

Cat parked in the garage and was relieved to find one of Dorian's spaces empty.

"Finally, a break," she said, as she got out of the car.

The house was completely silent when she walked in. Cat grabbed a bottle of water from the refrigerator and headed upstairs. She changed into her robe and was about to go into the bathroom, when the phone rang.

"Hello."

"Hey," Dorian said. "Listen I won't be home until late tonight."

"Okay."

"...I'll see you later."

"Bye."

Cat ended the call and sighed with relief. *A night to myself*, she thought. She went into the bathroom and turned on the shower. Cat no longer used their tub. Her reasoning, you can't be drowned in the shower. During her shower, Cat thought about how her lunch ended.

As Myles walked her to the car, Cat asked, "How ruthless are you?"

"What?" he asked.

"Earlier you said you could be forceful and ruthless."

"I can."

"That's hard to believe."

"Good. Because you'll never see that side of me."

"Did you teach...Dorian how to be forceful and ruthless?"

"What?"

"You're the oldest. They must've learned a lot from you."

"Some. Wait a minute, is something wrong?"

"No, I just..."

"Catherine, it's okay. Whatever it is you can tell me."

"...Not today. Today is about fantasies, right?"

Myles searched her eyes and said, "I've taught my brothers many things. To stand as a man by any decision they make. No matter the outcome. And yes, they probably learned how to be forceful, ruthless, and sometimes even dangerous from me. But I do hope I taught them how to control it and themselves. So, if he's loss control of himself you let me know. I'll make sure he remembers his place. Okay?"

Cat nodded.

"Will you call me later?"

"Yes," Cat said, as she got in her truck.

"One more thing."

Myles leaned in and kissed the corner of her mouth. "Happy Valentine's Day, sweetie."

"Happy Valentine's Day, Myles."

He closed her door and Cat started her truck and drove away.

Cat stepped out of the shower and wrapped a towel around herself. She stared at her reflection and then turned around to inspect the bruise on the small of her lower back. There was a slight discoloration where the bruise was. After drying her hair, Cat got dressed for bed and turned on the television for the background noise. She took out one the manuscripts she was working on and sat on the chaise lounge by the window. Now a days, Cat avoided going anywhere near the

bed. She sat on chaise lounge by the window. Cat tried to concentrate on the manuscript, but her mind kept drifting. Cat was staring out the window when she heard her phone buzz. She got up and went to her purse. She saw it was Myles.

“Hey,” Cat answered. “I was just thinking about you.”

“Glad to hear that,” he said. “Can you talk?”

“Yeah.”

“Where’s Dorian?”

“He called and said he would be home late.”

“Hmmp.”

“And what does that mean?”

“It means if you were mine you wouldn’t be home alone at night.”

“You can’t say that. No one can keep that promise.”

“I beg to differ, Ms. Palmer. I wouldn’t be able to stay away from you.”

“That sounds a bit stalkerish.”

“No. I’m just a man that knows what he wants and goes after it.”

“That’s for damn sure,” she said under her breath.

“What are doing?”

“Trying to concentrate on this manuscript, but my mind keeps wondering off.”

“Where is it going?”

“To...you.”

“What about me?”

“Today’s many surprises.”

“And what could’ve happened?”

“I chose to stay away from that thought.”

She heard Myles laugh and pictured that crooked smile of his.

“You okay over there?”

“Huh? Yeah. Why you ask?”

“You moaned.”

“No, I didn’t.”

“Yeah, you did, sweetie. Thinking about me?”

“...I plead the fifth.”

“I’ll take that as a yes.”

“Can we change the subject?”

“You can’t always change the subject when things get too hot.”

“That’s not...”

“It’s not?”

“No.”

Myles chuckled and said, “Okay, what would you like to talk about?”

“The weather.”

“The weather?” He laughed. “I don’t want to talk about the weather. I want to talk about the things I could be doing to you if you were here.”

“Please don’t do that.”

“Come out with me.”

“What?”

“Come out with me. You shouldn’t be at home alone. Neither should I.

