me its normal after a head injury to suffer from some severe headaches but they will ease off once I'm healed. She gives me some painkillers to help. Once I'm a little more relaxed Stacey turns to me.

"Why was Taylor here?" she questions.

"He wanted to talk," I say weakly, the painkillers seem to have kicked in and I'm starting to feel tired again.

"About what?" she throws back.

"I don't know, I didn't ask. I just asked him to leave, so drop it." I'm a little bitchy because I hate him but I missed seeing his face and that is causing my poor head to throb even more.

"I'm sorry I was just surprised to see him." Shit, now I feel bad.

"No, I'm sorry. I'm just tired and I really wasn't prepared to see him either," I say apologetically.

"Don't worry about it. Do you want to have your shower now or later?" she's asks but I don't get to answer because Dr. McGrath comes in.

"Hello Nessa. All your tests came back and they're prefect so we can let you go home."

I jump up in my bed. "Yes! I mean, I like it here but eh I just want to go home."

"Don't worry everyone feels the same. I'm happy to see my patient's leave too." He laughs then continues, "Your head might be sore for a while so I suggest you take a week off work and give it some time to heal. I also have some painkillers here for when you get a headache, but only take them if you need them. They're very strong and will make you sleepy."

He leaves and I'm so happy I get to go home to my bed. Oh I can't wait. I turn to Stacey and say, "Take me home bitch." She laughs and we start getting my things together. Once we have everything we head home.

I'm so excited to go home but that turns into fear when I reach my apartment door. I freeze unable to go inside.

"What's wrong Nessa?" Stacey asks.

"I don't know what actually happened to me or who did it. What if they come back? Maybe we should go to a hotel," I say as I turn to leave.

"It'll be ok. I had the locks changed and the apartment manager added and an alarm system free of charge. Isn't that great? It's going to be fine,"

she tells me confidently. I turn back and when she opens the door, I slowly walk in. It looks the same.

"Stacey, what was taken?" She looks at me confused so I continue. "You said it was a break-in so what was taken?"

"Nothing seems to be touched so the guards reckon they might have only gotten in when you disturbed them." Something's off, I just can't put my finger on it and my head is too sore to think right now. "Don't worry about it Nessa. It's going to be a bit weird to be back here but it will be ok." She smiles gently and adds, "Do you want a shower?" Good plan.

"Yes. You're going to scrub my back, right?" I wink at her.

"Ha you wish. I'll just be making sure you don't fall and break your neck," she says laughing.

"Glad you think that's funny." I laugh with her though. I manage to have a nice long shower without falling and I feel so much better but I'm exhausted from my pills that all I want is to go to bed. Just as I climb into bed Stacey comes in.

"Hey, I have to go into work in the morning. There is a big event I need to supervise. I've texted Ray and he can come over in the evening. Do you think you will be ok in the morning? I can find someone to take over from me if you're not ready to be alone." She looks stressed by again. Her work is important so I tell her I'll be fine, more like spend twenty minutes convincing her, but she agrees to go to work. She leaves and I'm so tired I drift straight off to sleep.

When I wake the next day it's one o'clock. I've slept more than twelve hours straight. Wow that's never happened before. I get up to make coffee. Just as I'm about to sit down there's a knock on the door.

I freeze I can feel the panic rising. I need to get a grip, burglars aren't going to knock. On shaky legs I walk to the door and look through the peephole. I see it's Taylor. Taking a deep breath I open the door.

"Nessa what's wrong with you?" I must still look panicked because Taylor is right in front of me. When I look back up at him he's very close and I take a step back.

"I'm fine. I just wasn't expecting anyone. What are you doing here?" He just ignores my question though and starts ushering me towards the sofa. Once I'm there he goes back to close the door then sits beside me.

"What happened?" he asks concerned.

"I'm fine. Like I said I wasn't expecting anyone. I just had a moment." I try to sound convincing but my voice is shaky and I'm still shaking with nerves.

"If you were so damn afraid why the hell did you answer the door?" He is shouting a little and it causes me to flinch. Why am I being such a fucking baby?

"You can go," I say it and really want to mean it but I'm a little frightened to be left here. I look up into his eyes—he's actually pretty angry if I go by the darkness of them.

"I will not be going anywhere without you so you can remove that idea from your head and tell me where your phone is." Without me? My phone? He's not making sense and I don't even get to reply because the prick is back. "Phone, Nessa. Where is it? Now!" I jump at his tone. Is he seriously for real?

"What's your deal? Stop shouting at me! I'm freaked enough without you coming in here and fucking shouting at me. How about you just leave." I get up and walk over to the sink, I need a glass of water my mouth is dry. He's behind me in a second.

"I'm sorry Nessa I just don't like seeing you frightened. You can come stay at my place for a while. I just wanted your phone to ring Stacey but as you won't part with it I'll do it my way." With that he takes out his phone and barks orders into it requesting Stacey's number. Whoever he spoke to is good because once he hangs up his phone beeps with a message.

I just stand there in shock as he starts ringing Stacey. He argues with her for ten minutes while I just stand there. When he's done he walks back over to me and studies me carefully. He doesn't expect the slap in the face he gets.

"Taylor you treated me like a fucking God damn whore and throw me out of your hotel like a piece of trash. Do you know how that made me feel? I didn't expect more from you the next day because we had an agreement, but could you have treated me like a damn human being rather than a piece of dirt on the bottom of your shoe. And if all that's not bad enough, you come back a month later after appearing in every magazine with different women. To top off what a fucking gent you are, you come in when I'm only getting out of hospital barking orders and shouting at me. What the fuck is

wrong with you Taylor?" I pretty much screamed my speech and he looks a little gob smacked. He goes over and sits on the sofa rubbing his jaw.

Ha! I hope it hurt the prick. Considering my hand is sore, I'd say it hurt a least a little.

"Nessa I..." he stops and puts his head down. I don't really want to fight anymore. My head is starting to hurt and he's just not going to leave so I take a seat on the couch beside him.

"Taylor why did you come to the hospital? Why after a month have you decided you want to talk? I don't understand it and I'm tired of fighting." He looks up at me and looks like he's struggling with whatever he's trying to say.

"I'm so sorry for that morning Nessa. I spent the last month trying to stay away from you. I should have known I was never gonna win that battle but I did try. My staff, family, and friends have been avoiding me because I've been a grumpy asshole. Then I hear some staff talking about you being in hospital and I thought I was gonna have to murder someone. I had to go straight there to see if you were ok. I can't get you off my damn mind you're there all the time and it's driving me crazy. The fact you were hurt when I should have been here. I don't know where this could go with us but I want to try. I want to look after you so please don't fight me."

What do I say to that? It doesn't even sound like Taylor the prick. My resolve is breaking down but what if I'm not enough for him and he throws me away or moves on? How am I going to deal with that—everyone seems to leave me eventually and I don't think I could deal with him doing that as well. I feel things for him, things I've never felt before. I still haven't figured out what it is or why but I know I could I risk losing my heart to him. I wish I wasn't so messed up maybe then we would have a chance.

Taylor breaks through my thoughts. "What are you thinking Nessa?"

Where do I start—oh hey I'm fucked up, people always leave you're no different. "I don't really know what to say to that," I say quietly. He gets up to start pacing.

"So you don't want give it a go?" He's getting angry again and I can handle that better than nice Taylor.

"I don't know what I want. Things aren't that straight forward for me. I'm fucked up Taylor and these past few months I've had so many changes in my personal life, I'm just trying to find my feet."

It's the truth. I still have things I need to figure out, my life has become a fucking game of Clue—the mystery of the attacker, the mystery of my father showing and then this man in front of me is just a fucking head spin altogether.

I look up at him he has his hand on his head in deep thought, when he looks up his eyes are soft.

"Nessa we're all a little fucked up and this thing with us is pretty fucked up but we won't know unless we try. I can't walk away so please don't make me."

Shit, he's not making this easy. I really want to, would it be so hard to try? Maybe if I just block my heart from it all till I see if I can get through this without my heart been shattered. Ha! Yeah right considering I'm pretty sure my God damn heart is already invested. I'm just not willing to admit that yet and what about all the woman he's been seen with? What if he can't stop seeing them? Has he slept with any of them since we've been apart? I want to give him a chance but I have too many things going through my head right now. Oh God can I do this? Maybe I can set some ground rules and see how he takes them or see how far he is willing to go for us.

"Ok fine, let's say I say yes, what then? You're a documented manwhore and you also told me you're not the hearts and flowers type. What about me and what I want?" He shocks me by laughing. I cross my arms in a huff and he laughs more. Really, like is he serious? He comes and sits next to me.

"Didn't I tell you not to read that stuff, look Nessa I haven't been near another woman since I slept with you, I just couldn't. I'm not the hearts and flowers type of guy but I'm pretty sure I gave a sappy speech not ten minutes ago so that might tell you that I'm trying."

"You want me to believe you weren't with any of the women?"

"I was at an event with them but nothing happened, the last person I slept with was you."

Could he be telling the truth was he really not with anyone since me? He was a bit sappy... Ugh, I suppose I could try and always walk away if it gets to be too much. Ha yeah right, great job trying to fool yourself Nessa. I'm going to try anyway because I'm just a glutton for punishment.

"Fine. I'm willing to try if you are but I swear Taylor, if I get one wisp of you and another girl being together I'm going to cut your fucking balls

off." He cups his balls protectively with his hands and makes a shocked face. I just laugh.

"I promise there is only one blonde in my life and you, woman, are her." With that he picks me up and gently places me on his lap and kisses me. It's soft to start but I can feel the hunger building. I place my hands on his shoulders but he stops and puts me back on the couch.

What the hell, why did he stop? Is he done with me already? I'm starting to panic and I just don't know how to stop it.

"Nessa get out of that damn head of yours. I stopped because if I didn't you would have been naked in seconds and you have just come out of hospital." Oh well I couldn't have been more wrong there but he doesn't have to know that.

"Yeah I knew that."

He takes my hand and gently tells me, "One day you're going to tell me who did this to you and don't say there is nothing wrong, I saw the look in your eyes just now and I'm going to find out who and what caused it."

Yeah well I'm not going to lie to myself and say he won't cause this man can get anything done when he puts his mind to it. So I simply answer him. "One day I might just tell you." That earns me a smile.

Taylor has decided that I'm going to stay with him on the week I have to rest. I tell him I'm not staying with him but it doesn't matter what I say, he always gets his way. He tells me it will give me some time to adjust to what happen then he starts listing off ways his place is safer. I see I'm not going to win this battle. Seems he already got Stacey to agree and I know I need to pick my battles with him so I let him win this one. Plus it is only a week, what harm could it be?

I get dressed and pack some stuff and we head to his car. It's a nice sports car, it's very different from my car. I drive a Micra and I love my little car. Stacey always tells me to get a new one and I was but my savings got stolen. Maybe in a few months.

The inside of his car is spotless with cream leather seats. I know it's some sort of BMW but after that who knows.

We get to his place quick enough. I'm getting pretty nervous as he pulls up.

"What's wrong?" Taylor asks.

"Nothing. Are you sure about this, you didn't want me here before."

He sighs and shakes his head. "Can we please forget about before. I'm sorry. This time I want you to be more a girlfriend not a hooker. I made a mistake, can you forgive me?"

Girlfriend, say what! I didn't expect that at all. This man is just full of surprises today. I try to lighten the mood.

"We really are living out my pretty woman fantasy, good stuff." I laugh and because it's kinda true, except the part where I'm an actual hooker. I keep laughing till there are tears coming from my eyes. I only stop when Taylor gives me his infamous growl.

"I'm sorry," I say but he gets out and comes round to open my door.

"Not funny Nessa." Oh it was totally funny but instead of answering I just smile at him while he shakes his head at me.

We walk into his building and it's really nice, a little posh—nah a lot posh. It's on Hanover Dock and I just know I'm going to love the view at night here. It also has a great view of the Liffey from the bottom floor, so I'd say it will be amazing on the top floor especially the way the lights hit the water. On the other side of the water is Kessler Enterprises. Jeez he really likes to keep an eye on his business.

We get in the lift and get off the top floor penthouse, not that I would have expected anything less from Taylor. I know I was here before but that's pretty foggy to me since I was very drunk then running like mad to get out of here.

Once we enter his apartment I notice two things, it's all white with black furniture, not very homey and it's about the size of five of my apartments put together.

Taylor goes to put my bag in a room and I go for a nosy. I spot a picture, it's of Taylor and a girl. She's very pretty and looks about my age with blonde hair but it darker than mine. She looks so familiar I just can't place her though.

Before I have time to consider it further Taylor is beside me. "Who is this?" I ask because considering it's the only picture in here she must be important.

"My sister," he says as he takes the picture from my hands and puts it back down. What was that all about? I raise my eyebrow at him.

"How about a deal, if you go rest on the sofa I'll tell you about her and whatever else you want to know. I know how nosy you are so I'm willing to let you ask me whatever it is you want if it means you will trust me a little more."

Oh hell yeah, Nosy Mary's gonna get her fill. I go to the sofa and he laughs and comes to sit beside me then he does something I don't expect and puts his arm around me pulling me over to cuddle into his chest. Damn him, I love a good cuddle and whit that one move my heart lets him in a little bit more.

"So come on, what do you want to know?" Eh everything but I'll start easy.

"Tell me about your sister." He tenses but then relaxes.

"Ok. She is twenty-six and the apple of my eye. I'd do anything for that girl. She's had me whipped since she was a baby," he says proudly.

"Cool she's my age, although I'm twenty-seven in December. What's her name?"

"Her name is Colleen."

"That's a pretty name. What other family do you have?" I ask.

"My mom and stepdad." He doesn't go into further detail about them. He's not really giving much away but I can see this is a big step for him so I don't push.

"How many businesses do you own?" He seems to relax at the change in subject.

"I buy, repair, and sell businesses going bust. I could own ten one week and three the next, and they could be anywhere in the world." Wow, just wow.

"How do you do all that by yourself? I mean should you really be sitting here during the day with me?"

"My stepfather helps run it. He's also very good at it and I have a million employees who are paid to look after them so don't worry. There is no place else I'd rather be." He seems to tense when he says Stepfather.

"Do you not like him?" I ask carefully and he's quite a minute before he answers.

"It's not that I don't like him. He's a great business man but he's a pretty shitty Father. He was never there and when he was, he still wasn't really there. I didn't care." He sighs and then continues, "I'm adopted. My dad was

a bad drinker and my real mom died in birth. When I was two my aunt took me for full custody and she's the best mom I could have asked for. She didn't think she could have kids herself, so Colleen was special surprise and shocked everyone—including my stepfather, who she met when I was. They're the only parents I've ever known and my mom is great and I only really deal with her husband on a business level but he's made sure I've had a decent life and help get my businesses off the ground so I'm thankful."

"Wow that's... I'm sorry and happy for you all at the same time," I say and try to change that subject.

"So how does one become a billionaire, do tell."

"I studied business management in college. When I was twenty-one my real father disappeared, I don't actually know where he went nor do I care, but he left some money with my mom for me. I bought a little bar, fixed it up and sold it for triple the price I had paid for it. I loved the whole reconstruction of it and helping make it a success for the new bar owner. I kept buying and reselling until eventually I was buying bigger and selling for way more," he says this very proudly. I decide not to ask more about his real Dad, I can see it's not something he wants to talk about.

"You're amazing, you really are. Now let's get down to the dirty—who's the girl who has made you hate women so much?" He looks into space but his features turn cold. Yup there's a story here.

"It's not as dramatic as you're going to like Miss Nosy Parker because I don't hate woman. I may have issues with trust because of this girl but not the commitment part—that's just how I feel and I'm trying to change it for you," he says tapping me on the nose.

"Yeah well I want to know. Please tell me about the girl anyway. What did she do to break your trust?"

"Fine, when I was eighteen I was in love with a girl. I really loved her and would have done pretty much anything for her. Thing was to my face she returned my love, but as soon as my back was turned she slept with half my football team. They, as well as her and her friends were all laughing at me. It was so bad I had to change schools. I've never felt that much humiliation in my life. I want to strangle them all. I kept thinking about what an idiot I was. I swore I'd never trust again. Can we leave it at that, you have me all talked out."

He's right though, he's answered so much and I know I'm being selfish making him dredge up his past. I just hope he doesn't ask me to talk because that's something I'm not ready to do.

I decide to have a nap while Taylor sends some emails so he can take the week off to spend with me.

When I wake it's dark. I must have slept for ages. I sit up and see my phone flashing with an incoming call.

"Hello?"

"Nessa! About damn time. Are you ok, do you want me come kick his ass and take you back?"

"I'm sorry, I was asleep and no I'm fine."

"What's going on with you two?"

"I don't know. He wants us to give it a shot at being in an actual relationship. I'm scared Stacey."

"Do you love him Nessa?" she asks.

"What, no. I don't know. I'm still trying to figure all this out." Could I love him this soon?

"Well I'll let you do that, just keep in contact regularly and I won't come over and beat him. If you want to talk I'm here. Oh and Ray says your dead for blowing his visit. He misses you so we are doing lunch on Wednesday, ok".

"Deal and thanks."

"No problem bitch. Love you. Get loads of rest." I laugh. God I miss her already.

"Will do. Love you too."

I hang up and put my phone down. I go in search for Taylor and food. I find him making calls on the sofa. When he sees me he hangs up. He's showered and changed and only wearing sweatpants low on his waist. And just like that I'm wet... This is not going to be easy.

"Stop looking at me like that Nessa. I'm holding back as much as I can here," he growls. Why is he holding back? Actually, I want him to fuck me.

"Why? I'm grand you don't have to hold back," I say sweetly but it doesn't work.

"No, you're only out of hospital a day. You're supposed to take it easy." Well poop. "Fine," I sulk.

"Come on babe, please just let me hold you tonight and tomorrow if you rest well we can have some fun." His voice is deep and strained. I can tell he really wants it now but he's being good the stupid man.

Fuck. I'm so sexually frustrated with his damn v, and his damn muscles, and his dam tattoos on display —he is not helping my frustration at all. "Fine but you need to put a top on and feed me."

He bursts out laughing. "I'm sure I can arrange that," he says still laughing. The prick.

"You better," I mutter and he walks off laughing louder. When he arrives back a few minutes later he has a t-shirt on and menus in his hand.

"What do you fancy?" Everything, I want to say but settle for plain out burger and chips. Once he orders we sit back on the couch and just cuddle in the peace and quiet. I love being in his arm a little too much, but I feel so safe here.

"How did you end up in so much debt? I mean you nearly had a heart attack when I suggested clothes and shoes," he questions, breaking the silence and I know I have to answer considering how much he shared with me earlier.

"Cliff notes version: forgot some files for work, headed back to get them and found one of my friends fucking my boyfriend. I think he may have planned it but to top it all off, he didn't have the job I thought he did. His wages were my credit cards and savings account." He tenses beside me.

"How the hell did he get your account details?" he says angrily as if he can talk. I lean up to look at him and raise an eyebrow.

"That's different, I didn't take anything," he says as if it makes perfect sense.

"No you didn't but that's not the point," I tell him sternly and continue, "I was in a relationship with him and thought I was in love. When we moved in together I would sometimes give him my cards to get stuff or to pay bills. I didn't even know that my cards could reach what he took." He is shaking his head when I'm finish.

"You shouldn't trust so easily," he says but there's a hidden meaning in the way he said it.

"Should I trust you?"

He thinks for a second. "I won't do anything to hurt you Nessa but that doesn't mean it can't happen." Eh cryptic much? What does that mean? But

before I can dwell further the buzzer to the door goes off. We eat and chat—he's actually really funny and relaxed not the Taylor I'm used to, it's strange but in a good way.

Once we're done eating we watch a movie and chill on the sofa. I really like cuddly Taylor. He just holds me and every once in a while will drop a kiss on my head. Once the film is over we head to bed and true to his word I don't get touched. I also don't get much sleep as I'm spooning a sex God. Seriously I'm so freaking horny and now is when he decides to be a gentleman.

I finally drifted off but wake up to something hard pressed between my butt cheeks. It has the heat yet again rising between my legs. I decide I'm not gonna let him say no, so I slowly turn around and move the sheet down then I move down the bed. Just as I'm about to release him from his boxer he moves and I freeze.

Shit, but he doesn't wake so I continue and take him in my hand. I move my hand up and down his shaft slowly. I can tell he needs a release too because the veins are bulging along his thick length. I take him deep in my mouth and he grunts then moans. When he says my name I know he's waking. About freaking time.

"Nessa what are you do- Ahh don't stop. Shit that's good."

With that I take him deep again and he grabs the sides of my face carefully then starts thrusting himself in and out of my mouth. I move my hand down and massage his balls. Soon everything starts to tighten up, he's not far away now.

"Nessa you need to stop if you don't want me to come in your mouth," he says breathlessly. I don't stop and he groans, "Oh fuck!" And with that he comes down the back of my throat all the while shuddering his release.

Ha take that! This bitch is just that good. I lie back on the pillow next to him smiling to myself. I feel Taylor move and when I open my eyes he's above me.

"Think your pretty great don't you?"

Eh yeah I do, because I am that great but I don't tell him that. "I don't know what you mean. I just wanted to surprise you." I say sweetly.

"Yeah surprise me. I told you we need to wait till you're better but you just had to go and prove how fine you are."

Oops he's on to me. "No. Yes. Maybe."

He doesn't say anything about my answer but instead moves between my legs. When his erect cock lands directly at my pussy with only a pair of lace panties between us I feel jolts of pleasure. Thank God for his rapid recovery time, the man is a machine. He stays there unmoving till I can't take it any longer.

"Please Taylor, touch me. Do something." He doesn't answer but starts to move his hand up and down my side. This man is killing me. "Taylor," I plead and he moves to the side and puts a condom on then he's back between my legs. "Taylor," I beg impatiently.

"Shh, patience baby." I'm about to explode and he hasn't even properly touched me yet. I just need a little contact so I wiggle underneath him before he pins me to the bed.

"Ugh. Taylor, please!" He smiles at my pleas. I'm about to bitch slap him—as soon as I get a hand free. He moves one hand down and rips my panties right off. Oh fuck yes! "Hey I might have like those."

"I'll buy you more," he laughs. I don't actually care and it was hot but I won't say no to new panties.

I feel him move down the bed then spread my legs wide open. "I love how you get so wet for me." With that he dives in and when his tongue hits my clit I jump and moan out his name.

He's licking and sucking my clit when his finger enters me. I'm so close. "Taylor, I'm going to come... Yes! Keep doing that... Oh God!" Just when I'm at the edge, he removes his finger. In one swift move he enters me.

"Oh God move. Please move!"

He finally complies with my sex fuelled demands and begins to move. When he does it feels so good. It feels so right. He speeds up his thrusts moving in and out faster yet never taking his eyes off me. His kisses are gentle and sweet. I want to scream for him to go harder or faster but in that moment we're not having sex—we're making love. When we come it's so intense, like nothing I have felt before. We both lie on the bed just trying to catch our breath.

Taylor leans over me with an intense look in his eye. "I've never felt that before while having sex," he says and I know what he means. It was intense.

"That's because we made love," I say carefully and look at him closely to catch his reaction. I know he's never had sex with feelings before. Did he know we were making love? Does he have feeling for me or am I just hoping? Could I ever be enough for him?

His face doesn't change he just stares at me. "I suppose we did," he says quietly, a little too quietly for my liking. I'm definitely not going to be enough for him but how do I let him go? I'm feeling the panic starting to awaken in my chest again, I need some space.

"I'm going to have a shower and get ready to meet my friends for lunch," I say getting up and before I know it I'm pinned beneath him again.

"What's wrong?" he asks. Shit.

"Nothing, I just have to start getting ready," I say pushing myself up and this time he doesn't stop me.

"Nessa, you went into your head and got that look that tells me you're going to run." I have a look? I'll need to watch that in the future.

"Yeah, running to the shower," I say as if he's mad but in truth he's right and I do really want to run away from him to think—something I can't do with him around.

I finish in the shower and step out to an angry Taylor. Uh oh.

"So do you want to tell me what that was all about?" He doesn't miss a beat

"What was what all about?" I ask innocently as if I have no clue what he's talking about.

"Don't play dumb Nessa, it doesn't suit you." He is not going to let this drop.

"It wasn't about anything. I just needed space we had amazing sex and it was just intense. I just need a few minutes to understand it." It's the truth, sort of. I just hope he takes my answer and leaves it alone.

"I don't believe you but I'll leave it for now. You're going to tell me what goes on in that head of yours and I can wait till you're ready. But till then don't lie to me and don't fucking run." With that he storms out. Great. I've pissed him off.

I get dress and go look for Taylor. I find him in the living room staring out the window.

"I'm sorry." When I say that he turns to face me but he doesn't say anything, just nods. Ugh he's not going to make this easy. "Taylor please

don't be annoyed at me. I've been doing things a certain way all my life just like you have. It's hard for me to change my habits but I'll try, ok. I ran because I'm not sure how I feel about you or how you feel about me and it scares me." He still doesn't say anything just keeps looking at me. I have been honest, it's what he wanted.

I'm about to walk away when he speaks, "It scares me too Nessa. You're the first woman I have ever made love to. I normally just fuck and go but with you everything is intense, amazing. I'm afraid I might lose that one day and I don't want to. I care about you a lot and want to see where this can go with us." I never really thought about him feeling this way before. He sounds as vulnerable as I feel.

"I'm sorry. I really am. I won't run anymore. I'll try to enjoy what we have without getting lost in my fucked up head."

"Good you can start by calling your friends because I have you here for a week and I plan on christening every room and surface in this place. Which means you don't have time for lunch but don't worry I'll feed you in between rounds," he says with a wink before stalking towards me. I instinctively start moving backward.

"I won't be gone too long. I'm sure you can survive that long without me".

He laughs. "Nope. You're not leaving, not now and not for the next week. You're all mine."

I'm stopped by the wall. When he catches up with me he pins me there. I laugh. "Fine take me, have your wicked way with me." I try to joke but it comes out in a pant. He has me pinned and I can feel his erection against my stomach.

"Oh baby, I plan doing just that," he says as his lips capture mine.

True to Taylor's word we spend everyday held up in the apartment. I'm going home tomorrow and I want to go out into the real world.

I find Taylor in the kitchen having a coffee. "Hey can we go out today? I feel like I'm going stir crazy stuck here," I plead with him. He puts his coffee down and comes over to me.

"Babe this is our last night together, I just want to enjoy you. I think we should stay in. I'll even cook."

I cross my arms over my chest. "No, I want to go out." I know I'm whining but seriously I need some fresh air.

"Babe we're not going out, let's not fight over it. Not on our last night." I don't understand why won't he bring me out. My insecurities have me wondering if he is afraid to be seen with me. I mean, I'm nothing like the normal models he has on his arms.

"Do you not want to be seen with me, is that it?" I whisper. He moves straight over to me and grabs me by the shoulders.

"Don't you dare do that. I would love nothing better than to shout out to the world that you're my woman but it's not that easy. I don't want you splashed all over some trashy magazine. I want to enjoy you and take my time. They will call you one of my women, and you're not—you are so much more. Just let me enjoy you and me before we go through all that."

I feel a little bad but I also feel that something isn't right. Do people really follow him everywhere? I wasn't asking to go somewhere fancy. A walk in the park would have been great but I need to learn to trust so I hug him and tell him fine.

We have dinner and an early night. Taylor wanted to spend the night giving me reasons not to go home. He did just that. I don't want to leave but I think space will do us both some good.

EIGHT

I'm heading home today because I go back to work tomorrow. It makes me feel sad to leave Taylor but I need some space to figure out what's going on between us. We haven't mentioned making love since that morning and I'm trying to tone down my inner voice that keeps telling me I'm not enough for him. I think I'm falling in love with him and that scares the crap out of me because that's when they leave me and I don't want him to leave.

I pour a coffee and look out the window when Taylor comes up behind me.

"I don't want you to go."

I don't want to go either but if I give him this space maybe he'll miss me and if he doesn't I have the space I need to deal with it.

"You'll be grand. I'm only down the road," I say as if it's not killing me to leave.

"I know," he says sadly so I turn and kiss him.

"Hey put on your big boy pants and let's get going. I have a dinner date with the girls since someone made me miss my last one." That gets him laughing.

"You loved it." He kisses me on the head and grabs my bag.

"Yes I did."

When we get to my apartment door I don't feel so afraid but I still get a weird feeling about the whole thing. Like how did they get in? Nothing was broken and nothing was taken, for a so called robbery. I mean they knocked me clean out. They could have taken what they wanted. I'm just trying to just forget about it and move on.

When we go in I feel a pang of sadness. I am really going to miss him.

"Why the long face?" Taylor asks taking my hand.

"I'm just realised I don't hate you so much anymore," I say jokingly and he laughs.

"I don't hate you so much either."

Taylor has to run and I have to go meet the girls at Fitzsimons. When he's gone I get my bag and head out.

Once I'm there I spot the girls and Ray at our usual table.

"What's up bitches?"

They all smile. "Well hello there slut. How was your week with the sex God?" Stacey says wiggling her eyebrows.

It was the best week of my life. I didn't want to leave. I'm afraid I love him. I could say all that but I settle for, "It was fine."

"Bullshit!" This comes from Sam at the same time Ray spits out, "Ha please! Don't play all innocent with me baby girl. You totally humped the sex God." Such a way with words he has.

"Ok fine it was great, amazing, and hot." I wink.

"Knew it, she just spent the week in bed," Sam says laughing.

"I'm sure she was just trying to get to know him Sam not everyone uses sex. Ever heard of having a conversation?" We all laugh. Awe poor Jess, she's so innocent and the only one of us who's still a virgin.

"Eh no, she totally had hot sex with the billionaire playboy," Stacey tells her but when she sees the look on my face when she used the word playboy she knew she said the wrong thing. My stomach feels too sick for lunch now. What if he's with someone else right now?

"Get that look of your face Nessa. I was kidding. I'm sorry I used that word, I didn't mean it. He's mad about you anyone can see that," Stacey says pulling me from my thoughts.

"Yeah I know. I'm fine, course he is." I say using my fake bravado and they all laugh.

While we're enjoying our food I notice Ray giving Sam the evil eye.

"What up with you two?" I ask them.

"Where do I start," Ray says rolling his eyes. Oh this is going to be good.

"From the beginning," I say holding my laugh in.

"He's such a drama queen, I swear. Don't you say a word," she threatens.

"Yeah like that's going to happen. You ruined mine and Boo's relationship. I can't even sleep with him anymore," Ray huffs. Boo is Ray's teddy bear that he's had for years. He can't sleep without it. What the hell did she do?

"Ok calm down you two and tell us what happened."

"Well Sam called me saying she needed a friend so I asked her to come over," Ray says but Sam jumps straight in.

"If you're going to tell it then say it right. You were crying like a baby because Nessa was in hospital and everyone else was busy so Stacey asked me to go calm him down," Sam says growling at Ray.

"Whatever. So she comes over a we have a few drinks and Miss Tight and Serious here starts to loosen up. She questions me about being gay. Like hello, it's so simple. Just like her I love the dick. But she wouldn't drop it. She kept asking how do I know and then she does the unthinkable and starts stripping till she's bum freaking naked! I nearly died and I most definitely puked a little. I told her to put it away but she was all for coming on to me. When I told her it was never going to happen she jumped on me, boobs flapping everywhere! It was horrible. I told her to get her saggy tits off me and that's when she took Boo and rubbed him all over her bits. It was so awful. I have washed Boo three times but I still can't seem to let him stay with me."

He's so dramatic I swear. Jess, Stacey, and I all burst out laughing, we can't seem to stop. There are tears rolling down my face and my sides hurt.

"I did not hit on you. I was drunk and messing around with you. You shouldn't have called my boobs saggy," Sam snaps at him.

"Whatever. Me and Boo are so traumatized we might need counselling," Ray snaps back.

"It's a fucking teddy, stop been a little baby and get the hell over it all ready!" Sam growls. I manage to stop laughing to tell them to chill. This is so funny, poor Boo.

We manage to enjoy the rest of our day with a just a few evil eyes from Sam to Ray. They're too funny. They really love each other though.

When I first met Ray at work he was hyper and I remember he always smelled amazing. We clicked straight away and became best friends. My girls also took to him well, which was great.

It's getting late so Stacey and I decide to head home. When I look at my phone I see a message from Taylor.

Hope you're having a good day with your friends. Miss you loads beautiful.

Wow he's too sweet. I miss him too. I send a quick message telling him that and we head out.

Once we get home I shower and head out for some food. I'm so hungry. I think I have an eating problem, I'm always hungry. Stacey's in the kitchen making a sandwich. I'm totally normal because she is hungry too.

"Hey do you want a sandwich?" Is the sky blue?

"Yes please," I say a little too eagerly and she laughs. "I'm just so hungry these last few days. I can't seem to fill myself. I'll need to diet at this stage." She laughs again.

"Oh you will be fine not a pick on you. Aunt flow is probably on her way." Yeah she could be right. When am I due for a visit? It actually feels like for ever since I had one. I'll have to check that out but they're always so irregular. I know I can't be pregnant, they did a test when I was admitted in hospital. I guess I'll just have to wait for flow to come around.

Taylor wants me to go on the pill, so when I get my monthly I'll have to make an appointment for the doctor. I was on the pill when I was with Brandon but we still always used protection. When I found him and Lucy together my head was fucked up and I forgot to take them for a few days. I wasn't having sex so I didn't really care but now I need to go back on it.

It's not that I don't want kids, I do. I just want them later in life. I don't want my child feeling the rejection I felt growing up so I wouldn't have a kid unless I was one hundred and ten percent sure I was in a forever relationship. Which might never happen but I'm ok with that, I'm getting used to the whole no one sticking around. No matter what happens I need to learn to be strong. I don't want the easy way out like my mother took, I will fight.

NINE

The weeks are flying by. Halloween has come and gone. In a month it's going to be Christmas my favourite time of year. I can't wait for it to be here. Taylor and I have been going good but I can't help the feeling that he's hiding something and I'm so afraid of what that could be. With his manwhore reputation I wonder a lot of the time if it could be another woman.

We don't see each other during the week much with work but spend the weekends together. Mostly we just stay in bed but we do venture out for food.

I don't like it. I want to go out with him show him off to my friends but he wants to wait a little longer. I'm not happy with that but I don't want to push him. This is his first relationship and I don't want him to feel rush or run the risk of losing him.

I've been so tired lately with work being supper busy, I don't get much of a break. I make a coffee and when I sit down I heave out a sigh of relief—it just feels so good to sit.

I still get a little freaked being in the apartment myself and I've been getting that feeling of being watched lately. Like hairs on your neck stand up freaky feeling. Stacey tells me I'm probably just still a little freaked over it all considering they never found out who broke in.

Still... something grates on me and I can't for the life of me understand the weird feelings I'm getting. Even when I'm walking down the street I can feel someone watching me. It all just freaks me out. I need to get a grip on things before I drive myself mad.

I'm stopped in my thoughts by a knock on the door. When I open it I freeze to the spot as the man standing there is a man I never wanted to see, a man I blame for every problem I have.

"Hello Nessa," he says carefully but I just can't answer. Why is he here? I take a breath and try to remain calm.

"What do you want?" I snap.

"So you know who I am?" he says still very carefully. He knows he's unwelcome. At least that's a plus.

"Of course I know who you are. My mother wallowed over you for years while you were God knows where. You left her to raise me on her own, heartbroken every God damn day because you wouldn't come back to her. Until the day she'd had enough and sliced her wrists and left me to find her." I was shouting and didn't even realise. He looks shocked and his face has lost a little colour, he actually looks like he needs to sit down. But what do I care.

"Nessa, that was not what happened." How would he know? He fucking left us.

"And what the hell would you know, you son of a bitch. You fucking left us. You left her and because of you she's dead!" I can't breathe. I need to sit down.

"Calm down Nessa. I know that's what you think. Your mother told me you never even asked for me and when she brought me up you would fog her off, but I really need you to listen to me please. Just give me five minutes and I'll leave. I think there are a few things you need to know," he pleads.

I really don't think I can deal with him here. He's opening old wounds I'm not ready to face now or ever. He knew what I thought of him though. Why did she tell him things? Why did he stay in contact but not see me? Maybe I do need answers, maybe they will make it worse but I have to at least try to move past it all. I don't want to be weak anymore.

"Ok fine, you can have five minutes then you need to leave me alone. I never needed you and I certainly don't want you now." I know that wounds him because he flinched a little. Why he cares, I can't figure out.

"Thank you," he says and I step aside to let him in. Once he takes a seat at the table, I move to the other side. We just sit there in silence for a minute. I wish he would just spit it out already—my stomach is doing summer saults.

"I thought you had something to say." I'm being bitchy but what does he expect? He nods and takes a big breath before he begins.

"Nessa, your mother and I were best friends since we were very young. She was an amazing woman and we really only loved each other in a sister and brother way. It might not make sense right now but I'll explain. You see, I was in love with a girl called Sarah. Head over heels in love but she was going through a rough patch when we had started seeing each other. One

day she just kicked me aside like dirt and I turned to your mother like I always did." He stops for a minute seemingly to ponder what he just.

"We both had too much to drink as we drowned my sorrows and that night we ended up in bed." This is not making sense to me. My mother never drank. I'm so confused they were best friends, she loved him but was not in love with him.

"We thought nothing of it and put it down to a drunken accident. We really just didn't feel that way about each other. It was a little weird afterwards but in the end we laughed it off. Sarah got in touch with me and she explained that she loved me but had freaked out. I really loved this girl and your mother encouraged me to go for it with her. I had to tell her the truth first, so I told her what happened with your mother and she forgave me. I was so pleased and so was your mother. This is where I blame myself a lot, Sarah asked me to stop being friends with your mother. She wasn't in a good place and was still worried I'd leave so I rang your mother and explained. I would never lie to her, she was my best friend, my sister. She told me to go for it but to give a phone call every now and then to let her know I was still alive. I agreed and so did Sarah."

He stops and shakes his head. He looks so sad. I still haven't said anything, I just can't understand it all. Why would she just let him leave? I thought she loved him. I don't get a chance to think further because he continues.

"Sarah didn't know she could get pregnant but a few months later we found out she was and we were delighted. I missed your mother terribly, we were friends for so long I felt like I abandoned her. No I did abandon her. We would talk on the phone and she would tell me she was fine and when my daughter was born she would always ask how she was doing. I was happy but Sarah knew I missed her. She told me she was sorry and told me to go see your mother." He stops and looks at me.

I have a sister? My head is spinning with all this. I don't have anything to say because I can't find the words but he's waiting for something so I nod for him to continue.

"When I went to see your mother she had a little girl in her arms. You were three at the time and I was shocked. She had never mentioned a child but when I walked up the garden I knew by her face there was something I was missing. That's when I looked at you, really look at you, and you

resembled me. I was shocked. I just stood there staring. I didn't know and she'd kept it from me. When we talked she told me that she knew I was happy and she didn't want to break my family apart and asked me to stay away. She said she was happy with just you and her and asked me the biggest favour, she asked me to stay away let you two be happy. It killed me, I swear Nessa it did, but for her I'd do anything. When I went home I told Sarah everything and she freaked a little but I told her I wasn't seeing you and what your mother said. Then she freaked some more about your mother stopping you from being in my life but I knew I had my family and she wanted hers. I rang her every few months to see how you were doing and she would tell me everything about you. I loved the stories she would tell me but it wasn't the same. I knew I was missing loads and still I stayed away."

By the look on his face I can see he's building up to something here and I don't like where all this is leading to. I get up and go pour a glass of wine. I still haven't said anything. I'm trying to process it all. This can't be right, surely I couldn't have gotten it so wrong. Why did she do this to me?

"Nessa are you ok? Do you want me to stop?"

I take a big gulp of my wine and turn to face him. "No I have a feeling the next part is the one I want to hear. I don't understand why when she talked to you on the phone she would cry after. Why if she wasn't in love with you? I don't understand any of this." I take a seat again and wait for him to answer.

"She cried for you and me. She knew she got to see you grow and enjoy you. She loved you very much and you're right this part is really hard part for me. I know you don't give a shit about me, I was a shitty Father not to fight for you. I left you without a fight because my best friend asked and a year before she died she rang me and told me I was a joke and that she hated me for never fighting for you. See, she tested me to see how much I loved you. The problem was I loved her and thought it was what she wanted but in truth she wanted me to fight for you and I failed. She rang me back a few months later and told me she had cancer and that she hadn't told you and it was also gone too far and she wouldn't make it more than a few months."

She had cancer? No she didn't, this can't be true. I feel my chest tighten up and the familiar feeling of panic overriding my body. I can't seem to

catch a breath when someone start rubbing my back. I look up to see my dad has moved beside me. He looks as rattled as me.

"Nessa breathe. Please breathe, come on." I take a deep breath and try calm myself down.

"That can't be right, I'd have known. You have to be lying." My eyes are wet and I can feel the tears dripping down my face. This can't be real.

"Nessa, I think I should go. You have heard enough for one day. I'm so sorry."

He looks really sad. I don't understand any of it but I need him to finish so I look at him and say, "Please tell me the rest. I need to know."

He shakes his head but thankfully sits back down. "Are you sure? You don't look like someone who could take much more." I don't think I can but I need to hear the rest.

"I just need to hear it," I say truthfully. He sighs but goes on.

"A week before she died we met for coffee she told me that she was getting weaker. I offered to help but she said she didn't want us to meet because you were too angry and for that she was sorry." A tear slides down his face. "I love you Nessa. I know you don't care but I need you to know that not a day goes by that I haven't thought about you. My daughter will confirm that, because I couldn't get to know you, I didn't make time for her. I felt it was unfair and I broke her heart too without even realising it. The morning your mother-" He can't get it out so I finish for him, "The morning of the day she killed herself. The day she abandoned me, and let me find her like that."

I was crying again. He looks shocked at my words—he open and closes his mouth a few times.

"She rang me that morning and told me she couldn't tell you about the cancer. That it wasn't fair on you and she wouldn't put you through that. I didn't know what she meant at the time. I tried to reason with her but she just kept saying none of it was fair on any of you and that I need to meet you because she couldn't do it anymore. I told her I'd call later when she had calmed down and we could do it together. That even if you hated me I would stand by the two of you, but she killed herself and left your aunt as your guardian. I went to see your aunt and she threw me away from the door. After that I just didn't know how to approach you, I was scared. But then I got the call from the hospital and it frightened me so much Nessa, I

couldn't have coped if anything had of happened to you. I'd have never forgive myself for not at least trying to explain myself to you."

I was full on sobbing now. My mother was trying to protect me and I have blamed her all these years and all the while my father wanted me. I can't make sense of it all and I need some time to think. Ten years of hate for two people can't be just forgotten about. I need to make sense of all this. I look to my father, I can't call him Dad I'm not even sure I want him in my life. Right now I just need space.

"Patrick thank you for telling me this but it's all a little hard to process. I need some space to think this all through." He stands up and reaches into his pocket and takes a letter out.

"I'm sorry I left it off for so long. I didn't know how you felt and I just chickened out. I'm so very sorry. I hope that sometime in the future you can forgive me. This is a letter I received in the post a few days after she died. There was one for me and one for you. I was asked to give it to you when you were ready to talk to me. I should have done it years ago."

I take the letter and leave it on the table and walk him to the door.

"I don't know how I feel about all this right now but give me some time."

He looks hopeful and I don't want to be a bitch so I just nod and say goodbye.

I don't think that I'm ready for all this I go back and sit at the table and stare at the letter. I'm so afraid of what it says. I just sit there and cry until Stacey comes in and the minute she sees me she runs over to me.

"What the hell happened?" I can't talk so I just cry on her shoulder for what feels like hours. When I'm done I'm so tired Stacey helps me to my room where I fall asleep.

I wake to my phone ringing. I look at the time, its eleven, I slept for three hours. I pick up my phone it's Taylor.

"Hello," I say sleepily, there's a lot of background noise.

"Hey beautiful. Look I can't see you this weekend, the family have a thing and I need to be there. I'll miss you though."

That hurts like a fucking knife through the heart. I'm his girlfriend, well I assumed I was. We have been seen each just over a month. He doesn't bring me out and I'm not good enough to meet his family. What am I just a

bit on the side? I need him right now with my head spinning from today. Maybe I'm overreacting but I just need him.

"So I won't see you at all?" I say a little too sadly.

"I'll take you out for dinner when I am back to make it up to you. Are you okay?"

Oh we're allowed to be seen with each other now. I'm obviously not ok. I wanna scream, you don't care, I can't be dealing with this.

"Whatever. Have fun." I hang up only for my phone to ring again.

"Go away Taylor. I'm not in the mood. Go have fun with your family, your little hooker will be here when you return."

I hang up again and put my phone on silent. I know I'm being a bitch but I just don't care right now. I get out of bed and head to the kitchen. The letter is still on the table but I can't read it yet. I'm not ready to see what she has to say. I'm still trying to process the fact that I hate my mother because she left me when she was protecting me in her own way. How does one get over that?

TEN

I stay in bed all Saturday and when I wake up on Sunday, Stacey is standing over me. "Time to get up Nessa. You smell and you haven't eaten anything. Let's go, don't make me kick your ass."

I laugh because she would. I know she wants to talk about all this. She has been really worried and hasn't left the apartment all weekend so I give in and go shower. When I'm done I head to the kitchen where she has two coffees poured.

"You ready to talk now babe? And that's more a you're talking end of. You can shout, scream, get it all out, but you're dealing with this now."

Wow don't hold back Stacey. I actually laugh. I suppose she's right, it is time.

"I know," I say and then tell her everything my father said. She looks like a fish the way her mouth is opening and closing.

"Jesus Nessa, are you going to open the letter?"

"I'm not ready, my whole life I have felt abandoned by those who love me. They all left Stacey, and he comes and tells me all of this."

When I look at her I'm surprised by the anger on her face. She shoots up from her chair. "You know what, that's bullshit. Yeah your mother left you but she did it for her own reasons—something I've told you for years. And yeah Brandon is a douche but for God's sake Nessa, have you never seen what was here all along? Your sisters. You know, the friends who love you and have never left you. The only family you have had for ten years. How about thinking how lucky you are and not wallowing on the ones who have left."

Oh my God. She's right every time I would fight with her over my mother I always said how I felt like I'm not enough yet for Stacey, Sam and Jess, I have always been enough and they never left. When I look at her she looks so hurt. How could I not have seen this all along?

"Stacey I'm so sorry. I just... I'm sorry." She sits down and breathes out slowly.

"You had it shitty finding your mother and not understanding the 'why' all these years but we love you and we're never leaving. Can't you understand that you're so loved and have been all these years." And that

starts off the tears. It's going to be hard but I can maybe make it through. If I just lean on what's been here the whole time maybe I can be strong and stop trying to fight this inner battle within myself—one I've been losing for years.

We decided to have a movie day to take my mind off things. Halfway through our second movie someone starts to bang on the door. Stacey gets up to open the door and Taylor storms in.

"What the fuck Nessa? Why haven't you been answering my calls?" He is so angry the veins his neck are bulging out. I turned my phone on silent Friday night and haven't touched it since. It's probably well dead now.

"My phone is dead," I say casually. Out of the corner of my eye I see Stacey sneaking off to her room. Way to have my back, sister.

"So you get annoyed at me over the phone, hang up, and just ignore me? I have been going out of my mind worrying about you."

"It took you two days to get here—obviously you haven't been going out of your mind." The bitch is coming out but seriously I'm not in the mood to deal with him.

"What the hell is wrong with you? I told you I had something to do. I couldn't just leave because you had a tantrum."

Wow isn't he sweet? "Go fuck yourself, Taylor!" I shout then turn back around and watch the film hoping he will leave but he doesn't. Instead he comes to sit beside me on the couch.

"I shouldn't have come in all guns blazing but I was worried. I know you're upset I didn't invite to meet my family. Everything at home is a little complicated at the moment, I didn't want to bring you into the middle of it"

Ugh, I feel a little bad now. I can understand complicated. Damn him. It still doesn't explain why we can't be seen out together but I'm not ready for that battle. I'll tackle that when my head is a little clearer.

"Fine," I say not really knowing what else to say to him. I have enough shit in my head without dealing with him. I was just taking my anger out on him the other night.

We have only been together a little while, he doesn't have to introduce me yet, it's way to early.

"So you forgive me?" he says poking my hip. Damn this man is just too cute. How could I not?

"I suppose you could be forgiven." He doesn't say anything but picks me up and puts me on his lap. We sit there cuddling like that till the film we're watching ends.

"I really did miss you," he whispers I can tell he did. I feel how much he did under me.

"So show me," I whisper back. He carries me to my room where he shows me all night how much he missed me. It feels good to be with him, I feel so safe.

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ELEVEN

A week has passed since my dad's visit and I still haven't made sense of it all. I do feel a little bad for him, he seemed to really care for my mam. I don't know if we can have a relationship but I feel I should at least try.

I also still haven't opened the letter yet. I'm just so afraid of what it's going to say and when I look at it I just sob like a baby. When I'm strong enough I will do it.

Stacey said I need a few weeks off work I told her it is better for me to work but she put her foot down. She was trying to give me a month but I bargained her down to just one week. Being off work leaves me bored out of my head. Seriously what the hell am I supposed to do with my days if I can't work?

My phone rings. Oh maybe someone wants to entertain me.

"Hello." But no one is there. I hang up and put my phone back down and it rings again. Once again no one talks. This happens two more times. I'm a little freaked so I call Taylor.

"Hey."

"Hey beautiful, everything ok?" Awe swoon, I love when he calls me that. "I'm bored. Stacey won't let me work. Want to grab lunch?"

"Why won't she let you work?" Well shit.

"She tells me I work too hard and earned a break." Yeah I should just tell him the truth, I just not ready to bring up the whole my family's fucked up story.

He laughs. "Sure. I'm pretty busy so do you want to grab a subway and we can eat here?" Ugh, of course we're not going out.

"Sure, be there soon." With that I hang up. He's always so busy and the whole never going out thing is starting to grate on me. I need to talk to him about that. I understand that he's is a billionaire with a ton of businesses so he works pretty hard. I'll never understand why he picked me but I'm glad he did. I love him so much and I can't wait for the day I get to tell him that.

I get dressed, grab lunch, and head to his office. I'm allowed straight in this time. When I enter his office he comes over and kisses me breathless.

"I missed you too," I laugh.

We sit down to eat our lunch. I look up from my lunch to see Taylor studying me.

"What's wrong babe?" He knows me so well. That's just one of the things I love about him. I'm so frighten he doesn't feel the same way, he probably doesn't. He's a billionaire sex God and I'm just well, me—nothing special.

He still waiting for an answer so I decide to tell him the truth. "My dad came to see me." He coughs a little.

"What as in your real Dad?"

Ok weird. "Yes, I only have the one."

"I mean you've never mentioned him before. I just didn't realise you had one, sorry." I suppose he's right, he actually never asked me about my family and I've been grateful to avoid it. I'm really going to have to tell him soon.

"I never met him till last week. He came and talked to me and explained a lot—my heads just all over the place with it all."

"Really, so your whole life you never once saw him and now he just turned up? What did he say?" I haven't told Taylor about my mam so I don't want to drag it up now. I know I should but I'm just not ready.

"Just some stuff and he wants us to get to know each other. I'm not sure how I feel about it all."

"Ok, I understand." He looks at his watch. "I am really busy today so I'll have to get back to work now." Was he trying to get rid of me? What the hell! I'm not going to argue though I should trust him even if it feels like a brush off.

"Ok. I'll go," I say a little sadly. I grab my things and head for the door.

"Nessa I'm sorry. I'm just really busy."

"I know. I understand it's fine."

He curses under his breath. "No it's not fine but I just have some of my own family shit going on. We'll talk later, ok." He comes over and kisses me sweetly. It feels very much like a goodbye kiss. This is weird, why is he acting like this?

I leave and head home even more confused. When I get home my head is mashed with everything. I decide to go for a run to clear my head a bit.

When I get back I realise it's not going to be that easy to fill my days without working. So after my run I head out to do a little shopping going straight to Pennys. I love that shop. I spend an hour there spending over a hundred euro but the sale was so good.

I head to Starbucks before I head home. As I'm leaving I bump right into someone. "Shit. Sorry," I say looking up to them and when I spot Lucy I want to take it right back. I go to walk around her but she steps in front of me. What the hell, does this bitch have a death wish?

"Get out of my way Lucy," I growl.

"Nessa I just want to talk a second. Please, it's important."

"There is nothing you can say that I want to hear." I go to move around her and again she stops me. I'm about to slap her if she doesn't move her ass.

"Have you seen Brandon lately?" she questions. Oh no she did not go there.

"Seriously, are you really asking me that?" I whisper shout as people are starting to look.

"It's not what you think. There is something wrong with him, like sick in the head wrong. He's obsessed with you." I doubt that, since he literally rubbed his cheating in my face.

"Look, I haven't seen him nor do I want to. And for that matter I don't want to be standing her talking to you either, so get the hell out of my way before I move you with a good dig in the jaw." This time I'm fully shouting. She wisely steps out of my way. The cheek of her!

I calm myself down on the walk home but I can't help thinking why she was being like that. He obviously still talks about me and she's jealous—that has to be it.

The last time I saw Brandon he hated me—I could see it in his face. I don't know why he did, I didn't do anything but be a loving girlfriend. I don't know why she is all up in arms about it. There must be trouble in paradise.

I'm just in the door to the apartment when I feel sick and just barely make it to the toilet before I puke everything I have in my stomach up. God I don't feel good. I've been feeling more and more tired lately. Maybe I need a vitamin shot or something.

When I get up I feel a little dizzy so I head out and ring the doctors. They give me an appointment for four o'clock, which is only a half hour from now. so I grab my bag and head back out.

When I arrive at the doctors there is not many waiting to be seen and I'm called into the room within ten minutes.

"Hello Nessa and how can we help you today?"

"I been feeling drained lately and very off. I think I might need a vitamin shot or something to boost me." She writes things down and then sends me to give a urine sample. When I come back in the room she's smiling. I might not die yet.

"Well Nessa you have been feeling off because you're pregnant." Say what! She's has to be kidding me. There's no way I am. I haven't been on the pill even though I was supposed to get it, but we use condoms every time. No way, she needs to check again.

"Nah impossible. Can you check again?" She shakes her head.

"Nessa it came straight up which suggests you're over a month at least." Shit! Oh God I'm going to puke again. She must see it coming too because she passes me a paper hat thing for me to get sick into. Once I stop she passes me some water.

"Thanks," I say weakly.

"I take it this is a shock? Can you remember when you had your last period?"

No I can't, they're never regular. Fuck. What am I going to do? I don't remember ever having sex without a condom. My head is spinning trying to think of the one time we didn't but I just can't come up with it because we were always careful. Then a freaking light bulb goes off over my head. In the hotel, the first time I slept with him when we had sex in the shower. I don't think we used anything did we? Shit I just don't know.

"Nessa I want you to head over to the Coombe and have a scan to see how far along you're gone. I will ring ahead so you should get brought straight in." I just nod. I'm in total shock.

How could I be so stupid and what the hell is Taylor going to think? Oh God this is a mess. I get up and thank her and head over to the Coombe. I'm

not waiting long like she said, I get brought into a room and she exposes my belly and puts cold gel on it.

"If you look at this screen you will see your baby." I just nod and with that a picture comes up of a blob. That's what it looks like a first but then I see a shape. It looks like a really small baby blob. Oh man, this can't be real.

"You're about ten weeks pregnant." What! How did I not know? Well if I kept better track of my damn periods I could have known but there always all over the place. Shit.

"I was in hospital a few weeks ago how come it didn't show up then?" I question.

"You could have got a false negative," she explains.

"How could I not know I'm so far gone?"

She just smiles at me.

"Some people can go through their whole pregnancy with no symptoms. It explains why you have been feeling tired and you got sick today so your morning sickness has just started a little late is all." She tells me she is going to grab some information for me.

When she leaves the room I clean the gel off my stomach and sit up. This is not good. What am I going to do? Taylor and I haven't even gone out to dinner in public yet and we're having a baby. Just great.

The nurse goes through all my prenatal information and also draws some blood which wasn't pleasant. When she asks about my family history for my mum and dad I break down. Once I calm down I tell her what I know, she writes it all down and excuses herself for a minute. When the nurse returns she gives me a picture of my baby, some leaflets and an appointment for when I've to see my nurse at fifteen weeks and one for when I'm twenty weeks.

I head home. I need to think about what I'm going to do. I mean what if Taylor doesn't want kids? What if he hates the idea of them or having one with me? Shit get a grip Nessa, if he doesn't you can do this on your own, I tell myself this all the way home.

I go straight to my room and climb into bed. I stare at the picture of my baby. I love it already. I try to tell myself everything will be ok. I don't want to see anyone right now so I just lie there. I must fall asleep because I wake up and it's bright out it had just gotten dark as I fell asleep the night before.

I get up and Stacey is already gone. Although I slept for like a day I still feel tired.

Thanks baby, you're not going to make it easy for me are you? I rub my stomach I feel all this love already. It's a strange feeling. I decided I'm not going to tell anyone for a few weeks. They say three months is the best time so that gives me two weeks to figure it all out.

I just need to talk Stacey into letting me go back to work so I can take my mind off things. I also need to deal with the letter which is sitting on my unit, and my dad. On top of dealing with my relationship with Taylor and figure out how adding a baby is going to either help or destroy it. Either way me and baby are gonna stick this out whether it's with Taylor or not.

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TWELVE

Its been two weeks since I made the decision to deal with my life and I have done nothing. I still haven't told anyone about the baby. Taylor hasn't noticed anything, not that I've seen him much. He seems way to preoccupied with whatever is going on with his family but Stacey has it figured out considering I spend most my time in the toilet these days. I am sporting a tiny bump nothing too noticeable but that will change soon.

I still haven't gone back to work. I may have started late with morning sickness but its kicking my ass now. I can barely take two steps before I end up in the toilet, so just as well I haven't seen much of Taylor.

I have decided that I'm going to talk to him tonight. I am a little worried with him being distracted lately. My mind is thinking up all sorts of things but I'm trying to trust him. I know he isn't another Brandon but I can't help feeling like he's hiding something from me, and my insecurities are telling me it's a woman.

I'm not seeing Taylor till later so when my father rang me and asked if we could have coffee I agreed. I think I should give him a chance. I head to the café on Connelly Street to meet him.

I spot him as soon as I'm in there. He's pretty tall and has sandy hair. I do look a lot like him. I knew I would because I never looked like my mother. When he spots me he waves.

"Hey." I wave back and take a seat.

"Hey," I say feeling a little awkward. What do I say to the Father I never knew?

"How are you feeling?" I know he's talking about everything he told me but I really don't want to talk about it again.

"I'm fine. I'm sorting through things in my head, it will take time considering for ten years I blamed the two of you for abandoning me." Shit, I didn't mean to say all that but it's got his attention. He goes to talk again but I stop him.

"Please, can we have coffee and chat about something else? I'm sorry. I didn't mean to offend you it's just going to take a while to change my train of thinking. I'll get there let's just get to know each other a bit and take it from there." When I'm done he smiles.

"That's fine with me. Actually it's more than fine." We talk for an hour or so about nothing really and it's nice. We don't bring up Mam or his family. We just chat about our day and what our plans are. When we stand up to leave he hands me a card. I look at him confused.

"What's this?" I question.

"That's an invitation to my birthday party in two weeks. I would really like you to come. I understand if you're not ready." I feel like saying, hell to the freaking no but I just nod and he smiles.

I head home to get ready to go to Taylor's. When I'm coming in Stacey is heading out.

"I'm meeting Jeff and tomorrow we're talking about this pregnancy you're not telling anyone about." With that she kisses me on the cheek and leaves. Guess I was right, she did know.

I arrive at Taylor's at eight and he greets me by taking me straight into his arms. Man I love his kisses.

"What was that for?" I swoon, seriously pregnancy makes me horny.

"That's because I missed you." How much I wonder and I drop my hand down the length of his body to see how much he missed me. Yup he's hard. Oh man I just want to bite him or something. He gets what I mean and takes me straight to the bedroom where he makes love to me. Something feels off though, he's not himself.

We're just lying there not talking so I figure now would be a great time to brooch the kids subject. "Have you ever thought about having kids?" I know it's random and I feel him tense under me.

"I don't want kids Nessa." Oh well that's not good. Shit. I can't drop it though considering I'm having his baby.

"Why? Almost everyone wants them at some stage in their life." I'm praying he says something positive here.

"No, I don't want them at all and I really don't want to talk about this anymore."

Now I'm pissed. Sure doesn't matter that I might want kids. Never mind the fact that I'm actually having one. I sit up and look at him.

"And what about me? What if I want them?" He gets out of bed and starts dressing himself. What the hell is he doing?

"Well then you have the wrong man Nessa." He looks hurt by his own statement. Why is he saying this if he doesn't mean it?

"So that's it. End of discussion. If I want to be with you I don't get a say in our future?"

He thinks for a minute. "Who said we have a future?" With that he goes in and rips my heart clear from my chest. It physically hurts. I rub my chest as a tear leaks from my eye and he just stands there staring. I get up and get dressed while he turns his back to me and looks out the window.

What the hell happened? I can't even say anything because if I open my mouth I'll cry. So I just walk out. It's two in the morning and he just let me go.

I make it home and just sit in the dark. I'm not going to cry for that asshole, I have a baby to think off. I sit there all night just calming myself and dealing with my shattered heart.

I don't want to be alone and I never ask for help but I text Stacey because right now I really need her to tell me what to do. I'm so stuck, how am I supposed to do this?

I head into the shower and it's like I'm a robot. I can't function properly. I really can't wait for this year to end because my shitty lucky is just non freaking stop. Just as I get dressed Stacey burst through the door.

"What's wrong Nessa? Fuck look at you. What the hell happened?"

I just look at her because she's barely dressed and her hair is everywhere. She must have just ran when I texted and for some reason I feel the need to hug her. She hugs me right back. How have I never seen this?

I walk out and put the kettle on and she sits at the table waiting for me to speak.

"I'm twelve weeks pregnant. Of course you have known and I knew you had discovered my secret but I just wanted time to deal. You know me."

"Of course I know you, you idiot. You spent most of the damn time puking," she says in a duh voice.

"I know. This baby is kicking my ass already." I smile weakly.

"It will get better and if it doesn't just think in the end you get to hold that little one." She points toward my stomach causing me to rub it and her to smile.

"Thanks but doesn't mean I have to like puking," I laugh.

"What happened?" she says softly.

"Taylor doesn't want kids." She goes to butt in but I shake my head. "I haven't told him yet. But when I brought it up last night he told me he never wants them and then proceeded to tell me that it didn't matter if I did because we have no future anyway." Before I can blink she's up and pacing.

"I'm going to kick the fucking face off him! What the hell is his problem?" She looks to me and then calms a bit. "Look you don't need him. You have me and the girls. We don't need him, but tell him anyway for your child. You have to after everything with your own dad. It's best just to tell him and leave it to him so at least when he walks away you know you tried. Either way I'm going to kill him, do you understand that?"

I laugh because she will really kill him. She's a hellcat when she gets going.

"I know you're right. I just need to deal with him and me not being together. It's not making much sense at the moment nothing in my life is. Everything's all over the place and I know I need to try to straighten it." She nods and tells me she's going to have a quick shower and then we can have a movie day.

If I hadn't of mentioned kids would we still be together now? What changed in him I don't understand. On the other hand I should have known we had no future. I mean we barely went out, we were mainly at his place or mine.

I really thought I could feel his love. How wrong can one person be? For years I thought I was unloved because they all just left, when I start figuring things out it turns out I'm wrong about everybody and everything.

My life is one big fuckfest and I don't know how to start dealing with all this but one thing is for sure—I will do it for my baby because he or she will always come first.

I pick myself up and head for the shower, it's time to go tell the prick he going to be a Father. It's time to start facing my issues one at a time starting with Taylor.

I shower and dress in my jeans only my damn top button won't close. I look in the mirror and that's when I see the rounded baby bump that has replaced my normally flat stomach. I rub my bump feeling so much love for

this little bump and that's when I realise no matter what happens everyone can go to hell. If Taylor can't accept it, screw him.

When I walk out Stacey is at the table reading one of her trashy gossip magazines and her face is so red it looks like it going to explode.

"What has you so angry?" She jumps and closes the magazine. Now her face has a sadness about it, that's when I get a flash back to what I saw the last time I looked into one of those magazines.

"Why are you dressed? We're having a movie day," she says nervously.

"Show me." She shakes her head no.

"Nessa, don't do it to yourself." She's begging a little so it must be bad.

"Show me." She finally hands over the magazine and I flip through the pages till I come across a picture of Taylor with Miss Leggy Blonde. He has his arm around her and she's smiling up at him, it's dated two weeks. Which was when he told me he had a family thing, the caption reads that it's his birthday party.

I didn't even know it was his birthday. I'm so angry I swear I'm never going near another man again. Family problems my fucking ass. I'm so stupid. I grab my bag and walk to the door.

"Nessa where are you going? You need to calm down." That is where she is wrong. I don't need to calm down, I need this anger. For once it's what's going to get me through this.

"I'll be fine." Or not, but I'm going to do this anyway. I leave and head straight for Taylor's.

When I arrive I use my key card to get in the building and up to his door. Taking a deep long breath I knock. When he answers, the shock on his face is evident.

"Nessa what are you doing here?" He looks over his shoulder and back at me.

"We need to talk." Before he can answer I hear a woman.

"Taylor come on. Can we do this already, I have a busy day."

He doesn't take his eyes off me and right now I am just frozen there looking at him. I swallow back my tears and straighten my shoulders.

"Oh don't worry." I hit him with the magazine "I knew about her. She went with you to your birthday party. You may have been ashamed of me but how fucking dare you treat me like that. Are you that sick in the head that you play with people's feelings? Or are you just a greedy prick who

wants a different woman for everyday of the week? Well fuck you Taylor. I didn't want you and you made me fall for you. Why couldn't you have just left me alone!" I was shouting at him and damn my hormones I could feel my tears dripping. He is looking at me in complete shock.

"Nessa fuck... This is... Fuck!" he roars and I just turn and leave but he grabs my arm.

"Nessa." I pull my arm from him and look at him with disgust

"You make me sick. Don't you ever say my name again. I fucking hate you and if I never see you again it will be too soon." With that I run to the elevator and press the button. I just make it out the door before I drop to my knees in front of the building and sob. A few minutes pass when I hear my name.

"Nessa?" I look up and I'm shocked to see my father.

"What's wrong? Come on let me help you." He looks worried. I just shake my head. Jesus it just keeps coming. He helps me up. "Let's get you home sweetheart/." I don't answer but he takes me back to my place.

I sit at the table. I still haven't talked to him and he doesn't question it which I'm grateful for. He puts a tea in front of me.

"Do you want to talk about it?" I look at him. He really does look worried.

"I'm pregnant," I blurt out.

"Are you happy about it?" he asks carefully. Well I suppose he did find me in a mess on the street and the first thing I say is I'm pregnant.

"About the baby yes, but the Father no. He's a cheating scumbag who hates kids." I laugh a little. It's not funny but seriously first Brandon then Taylor. I really should just give up men now.

I don't really want to talk about it anymore I can't deal with the pain in my God damn chest nor do I understand why he did this to me. I loved him. I decide to change the subject before he can question further.

"I'm sorry you had to find me like that. I don't know what happened. Were you visiting someone?" He nods.

"I was just visiting someone don't worry about that." Oh I didn't know that.

"Oh cool. Sorry. I didn't mean to disrupt your day." Bet he is just delighted to have a messed up kid. To be fair it's half his fault though.

"Don't you ever say sorry for that. If you ever need me I'll be there. I know you probably will never need me but if you ever decide one day to give your old man a chance, I won't let you down again."

Do I need him? Maybe not, but it would be nice for my baby to have some family. I realize in that moment life is too short and I can forgive him, in time of course.

"Well my baby is gonna need a Granddad to spoil him or her." He smiles a megawatt smile, one that goes right to his eyes.

"I can do that. You have no idea what that would mean to me." I smile because the look on his face tells me he will make a great Granddad.

"Look I'm not ready to call you Dad and I can forgive you in time when I deal with it all. I'd like us to move on from this. I have lived in the past way too long and my life is a bit of a mess at the moment but I'd like it if you were in it," I tell him truthfully.

"Nessa that makes me the happiest man in the world right now. I don't deserve you, never did, but I'm glad you can give me a chance to be a Granddad and maybe one day a Dad. Just make sure if you ever need anything you will call me."

I probably won't call him but he seems really happy now and I don't want to be a buzz kill so I just nod. We chat a little while longer.

Later I tell him he can go and that I'm fine. He seems reluctant but goes anyway. I'm feeling tired from the events of today, but just as I'm about to head to my room Stacey bursts through the door.

"Where the hell did you go? I have looked everywhere." She's grinding her teeth a little when she speaks and that's when I spot her holding her swollen hand.

"What did you do?" I say grabbing ice from the freezer

"Eh... I did nothing," she says a little too quickly. I raise an eyebrow.

"Ok. I may have went to Taylor's to see if you were there and when I saw blondie I just snapped and punched him in straight in the jaw. I may have hurt myself more than him. Like seriously his jaw is made of steel. Ouch go easy."

Jesus she hit him, that's my girl! Her hand looks pretty swollen though.

"Oh my God you actually hit him! I think you may need an x-ray."

"Nah, I'm ok are you? I assume you saw her there."

"Yeah I did. I'm ok," I tell her rubbing my stomach. "I have to be strong for this little one growing in me."

She smiles at me. "Yeah. Keep your head up babe, you can get through this. It's been a shitty few months but you are so strong."

"Thanks. I'm feeling kinda strong." Yeah right. I literally had a break down outside his building but I'm not going to worry her with that.

"Where did you go?"

"I went there saw them and left. I bumped into my dad he could see I was a little upset and he brought me here." It's kinda true.

"Your dad? That's good. Everything ok with you two?"

"Yeah, I think we will be fine in time. I told him he was going to be a Granddad."

"Really? That's great babe. I'm happy this is working out for you. I'm sorry about Taylor, I know you liked him."

"I fell in love with him Stacey."

"Oh shit Nessa. I'm sorry." Yeah me too. Sorry I seem to attract pricks. I don't want to sit around thinking about this all the time.

"Stacey I want to work. Please don't say no, because I don't think I can take that." She looks like she wants to say no.

"But you're pregnant and going through shit. Are you sure you can handle work on top of it all?"

"You're right but I have to be strong for this baby. I still have a hell of a fight ahead of me but I want to work so please let me." I know I'm begging a little but I want my mind off my shit. I'm going to have to face my shit one day soon and I'm not ready for it to be now—working is just the distraction I need.

"Fine there's a corporate event tomorrow. You can host. I need a night off anyway."

Yes I feel like fist pumping the air. "Thank you and you do need a night off." I hug her.

"Nessa you're so strong. Everything you have been through and you just get on with it. I am so proud to call you my friend, my sister, and my family but please stop with holding the shit in. I don't think I can handle it if you break on me so please talk to someone."

Well shit. I feel the tears dripping out of my eyes. "I won't break. I'm not fragile but I'm going to have to open that letter and I'm going to have to deal

with Taylor. I can't promise I will be strong all the time but I will get through it."

"I know and I'll be right here with you."

I'm so tired and everything is swimming around my mind. I to go to bed as I'm working tomorrow I could use the rest. I know I should be in a ball curled up crying about Taylor but I'm not gonna be my mam, I can't give up.

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THIRTEEN

Everything's running smoothly and I have checked in with Stacey to let her know everything grand. She worries way too much. She may not have rang me but she is probably pacing the apartment.

The guests are starting to arrive as I head out back to check everything. On the way back in I grab a tray of drinks to give to the waiting staff to start handing out.

I'm just about to hand the girl the tray of drinks when I spot Taylor arguing with my dad. What the hell? Then a girl comes up and they both smile. I know her face but from where? She turns and I notice two things at once, she the girl in the picture Taylor had in his apartment and she looks like me.

I feel suddenly feel very dizzy. The tray of drinks fall from my hands. I start backing out but the noise got everyone's attention and when Taylor notices me he pales, my dad spots me and makes his way over.

"Nessa are you ok? What are you doing here?" I can't answer. I just stare at Taylor who is now also beside me.

"Nessa it's not what you think." This comes from Taylor. I don't know what to think right now. The picture from his house he called her his sister, which make my dad his stepdad. Is this some sick joke? Did he know all along who I was to these people? It's all so confusing but Taylor was adopted by his aunt, who is my dad's wife. They're his family too. I need to leave to figure this out.

This is why I couldn't be at his birthday party or why we never went out much! Oh it's all making sense now. I bet he had a great laugh at me.

"Taylor do you know Nessa? What's going on here?" my dad asks Taylor as it seems I can't answer.

"Yes, I do." Shit my dad will know it's him. Shit I need to leave so I turn and walk away but Taylor grabs my arm.

"Nessa just let me explain."

"Let go," I ask but he doesn't. I look to my dad who is looking at us and I can see all the dots connecting for him.

"You're the one who got her pregnant, cheated, and tossed her aside?" my dad says in a deadly tone, even I'm a little afraid.

"Pregnant! What the hell is he talking about Nessa?"

"What's going on Dad? Who is she?" When Colleen talks I realise I need to move but Taylor still has me so I take a deep breath.

"Yes I am. I tried to tell you but we don't have a future remember." I turn to my dad and then I turn to Colleen my apparent sister. "I'd be your sister, his daughter, and his whore so really I'm just no one important." With that I pull my arm from Taylor's grip.

"Nessa stop. That's not true. Let's go sit down, you don't look the best." This comes from my dad. I can see his worry but I can't stay here.

"I can't do this right now. Please don't ask me to." He looks at me and nods.

"Nessa we need to talk. Just stay, I can explain."

"There is nothing to explain. I just don't even want to talk to you. I hate you, can you understand that? I. Hate. You!" With that I turn and run.

I make it out the door and down the street before I stop at a wall to breathe. When a sharp pain hits the back of my head I realise my day is just going to shit.

FOURTEEN

My head is throbbing. When I open my eyes I freak a little because I'm tied to my old bed. I pull at the ropes but I get nowhere. The door to the room opens and Brandon walks in.

"Welcome home Nessa," he sneers. Brandon has done this, why?

"What's going on? Let me go!" I pull at the ropes again and get nowhere.

"No point in fighting. You're not going anywhere."

"What do you want from me?" My freaking head is pounding.

"I took everything from you but you just land right back on your feet, didn't you? Every girl I ever did this to could never get over the hurt. I know because that's the best part for me watching you all break. But no, not you. I thought I picked a big softy looking for a bit of love but no you actually got up and fought. Looking at you in that hospital bed I thought I finally broke you. You looked so weak but again you got up so I'm going to kill you slowly and take some pleasure from it. I'm going to enjoy every moment," he sneers at me. This is a sick joke. He's not really going to kill me. He's kidding, right?

"Brandon this is not funny anymore. Please let me go." The look he throws my way scares the shit out of me.

"Oh this is no joke. I know you thought you were funny leaving and landing yourself a billionaire. Well guess what, jokes on you now."

Leaving him? Oh God, he's messed up. Lucy was right. Seriously no more men for me.

"I didn't leave you. You cheated on me. Just let me go please. I won't tell anyone," I plead.

He jumps on to the bed and that's when I notice the knife. In his hand. I scream. Oh God, my baby. He's going to kill me and my baby!

"Scream all you want Nessa, no one will hear you and no one will care. You're nothing."

I hear a noise downstairs the same time I feel the pain in my side as he stabs me. All I can think of as everything goes black is I hope my baby will be ok.

Taylor

I just stand there and watch her leave. I knew this moment was going to come. I just had it played out so different in my head. I suppose that's what happens when a plan back fires. I definitely didn't see falling in love as part of it but I did I fall hard and fast.

I bought a fucking company to get payback on Patrick and his daughter. For years he would slip off to his other family and leave us. Sure he said he was working but we all knew he was really going to see his other daughter.

Sally was always sad and Colleen would cry herself to sleep wanting her daddy and not knowing where the hell he was. My aunt Sally adopted me from my alcoholic Father when I was four. I didn't have a Mother as she tragically died in child birth. I'll always be grateful to Sally for taking me in.

I didn't hate my father he just couldn't cope with losing the love of his life. I was the reminder that she was dead or that I killed her. Who knows, all I know is he didn't want me and Sally did.

Seeing her so broken over Patrick fuelled a need in me to protect her and Colleen. I never understood why she would never get rid of him and when I questioned her she told me I didn't understand. I always thought she was weak but I guess love does that to people.

It's not that I didn't liked Patrick, he gave us everything and helps with my companies but he never saw what he did to them. He was never there and I want him to know what it was like trying to pick up the pieces of two broken women, by going after what he seemed to care about most. Nessa.

When she walked into my office and threw that water in my face I was in shock. She wasn't afraid of me and that fed my need to hurt her more than ever.

The first night I slept with her I felt shit I have never felt before. I never let myself get close to women. I didn't want to marry and I certainly didn't want to end up like my dad—broke from losing the one person he loved and left with a child. I never wanted that for myself so I thought this was going to be easy turns out not so much.

When I heard she was in hospital something inside me broke. I went to see her and knew there would be no staying away so I stopped trying. I just had to make sure my family didn't know I was seeing her. Simple enough, right? Well not so much because that meant I couldn't be seen with her.

I felt terrible. I was falling in love with a girl that I wanted to spoil and show off to the world but I couldn't bring her out in case a picture of us was taken. I was getting nervous especially when she said she was talking to her dad. She told me she didn't see him but she had to have been seeing him and because I thought she had been it meant she was lying to me.

I convinced myself she knew who I was and I decided to hurt her before she could hurt me. When she mentioned kids and a future I freaked. She sounded so genuine but I figured it was all part of her plan to out me. I never wanted them anyway after knowing what my dad went through, but even when I was telling her I felt sick to my stomach. I wanted a future with her, needed one, but it was time to let her go.

When she came back the next day I was shocked but the look of hate and disgust on her face killed something in me. Kim had only gotten there, she was looking to be paid for escorting me to my birthday party. It had killed me to take her and not Nessa but everyone could see I had been happier than normal and knew it was a woman so I had to cover my tracks by bringing Kim.

I spent most my time keeping Nessa in so I couldn't be photographed with her, yet never even considered being photographed with Kim at my very big birthday bash. But that's probably because I spent the whole night wishing Nessa was there.

I thought I broke her that morning. I didn't it though, it was just now I did that and I don't have the first clue how I'm going to fix this.

"Taylor is this true? What the hell is going on?" Colleen breaks me from my thoughts.. She looks hurt but I need to find Nessa.

"It's a long story and I have to go. Can we talk later? I just need to find her." My voice cracks a little. Shit I've got to leave and go after her but Patrick stops me.

"What have you done to her Taylor? When she found out about your cheating I found her outside your apartment complex on her fucking knees sobbing her heart out. What the fuck is going on and how do you know Nessa?" He's fuming. I don't think I have ever seen him so angry.

"I didn't cheat but I didn't tell her that." He looks like he wants to hit me but this is his fucking fault.

"You know what, screw you! If you were there for this fucking family I wouldn't have had to do this." He looks shocked. Like he doesn't know why

it's his fucking fault.

"What do you mean by that? I didn't do this. So easy to blame someone else!" he shouts.

"Yeah you did, You left your wife and daughter crying themselves to sleep while you went off to your tramp and other daughter on the side. Leaving me to try to keep us all together." He punches me in the jaw and it hurts like hell. My jaw has taken two hits in less than twenty-four hours. For a girl, Stacey has a mean right hook. I'm happy to take the hits though I know I deserve them. I have royally fucked things up.

"I did not cheat on Sally and Nessa's mother wasn't a tramp." He shakes his head but goes on.

"I did work every hour I could because I felt terrible playing Daddy to one child while the other was abandoned by me. Everything that happened in the past was a few peoples fault and I take most the blame, but none of this was Nessa's or Colleen's. I just couldn't deal with it all. When Sally cried it was because she was hurting for me too. The first time I saw Nessa and talked to her was a few weeks ago and I've been trying to repair the damage I've done with my two daughters!" he's shouting this and is out of breath when he finishes.

Nessa was telling me the truth? He really has only started talking to her. I thought it was a cover up because she was getting to close to the truth about who I was. I need to find her and explain myself. Fuck!

"I know I messed up. I'm going to fix it," I growl but it's not helping matters when I look to Colleen she is crying.

"I don't know what your game was Taylor but you fell in love with her didn't you?" she asks. She looks so sad for me.

"Yeah I did, and now she hates me and I have to try fix it." I go to leave and Patrick stop me again.

"Nessa's mother once told me in order for someone you love to hate you that much they have to love you whole heartily and judging by the look on her face she did love you a lot. If you don't fight for that love, then you deserve what you get. That girl deserves for someone to fight in her corner—God knows I didn't. You have a baby coming, she needs you whether she knows it or not. By the look on your face you need her just as much." He looks just as broken as Nessa but he's right, I can fix this or at least try. I turn and walk out to find my girl and fix this mess.

I head to her apartment first, when I reach the door it's wide open. I call out but no one answers. I walk in and see someone lying on the kitchen floor. I run over to see that it's Stacey. Shit, what's going on? I shake her a little and she stirs, thank God. She tries to get up but grabs her head.

"Shit, get me off this floor." I lift her to the chair.

"You need to find Nessa, now! Brandon's gone crazy and he's blaming her for it all. He's going to kill her." She flinches from shouting.

"What do you mean? What happened?" I'm panicking now.

"Will you just go find Nessa, you dumb fuck. Didn't you hear me? He's going to fucking kill her! Go! Now!" What the fuck.

I grab my phone and call Nessa it goes straight to voicemail. Fuck! I call Patrick who tells me he will come sort Stacey out.

"Patrick's coming over and he's calling the guards. Is there any place you can think of that he might have taken her?" I'm yelling I don't mean to but I'm panicking.

"I don't know. You just need to find her Taylor!" She's crying now. I bend down and grab her shoulders.

"Think Stacey. There had to be somewhere, anywhere he'd take her. God damn it, think!" I shout at her. I shouldn't, she's hurt but I need to find Nessa.

"Ok, ok let me think... Maybe their old house in Crumlin. Nessa was paying the rent on it. I don't know if he still lived there after she stopped but it's the only place I can think of."

I hand her a pen and paper and she writes down the address. I don't say another word before I run to my car.

When I get to the house I notice a car in the garden. I walk to the door and knock but I get no answer. I look around for a way in but when I hear a scream I freeze. Oh God, Nessa!

I kick the door in. I'm running I'm pure adrenaline. I'm so terrified but I have to get to Nessa. I run up the stairs and see her tied to bed unconscious and bleeding from the side or stomach, there is too much blood, I don't know where it's coming from.

I feel like I'm going to puke but Brandon has spotted me. He's laughing. I'm going to kill this mother fucker, but before I can form any sort of plan

he raises the knife in the air. I just jump and tackle him. He nicks my arm but I manage to get the knife. I punch him hard in the face and keep punching till I'm sure he's out cold.

I run to Nessa, untying her arms. I don't know what to do so I just pick her up, hold her and try to apply pressure to her wound.

"Please Nessa, wake up. Please don't leave me. I'm so sorry. Please."

I called Patrick and told him where I was I hope he get the ambulance her soon. I feel something wet hit my hand and I realise I'm crying.

I look up at the guards and ambulance that have just arrived. I didn't even hear them come in, I feel like I'm in a dream.

When they try to take her away from me I don't let go. It takes Patrick and a guard to drag me away. They want to check my arm but I don't care, I just need Nessa. They rush her out and that sends me into a whole new panic.

I can't breathe. Fuck, someone is telling me to breathe but they annoy me more than anything. I take a deep breath. I need to calm down to get to Nessa. It takes me about five minutes but I manage to calm down. When I look up Patrick is there. Why hasn't he gone to with her?

"I waited to give you a lift. I don't think you should drive. We can send someone to pick up your car later." With that I jump up and we head to his car. We don't talk on the way to the hospital.

I jump out as we arrive leaving Patrick to park. I know he should be here more than I should but I'm selfish, I need to see her. I run to a and e and grab the first nurse I find.

"I need to see Nessa Donoghue. She was just brought in by ambulance." She looks a little scared. I need to calm down. "I'm sorry she's my girlfriend, she's been stabbed, and she's pregnant I'm panicking a bit. She wasn't conscious when they took her." She seems to have relaxed.

"Let me check the computer." She goes over and types in something. "I can't find her name yet so could you please take a seat in one of our family rooms and I'll go see what I can find out." She walks off and I head to the room I'm supposed to wait in. As I go to open the door Patrick comes through the main entrance, I wave him over.

"The nurse is going to find out where she is. We have to wait in here."

Patrick nods and we go in, it's a small room with six chairs all round it with a small table in the middle. It has that hospital smell that turns your

stomach. We have been sitting here for about twenty minutes when the nurse returns.

"She's in surgery at the moment. The stab wound has caused some tissue damage that has to be sorted to help stop the bleeding. I'm afraid that's all I could find out. You will have to wait till the doctor comes in once he's done in surgery." With that she goes back out.

"Are you ok Taylor?" Patrick asks sadly.

"Shouldn't I be asking you that? She is your daughter, I'm just the prick who ruined her life."

I know I'm being a prick right now but fuck if I know deal with this shit. I feel like a fucking girl. I take charge of companies all over the world yet and this one girl can bring me to my knees.

The door opens and Sally and Colleen come through. They hug Patrick and Sally comes to sit next to me.

"How you holding up? Colleen has got me up to speed, quiet a mess you made, but then love is very messy," she says smiling softly.

"I really got it all wrong, didn't I?" I'm bitter and she can hear it in my voice.

"Taylor you and Colleen were young, it wasn't something I wanted to explain. Now that you and Nessa are involved I can't really tell you it all but I can tell you my part in it." Her part? Just how fucked up is this mess? I nod for her to go on.

"I'm not going into the whole nitty-gritty now considering where we are but I'll do my best to get to the point." She smiles then begins. "I fell in love with Patrick and he fell right back. I was in an abusive relationship prior to this and it caused me my chance to have kids or so I thought. I only left when I saw your father wasn't coping and I took you. I didn't want you tainted with anything bad so I left him and moved away with you. I was in pretty bad shape emotionally. I didn't know how to deal with a man like Patrick, with one who loved me so gently and wanted to spoil me. I was so used to been punished I didn't know what to do with someone like Patrick who was just so nice. I freaked out and pushed him away, told him there was nothing between us. That was my mistake. Patrick was understandably upset and he turned to his best friend. I didn't ever get to meet her but we did talk on the phone. she was a lovely woman. While Patrick and I were

apart they slept together." She stops speaking she doesn't look hurt more saddened by it all.

"A month later I knew I made a mistake and he confessed everything. I was all over the place emotionally and I didn't want to lose him. I thought by stopping him from being near his best friend it would help but it didn't, it just made Patrick sad. I could see how it was hurting him. She was like a sister, they'd made a mistake. As did I, so I told him to go see her that's when he found out about Nessa." She turns to Patrick who looks at me with regret in his eyes.

"Jane, that's Nessa mam, asked me to stay away to go back to Sally, Colleen, and you, to enjoy my family but I had to let her enjoy Nessa. She knew I loved Sally and didn't want to come between us. Even then she thought of me and I walked away giving her what she wanted not thinking I should fight for my daughter or my friendship." A tear slips down his face. How could I get everything wrong and what's Nessa side of this? No matter what it is she is never going to forgive me for this.

"I'm sorry for everything Patrick. I... Fuck, I don't know how to make this right."

I start pacing when the door opens again it's Nessa two friends. The one with the dark hair, I think her name is Sam. is giving me the death stare. Just great. The blonde one speaks though.

"Hi we're Nessa friends. We have been down the hall with Stacey and she's going crazy wondering how Nessa is doing but they won't tell us anything."

Colleen stands up. "Hi I'm Colleen. She's in surgery right now. We're just waiting for her to come out."

"Who the hell are you all anyway, her family? The only one I have ever seen is that prick in the corner and I have known her since we were five." That comes from Sam and she is fucking pissed. Looking around the room, everyone looks to be in a little shock.

"Why don't you go and I'll send someone to tell you how she is when they bring her back," I say hoping she takes her anger out on me not the rest of my family.

Jess grabs Sam's arm and tries to drag her out but she won't move. "Please Sam, not now. Come on." But Sam shakes her head.

"No I will not. how fucking dare you, all of you. That girl has been through the mill and what, you all decided she didn't have enough to deal with so throw her some more. She was just fine without you all. She's the strongest person I know, yet she so broken, she has never once let anyone see the broken part until recently when you all came crashing into her life. Has she even told you about the day she found her mother? No she hasn't because she hasn't told anyone. All we know is that she found her in the bath. Can any of you image what's that is like. Where was her family then? No where because we're her family, so you can all go to hell." When she finished she crying, Jess is as shocked as the rest of the room but she snaps out of it to hug her.

"Come on Sam. It's ok, she will be ok and she will kick your ass for that," Jess talks to her gently. Jesus, Nessa's friends are all little fire crackers. I'm glad in a way that she has them and that they have her back. Jess talks Sam into leaving. I'm outta here, fuck this.

"I'm going too. She's right, I have done enough damage. I need to leave her alone, not stay here. Can you tell me how she is and if the-" Jesus I can't say it but luckily Sally knows what I want to say.

"Taylor, I'll tell you if you're sure you want to leave." She is giving me a pitying look. One I can't stand. I need to leave so I nod and walk out.

I head home and open a bottle of whiskey and start drinking.

Nessa

Ugh, I feel weird and I hurt all over. I'm trying to open my eyes but I'm too sleepy. I hear Sam and Stacey talking. Ugh, I know I'm in hospital again. Shit Brandon! My baby! Oh God, my baby!

"Relax Nessa. Take your time and open your eyes." I would if I could Stacey.. I try again and a bit of light comes through and stings making me shut them again.

"Oh stop being a baby and open your damn eyes Nessa." This comes from my lovely friend Sam who's getting a slap when I can move again. I try again and I get them open a little more. I try to talk but my throat is too dry.

"Water," I manage to croak out.

"We will get you some. Now try to open your eyes again." I do and I manage to keep them open longer but it's still hard. I do it again and they

stay open. Everything is blurred but it comes back into focus bit by bit.

Stacey and Sam are beside me looking terrified. "Seriously quit looking at me like I'm going to die," I whisper. "My baby? Shit is my baby ok?" I start panicking but Stacey puts her hand on mine.

"Relax. Everything's fine. It's ok, the baby is fine." Oh thank God I lay my head back.

The nurse comes in and allows me to have a drink. I sit up and feel like I have been run over with a train. My side hurts like a bitch and I feel like my friends are mourning a loss. I'm seriously over this shit.

"Seriously will you guys change your faces before you're stuck like that." I smirk. I probably shouldn't joke but my luck has been that shitty lately, it's begging to be funny. With that thought I laugh which causes me to wince. Shit my side fucking hurts!

"Ha that's what you get," snickers Sam.

"Well if I don't laugh I might cry and lord knows I'm turning into a right moan bag these days," I reply because it's been tough to deal with shit lately. How can one person deal with all this and not break into a million pieces? I feel lost and broken but I need to be strong for the little one growing inside me. I need to just shut it all down and deal with this shit and stop running from it all.

"Nessa I don't even know what to say to you. You are not a moan bag, you have been through shit. It's ok to cry. I wish you would just talk about it." This comes from Stacey who still hasn't taken that damn look off her face.

"Fine let's talk about everything, Stacey. Let's get it all right out there." My voice is still crackly. I might not be able to talk much but hey, I'm going to do this because it seems my friends are finding it hard to deal with too and I love these bitches so it's time.

"You have just woke up after being out cold for a day because you were stabbed by an ex-boyfriend while running from the current love of your life and you really want to get it off your chest now? Just rest, Nessa!" Stacey is seriously pissed now but so am I.

"Stacey I feel like I'm broken into a million pieces and I don't know how I'm going to put myself back together. I am going to try though and I'm starting right now," I whisper shout because my voice is seriously fucked right now.

"What did you see when you came home from school that day?" Sam asks. Straight to the point. Well done Sam. I close my eyes but open them straight away because that image is still so clear.

"I walked in and called out to my mam like I always did. She didn't answer so I went to my room."

I stop talking. Can I do this? I shake my head I have no idea why because it's not doing anything. I have blocked the memory for so long. It's just so hard going back to that moment.

"Just stop Nessa. You're not ready," Stacey states firmly but because Sam said it I know for sure it's something they all want me to share. I've been trying to block it out for years maybe sharing is the way to go so I close my eyes and concentrate.

"I sat in my room listening to music for an hour and she still hadn't come back. I remember thinking it was strange because she was always there when I got in so I picked up my phone and rang her. The sound of her phone came from the bathroom. When I open the door she was lifeless in the bath. I ran to her but the blood was everywhere it was so red, you know, deep red all over the white bath. She was fully clothed and there was no water in the bath."

I need a minute to compose myself. Jesus, this is hard. I feel something touch my hands. I open my eyes and Stacey and Sam are on either side of the bed holding my hands, it makes me feel stronger.

"There was a horrible smell because she was dead a while more than a few hours but I didn't care, I just held her. I didn't care that I was covered in blood. I had just sat there and screamed after about an hour of holding her. I knew I had to tell someone so I rang for help and you know everything after that."

They both gently hug me. When they parted I notice people at the end of my bed—Patrick, Colleen and I'm assuming the lady on the end is Sally. I know they heard because like Stacey and almost Sam, they have tears in their eyes.

Stacey leans down. "We're going to give you some time to talk to your dad. I'm so proud of you and I love you," she whispers in my ear.

I look to Sam as she squeezes my hand and they both leave. I love them. Without them I don't know where I'd be. They have their stories to and

when the day comes I'll be there by their side like they have been for me all these years.

"I'm sorry we heard," my dad offers sadly.

"It's fine, it's something I should have said a long time ago. Nearly dying can do that I suppose." I look to Colleen and Sally. "Why don't you introduce me Patrick." I smile weakly.

He nods. "This is my wife Sally and my other daughter Colleen," he whispers. Shit, I never really thought how fucked up this all is for everyone, not just me.

"I'm sorry how I greeted you before Colleen I was pissed at..." I swallow. I can't say his name because that cut hurts more than my actual stab wound. Thankfully Colleen understands.

"Oh yeah, that's fine. My Dad explained what he could. I get it." But then she gets a serious look on her face. "I'm sorry for everything that you ever had to go through and I'm sorry I didn't get the chance to be there because I would love to have you as my sister."

I don't know what to say to that so I just sit there with I'm sure what is a stunned look on my face. Jesus, I'm done with this drama.

I faced that day with the help of my friends. I need to move past all this and I should start with the people in this room.

"Look I just want to say a few things then I'd really like it if we could move on from all this because I'm really sick of the pity and the sad looks. I loved my Mam very much. She was an amazing woman who cared for me with the love of both parents. I now understand, but don't agree with what she did. I also understand your role and Sally's in it all, but please can we have a fresh start? I can't keep living in the past. I need to move on from it all. Obviously it's not that simple, I do have a little one growing in me and I have been through hell. I just want to forget the bad shit, remember the good, and give this child the life and family they deserve."

Wow, sounds so simple. If only. It felt good to take that step and by the look on my Dad's face he agrees. He comes straight over and hugs me.

"That's fine Nessa. I'm so glad you're ok and we want to help anyway we can."

I wonder. "Do you think you can find me food? I'm so hungry," I beg a little and they all laugh.

"Sure thing hunny. Anything you prefer?" Sally asks. It's the first time she's spoken. "No anything will do. I'm not fussy."

"Ok, I'll go see what I can find," Sally says as she heads off.

Colleen, Dad, and I talk a little. It's very strange but they're nice people. Giving them a chance won't be so bad. Sally brings back food. When I'm done I yawn and Dad suggests they leave and come back later.

I say bye to them all but Colleen comes over to me. "I know it's not my place and I don't want to rock whatever relationship we have but I feel I need to mention that Taylor isn't taken this all so well. he left the hospital yesterday and we can't get through to him. He loves you. I don't know what went on exactly between you two but I just thought you should know." Then she walks out.

Taylor was here? When did he come? How did he know I was here? Actually, how the hell did I get here? What happened to Brandon? Where is he now?

I'm feeling a little frightened so I text Stacey and ask her to come back which doesn't take her long because I get a delivery report and boom she here. "What's wrong babe, you ok?"

"How did you find me and where is Brandon?" I'm panicking and she can see it.

"It's ok. Calm down Nessa. He's in prison, he can't come near you. I didn't find you, Taylor did. When you ran out on him he came to look for you at the apartment and found me unconscious." I go to talk but she puts her hand up. "I'm fine. It wasn't anything serious but Brandon had been there looking for you. When I told Taylor he freaked, practically nearly shook me to death trying to get me and my swollen head to think of where he might have taken you. I guessed right because your Dad rang me and told me they found you. Once I got checked out I went to the family room but he had gone."

Why did he care, he was just using me. Well at least that's what I think. Why else did he hide me away, break my heart, and keep the fact that he lived with my dad all his life a secret.

"I can't believe it or understand why he would do all this," I say confused but she smiles.

"Because he loves you silly. Whatever game he was playing it backfired on him." Good enough for him, the prick.

"Colleen said he left and can't be gotten in touch with. She seems worried."

"Are you worried?" she asks carefully.

"No. I don't care!" I snap.

"Even though he saved your life?" She's pushing it and she knows it.

"Stacey," I growl.

"Fine but I'm not going to lie to you. Jess said he was pale as a ghost and panicking to death when she went to see how you were doing but Sam gave him shit and he left."

Sam, that's not good. I can only image what she said. She lashes out when she's upset. I love that girl but she goes straight for the jugular when her sisters' are concerned.

"Do I want to know what she said?"

"Nope. She told them all off and Jess reckons he thinks you're better off without him."

"That may be true but it's not just me anymore. Maybe it's time he understands that."

I ponder on that thought and decide Taylor needs to explain himself. He may want nothing to do with the baby or me but he better understand that this baby is not missing out on the rest of his family, on our family because of him.

"What are you going to do?" Stacey asks puzzled.

"I managed to tell you all about finding my mam after ten years. I can face Taylor and I'm going to tell him he better get his ass in here and explain himself."

I'm giving it my all now but seeing him is going to be different. I can't handle my feeling around him but I'll do it. I pick up my phone to call him. My freaking hands are shaking as I dial, it rings three times.

"Hello," says a slurred voice. Great he's drunk.

"Taylor you have till tomorrow to sober the hell up and get your fucking ass up to this hospital so we can talk or you never bother me again." I try to sound strong but just hearing his voice killed me a little.

"I'm not going to bother you again anyway," he slurs back at me. Ugh

"Grow up and stop acting like a fucking baby. And call your damn family while you're at it because they're worried." I hang up without giving him a chance to answer me. I'm freaking shaking I'm so pissed off.

"Are you ok?"

Am I? I don't really know right now. I'm gonna lie anyways. "Yes, I'm fine. I need to rest. Can you stay? I just don't really want to be alone right now."

"Eh duh, like I'd leave you now anyways. Even if you wanted me to leave, I'd still stay," she scoffs, but then turns to me with a seriously face. "Nessa I'm proud of you. Today you showed the strength I knew you had all along, pity it took you being stabbed for you to use it," she laughs lightly.

"I'm sorry I worried you," I tell her.

"Please like any of this was your fault. Now rest. I shall be here when you wake."

With that I lay down I'm so tired I fall into an easy dreamless sleep.

I wake to the rain bouncing off the window of my hospital room.. When I look around the room it's empty. Where has Stacey gone? I sit up to grab my phone but a sharp pain shoots through my side. Shit.

"Take it easy Nessa," Stacey warns as she enters the room.

"Where did you go?" I snap. I don't mean to but the pain is excruciating and I was a little panicked being here on my own.

"I just went to grab a coffee babe. Do you need painkillers? I'll call a nurse." She sounds panicky now. I don't want to take the painkillers, I know they say they won't hurt the baby but considering everything that's happened I don't want to jinx anything.

"No, I'm fine, I just need a minute I sat up too quickly. Can you help me?" She walks over and helps me sit up.

"You should take the painkillers if it is hurting, Nessa."

"No, I'm fine. It'll be ok. What time is it? Did I sleep long?" It was bright when I went to sleep and it's still bright now, it can't have been too long.

"You slept for over twelve hours," she laughs.

"No way. Jesus, I must have been tired. What time is it?"

"It's eight in the morning, babe."

Wow no wonder I feel all dirty. I could really use a shower and to get out of this bed. I having been out of it for how long? Two days which means... Oh hell no !

When I look at Stacey I know the minutes she cops what I'm think because she jumps up and mumbles something about getting the nurse and not to freak out. Oh man how did I not cop the stupid catheter yesterday? Eww of course now I have copped to it I'm freaking out. Ugh!

I just sit there looking down at my lap. I'm afraid to move now in case I feel it. People laugh at my fear of it but it gives me the willies. I can't cope with it.

"Hello Nessa, I'm Lou your nurse for today. Your friends tells me you don't want your catheter in."

"No I want it out. Now please, like right now," I pled and she smiles at me. Seriously, she better not give me the 'it's better left in' speech.

"I'll tell you what if you get out of bed and walk the length of the corridor I will take it out," she says a little too smugly.

"I am not moving with this thing in me. Take it out or I will. Actually take it out anyway, I don't care if I piss all over myself. I don't want it in." I pretty much just yelled at her but it doesn't seem to have fazed her. Stupid nurse. When she goes to talk I put my hand up.

"No, do not give me your speech. I don't like them. They freak me out so please just remove it." I don't think making your nurse angry is a good thing. Oops,

she looks pissed.

"That's fine. I will remove it," she snaps.

Oh like you had a choice bitch, it was coming out either way. Once she takes it out she leaves looking like she doesn't want to be my friend. I feel a little bad. I know it's just her job but seriously having a needle in my vajaja is just a disturbing thought altogether.

After having a bit to eat I feel the need to wee.

"Stacey could you help me, I need to go the toilet." I hate this part. It stings like something else after having a catheter in. I try to move myself to the edge of the bed but the pain in my side is pretty intense.

"Take it easy Nessa, you have stiches. You don't want to tear them. Just go slow or maybe I need to get the nurse," she scolds me like a child.

"No, don't get the nurse she hates me. I'll take it slow, ok." I slowly move to the edge of the bed with Stacey's help. My legs feel a little weak when I place them on the floor which is not good. I don't really want to end

up going down on my face. Stacey takes my arm to help me stand but I'm too afraid.

"I can't. My legs are a little weak. Shit the nurse is going to love this."

"Well if you weren't such a bitch to her I'm sure she would have helped," she laughs because this is so funny.

"Not funny Stacey. I'm gonna wet myself if I don't get in there now," I snarl at her but she just laughs harder. Damn her.

I stand and hold the bed. My legs are a little shaky. I try take a step but start to fall. Just as I'm about to hit the ground strong arms come around me.

"What the hell? You shouldn't be out of the fucking bed, never mind walking," he growls. At this stage Stacey has stopped laughing and is just looking back and forth between Taylor and myself.

"Can't be too bad if you can come in here and shout," I growl back.

"What are you trying to do?" he says a little calmer.

"She made the nurse take her catheter out and now she needs to wee but her legs are a little weak from being in bed the last few days. And she can't call the nurse for help because she was a bitch to her," Stacey tells him with a smirk at me and then leaves the room.

Well I never! The bitch. She is so dead when I can walk. I look back to Taylor who is staring at me. He doesn't say anything just picks me up and carries me to the bathroom. I don't say anything because I'm sure I'm in shock.

He places at the toilet where there is a handrail. I grab it and he just stands there looking at me.

"You can go now. I can handle it from here." I wave him off but he just stands there.

"I'm not going so deal with it and do what you have to do." Ugh! I know he's not going to go, the stubborn man.

"Will you at least turn around?" I huff and thankfully he does. I use one hand to pull my trousers down and sit down. Once I'm done I feel better and my legs don't feel so shaky. I don't want to try walk on my own yet so I wash my hands and let him take me back to bed.

We sit there for a few minutes saying nothing. I'm the one to break the silence.

"Why?" Saying it gives me a pain in my chest. Shit I forgot with everything that was going on how much all this hurts. I love him and to him

I'm just a game. He hasn't answered me and when I look at him he has an intense look on his face. Like he wants to say something but doesn't know how. It pisses me off a little.

"Well it's simple, tell me why Taylor," I snap.

"No. It's not simple, nothing about all this is simple." Well that's true I suppose but I never asked for any of this.

"Well make it simple because your family is now mine and don't forget about the fact that I'm carrying your child. You need to decide what your role is going to be in all this."

He told me he doesn't want kids before. I don't know if it was just kids with me or in general. Actually I don't know anything about him really, it all just a game to him.

"I'm sorry for everything Nessa," he whispers so quietly I almost don't hear him.

"Why? I need to know why? I really do. I mean I never spoke to my Dad and didn't know any of them, so why me?"

"Because you were who I blamed for your dad not being a Dad to the only sister and family I knew. When your name came up in the interview I figured I could just fire you but you were a firecracker that didn't take my shit. You were also the most beautiful woman I've ever laid eyes on and when you approached the table I was instantly hard and that actually pissed me off. So when I saw you at that function I knew a better way to get payback and reap the benefits." He shakes his head.

"By sleeping with me," I state. I can feel my tears welling up. I just need to hold back a bit longer.

"Yeah, I figured treating you like a whore would do it. Considering the slap you gave me I knew you would be pissed and hurt."

Yeah more like heartbroken. What a prick. I don't get to say anything before he continues.

"What I wasn't expecting that night was what passed between us it... It was like nothing I've ever felt before. You were supposed to be a fuck, nothing more. I distance myself from you but when I heard you were in hospital I knew there was no point fighting it because I needed you more than you will ever know. But of course I couldn't tell you who I really was so I had to keep you a secret. I could see you starting to realise what I was doing and it just broke me. I had to set you free or tell you the truth. When

you told me you talked to your Dad I knew I didn't have a choice because you were going to find out either way."

"So you pushed me away, told me we had no future, you also told me you don't want kids." He's looking down at the ground now thinking but when he looks up I see fear in his eyes.

"I wanted a future with you. I want a future with you, but kids were never part of my plan Nessa. Not for the reason you think. I just love you so much that the thought of losing you killed me. I'd rather have you than a child," He laughs, "Lost you anyway though, didn't I?"

He'd rather have me than a child? He loves me? "What do you mean by that?" I'm confused now.

"My mother died in child birth Nessa, and my dad... Well he couldn't survive without her and I was his reminder of what he lost. I can't do that to our child. I can't lose you like that."

Wow I never realised how all this affected him.

"That's life Taylor. I'd happily give up my life for my baby as I'm sure your mother was. Your father was wrong, you were a blessing and a part of the one person he loved the most. He should have cherished you not given you away."

He seems in shock from what I said.

"You don't know what you're talking about Nessa."

Oh pushing me away again are we. I don't think so. "No you don't know if she survived if he would have raised you with her, protected you from anything bad. But because she didn't survive he decides, screw that I don't want him. I don't think so. My child will always come first—over me, over you, over everyone. Do you understand!" I was yelling a bit and he gets up and starts pacing.

"I'm sorry they're my issues. I shouldn't have taken them out on you. Let me make this right, Nessa. All of it."

He's pleading now. I understand he wanted to protect Colleen and I might have forgave him for that but the woman behind my back, no I will not tolerate cheating.

"There is no way. You lost that right went you went off with your other blonde." He cringes as I finish.

"I didn't sleep with her. She's a friend who sometimes comes to functions with me. The morning you came over she was there getting paid.

She had been away and I didn't get a chance to pay her before."

My heart is speeding up. I want to believe him, I do. But I'm so afraid I can't be that girl for him.

"I don't know if I believe you," I say sadly and a tear slips from my eye. Stupid emotions. He crosses the room and takes my hand.

"Sally and Colleen where on my back. They knew I was different—happier not so cranky." He smiles and goes on, "I was in love. They knew it before me. I couldn't bring you to my birthday party because I wasn't ready to lose you. I needed more time so I asked Emma to come so they wouldn't ask questions. I swear I have not been near another woman since you walked into my office and threw water on me."

He loves me but does he really? Ugh, I love him so much but can I trust him not to break what's left of me because he has that power.

"There is still so much to talk about." I kinda just want to jump into his arms maybe hump a leg but I can't let him back in that easy. He needs to explain so much more.

"I know you don't understand much now, I'm still struggling to understand it all. I thought you and your Dad talked every day and that he dumped Colleen for you. I thought so much. I never knew half of it and that's on me but please don't give up on us."

He's pleading. He looks so lost. I squeeze his hand and move to the other side of the bed and pat the empty side. He looks confused for a second but jumps up and wraps his arms around me.

"We can deal with all that together. We both have pasts we have to deal with but for now I just want the man I love to hold me and promise me he will never lie to me again."

I feel all the tension in his body go and he kisses me on the head.

"I promise baby. I promise I will spend the rest of my life making it up to you. I fucking love you, woman."

That makes me smile but I need to say one more thing before I agree to try this again.

"We're having a baby Taylor. Can you deal with that because if not, I don't think we have a future. This child will always come first for me."

"I know this baby is a part of you and I promise to dial down my insecurities and enjoy it with you but I'm scared Nessa."

I turn in his arms and give him a gentle kiss.

"I promise to understand your fears, I really do. This baby is happening and before it does we need to help you deal with it because I want my family to be together."

"Me too. I love you Nessa," he declares and I laugh.

"I love you too."

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FIFTEEN

I have been in hospital for three days in total. I lost a lot of blood and they wanted to keep an eye on me and the baby. I finally get to go home. Great, well not really because Stacey and Taylor are killing each other over where I'm going home to. It's like I'm not even here.

"Nessa tell Stacey you will be moving in with me permanently." Whoa, whoa whoa! "Eh well... what?"

"We're having a baby and giving us a go. I'm going to make you my wife and you're moving in with me end of." Oh hell no.

"You better take that back. When I get asked to be your wife during a romantic proposal then maybe I'll think about it. You better take that back now." At least he looks ashamed.

"I'm sorry baby. You're right but it doesn't mean you won't be my wife so please move in with me. I have been hiding you away for too long. I need you with me, please."

Awe shit. I can't say no to that now can I? I turn to Stacey but she puts her hand up.

"Yeah, yeah he wins," she says and rolls her eyes.

"I'll send someone to pick up your stuff from your apartment. Stacey you know you can come over anytime." He smiles in victory.

"Like you could stop me," she scoffs.

Once we get everything we need from the doctor we head to Taylor's. I decide I want to flake on the coach for the day. I still can't do much with the stiches.

"Do you want anything babe?"

Yeah you! I feel like shouting. Having him around all the time is making me horny damn pregnancy hormones but he won't touch me and I don't want to make the first move.

"No, I'm fine." I reply.

"I told everyone to give you a few days to get settled before they visit."

I know it's terrible but thank God. Everyone has been by my side for the last few days and it's been great, but just me and my sex God for a while will be grand.

When my Dad, Sally, and Colleen came in I thought maybe it would be awkward with me and Taylor but they were delighted and I loved feeling like part of the family. I know there is a long way to go before I feel comfortable but now I feel I can get there.

The girls have been wonderful apart from Jess. She hasn't been around at all. Stacey tells me she's been working but something's up. I still need to find out, I told Sam it's bullshit and she needs to pay her a visit and she promised me she would. Ray has also come by. He always cheers me right up.

Brandon has been charged with attempted murder and we're awaiting a trial date. Taylor is dealing with all of that. He has the best solicitors who are making sure Brandon does full time.

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SIXTEEN

Me and Taylor slip into a good routine. He's going back to work today. He doesn't want to though. I've only been here two days. He thinks I still need to be looked after. I know he'll probably ring someone to come sit with me. He means well. I know I'm going to miss him something terrible. I'm fine, my stitches are healing good and the baby is doing fine.

He still hasn't touched me and it's driving me a little crazy. I know he's waiting till I'm fully healed, he told me this but seriously sleeping next to him is so hard.

When he heads off to work I get bored and start going through the boxes Taylor got from Stacey's. I haven't even touched half of them. When I walk into the spare room they're scattered all round. Ugh, there is loads of them. I didn't even think I had this much stuff. Just as I open the first box my phone rings.

"Hello."

"Hey baby, you ok?" Seriously, this man. He's only been gone a few hours.

"I'm fine, just sorting through the boxes."

"Leave them, we can do them later. Will you have lunch with me today?"

"Sure. Will I bring it to you?" Oh I could go down there naked only wearing a jacket...

"No its fine I'll pick you up. I have a surprise for you so I'll drive."

"My surprise better come in the form of a big hard cock." he laughs down the phone line.

Oh fuck! "Did I say that out loud?" I cringe and he just keeps laughing.

"Yes you did. Is my baby feeling needy?"

The jackass. "Your baby? I'm beyond needy," I growl into the phone.

"Ok I will get right on it once you heal. Be ready at one." He just hangs up. I must sit there just staring phone. I'm going to kill him.

I put my phone down and decide to let Taylor help me later with the boxes. As I close the one I opened, I spot my mam's letter in it.

Shit. I need to face this so I pick it up. I sit there for over a half hour but I can't open it. I need to be close to her so I check the time it's only half past

eleven.

I jump up, grab my coat and head to Mount Drone, where my am is buried. When I get near her grave I panic. I haven't visited since I buried her. I just left her because I thought she'd abandoned me so I just left her.

I manage to compose myself and make the final steps. I'm shocked when I see her grave is done up with lovely windmills and fresh flowers. Who did this? I sit down at the side of her headstone and look around. I see a best friend plaque and know my Dad must have kept the grave nice over the years. That warms my heart, he must have truly loved her. I take the letter from my pocket and open it.

To my darling daughter,

If you're reading this two things have happened: one being that I have died and the other that you have met your father. I realise these are two major things to happen and I can only hope the strength you have always shown gets you through this. I'm so sorry for the way I had to leave you, I just couldn't go through all that sickness with my precious little angel being dragged down with me. You deserved better than that. If I had of told you I had cancer you would have given up your life for me and I couldn't have that baby, I just couldn't. I know you will be angry but I hope one day you can forgive me for my decisions. I'm not proud of myself for them but it's what I felt was best. One day when you have some beautiful children of your own running round you will give up the world to make them happy. Please don't be too hard on your dad, it's mostly my fault he wasn't around. Give him and Sally a chance. She's a lovely woman who had her own issues. I'm sad I won't be around to see you go to college, get your first boyfriend, get married or have children but know that every step you take I'm there with you. I have left your aunt as guardian. I know she isn't the nicest but I knew if your dad stayed away you would get to stay with your friends. I'm so very sorry. I love you baby girl. Always and forever. Be the best version of you that you can be.

Love, Mam

I'm full on sobbing as I look up to her grave. "I'm so sorry Mam. I'm so fucking sorry. I wish you didn't feel like you had to do that alone. I miss you so much. I wish you were here..."

I can't finish I so I just sit there and cry till I feel strong arms come around me.

"Shh baby. It's ok. It's going to be ok, I got you."

I'm so thankful for Taylor's strength right now. I take it in and I manage to stop crying after a few minutes.

"Thank you," I tell Taylor.

"Don't you dare say thank you. I love you. I will always be here for you."

I hug him tighter.

"You know the worst part of all of this? When I came in and went to my room. I didn't know where she was and I was thinking God I'm so hungry, where is she?" I laugh. "It's mad. I rang her because I was hungry and she was dead in the bath."

Taylor squeezes me tighter. "Please don't talk like that. You did what you would do any normal day. You didn't know, how could you? Please don't punish yourself."

I know he's right. I just fucking miss her and wish I had seen a sign of what had happened that day.

I look up to Taylor. "How did you know where I was?" I ask him because no one would ever have guessed I was here.

"Eh well... You know after the whole kidnapping thing... I may have had your phone placed with a tracker. When Ray got to the house and you didn't answer he freaked and rang me and I tracked you to here."

I kind of want to throttle him but then again I know it's for my benefit and safety and I really don't have the fucking energy.

"You're lucky I'm feeling nice right now," I say smiling and he lets out the breath he was holding.

"Oh good. How about that surprise now or would you rather go home?"

"No, it's fine. I'd like to see it now." He helps me up and I feel lighter after coming here and being with my mam. Taylor tells me I have to leave my car and he will have someone pick it up later.

When we get in the car I ask where we are going but he's not telling me. Maybe I don't like surprises after. We pull into a private housing estate in

Templeogue. It's really nice.

"Why are we here?" I question.

"No patience." He tsks. "But I suppose I could tell you. You see that house over there." He points to a big house with a lovely garden. "Yeah," I tell him slowly.

"Well that's our new home. Do you want to go see it?" he says smugly.

Oh my God can he be serious. I don't even answer him, I jump straight out of the car.

"I will take that as a yes then." He laughs and walks up behind me.

When we get to the door he opens it and I walk in. It's so beautiful and big. I'm wowed.

"So what do you think, good family home?" he asks and I jump up and hug him.

"Easy tiger. Stiches remember." I do because it actually hurt a little but I don't care.

"I know, I just love it. Thank you!" I say and tears once again make an appearance. I'm such a cry baby.

"One more thing before we go," he says taking a step back from me.

"Oh yeah, what's that?" I ask curiously.

He pulls a box out of his pocket and gets down on one knee, which only sets my tears off more. He just smiles at me.

"This is going to be our new home and I wanted to start it off with a good memory. Nessa when I first met you I knew no matter how hard I wanted to deny it that you were going to be it for me. I love you with every fiber of my soul. Will you, my beautiful, do me the honour of being my wife?" His voice is shaky and I can see my hot billionaire is scared.

"Will you fuck me right now if I yes?" I smirk. I shouldn't joke with him right now.

"Nessa," he growls. God I love it when he does that.

"Taylor it's simple." I smile, he's weakening.

"Fine, just answer the damn question."

"Yes Taylor, I will marry you."

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

To write and self-publish was a pretty hard job. One that without the help of so many great people helping me along the way wouldn't have been possible.

First I'd like to thank my family—especially my sisters Ciara and Samantha, who encouraged me all the way to the end.

Thanks to my friends Laura and Sarah, who read *Nessa* for me and helped me see what I needed to add and take away. The hardest part of this whole writing process for me was writing my synopsis and Laura help with that a great amount. I'm pretty sure without her I'd still be sitting in front of my computer trying to deciding what to use. To my beta reader and new friend, Sarah Honey, who has encouraged and guided me through *Nessa's* book, thank you.

While writing this book I must have tormented my sister's friend, author L.A. Casey, with a million questions. All of which she happily answered and for that I will always be grateful.

When *Nessa* was done and it was time for me to turn to an editor I'm glad I chose Jen from Gypsy Heart Editing. She is absolutely amazing. She went above and beyond in helping make my book perfect. She was the most helpful person for me in all this and she is amazing at her job. Not only did she edit my book, she spent time talking me through it. So a big thanks to her! Without her help I'm not sure how I would have coped with the editing process.

My lovely cover was done by LJ over at Mayhem Cover Creations. I thought I'd be picky and unsure of what to choose but once got the links, I found a picture I loved and was amazed at what they did with it. I absolutely love my cover. The service was great and they answered my never ending questions. A big thank you to them as well!

To you, my readers, thank you for buying my book. I hope you enjoyed it as much as I enjoyed writing it.

Without everyone here, I wouldn't have made it through my first book and I will always be thankful to each of you for helping me along my journey to self-publishing.

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ABOUT M. BRENNAN

I'm a Mom to a wonderful son and a native of Dublin, Ireland. I come from a big family with five younger sisters and one younger brother (I know, the poor lad). I have worked as a barmaid for over ten years now and I love it.

Working with the public, talking with them, and getting to know new people is what I love most. On a normal day I can usually be found with my nose in a book or chasing my son.

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