“No. Dorian...”

“Won’t be home until late.”

“No.”

“We’ll go for a ride. You won’t have to get out of the car.”

“...Okay.”

“Really?”

“Yeah. Give me ten minutes.”

“See you in a minute.”

“Ten minutes.”

Cat could hear him laugh as she ended the call. She got up and went into her closet. She dressed in jeans, a sweater, and boots. She put her hair up and put on some light makeup. Cat grabbed her coat and left the room. When she made it downstairs, she opened the door to find Myles standing next to his car, holding a rose. Cat smiled, locked the door and walked to the car.

“I’m glad you agreed to come out with me,” he said, handing her a rose.

“I can’t seem to say no to you.”

“Music to my ears. After you.”

Cat got in and waited for him. As he drove out the driveway, Cat looked back at the house and felt like she was being rescued.

“You okay?” Myles asked.

“Yeah.”

“Left or right when we get out the gate?”

“Hmmm, right.”

When they drove through the gate, Myles turned right. He took her hand and laced his fingers through hers. Myles had a destination in mind and he prayed that she liked it. He took the scenic route to Piedmont Park.

When they arrived, Cat said, “A park? I thought I wouldn’t have to get out.”

“Just this once.”

He parked near the gazebo and got out. He came around and opened her door. Cat could hear music and see lights in the gazebo.

“What’s going on?” she asked.

“Why don’t we go see,” he said, taking her hand.

“Wait, we can’t interrupt someone’s moment. That could be a proposal.”

“Let’s go see.”

They walked the short distance to the gazebo and found a man playing a guitar and a woman singing.

Cat looked at Myles, “You?”

Myles pulled her closed and moved slowly to the music.

“Why would you do this?”

“Because in New Orleans you said I’d shown you something new. I wanted to add today to the list.”

“This is definitely at the top of that list. But how did you get everything together so fast?”

“I always plan ahead.”

Cat pulled him down into a kiss. He pulled her closer as their kiss grew more passionate. Myles broke the kiss and stared into Cat’s eyes. This was what love feels like. He had no doubt in his mind. Thirty minutes later, the songstress finished her last song.

“You have a beautiful voice,” Cat said, as she clapped.

“Thank you,” the songstress said. “So, do you. I heard you sing at The Blue Den.”

“You’re the lead singer of the band,” Cat said, when she recognized her.

“I am. Mr. Wallace asked me to do a personal show for him and a special lady. You never say no to the boss.”

“Thank you, Alisha,” Myles said. “And thanks, Jerome.”

“You two enjoy your night,” Jerome said, as he and Alisha left.

“Good night,” Cat said. She then turned to Myles and said, “Thank you. That...that was beautiful.”

“I have one more thing for you, but it’s at my house.”

“Okay.”

“You sure?”

“Yes, I’m sure.”

They went back to the car and headed for home. They arrived at his house in no time.

When they walked, he said, “It’s in the den.”

Cat smiled at him and then walked into the den. There was a fire going, soft music, and champagne waiting for them. She took off her coat and walked over to the couch. Myles poured them each a glass of champagne.

“And how did you know I would agree to come here?”

“Prayer works.”

Cat laughed and took the glass he handed her. “Toast.”

“Okay.”

“To meeting at the path.”

“To meeting at...” Myles stared at her in disbelief. “Did you say...?”

Cat took his glass and put it on the table. She took his hand and led him up to his bedroom.

“Are you...”

“Shhh.”

Cat started to undress him. She pulled his sweater over his head and moved on to his belt and jeans.

“I want you,” she said and kissed him.

Myles pulled her against him and lay back on the bed. Cat straddled him and he sat up. Myles raised her sweater over her head and undid her bra. He kissed her as he unbuttoned pants. He turned Cat on to her back and began to kiss down her throat to her chest.

“Yes.” Cat moaned.

“Say it again.”

“Yes.” Cat moaned louder.

As he trailed kisses down her body, he removed her jeans and panties.

“God, I’ve never touched skin as soft as yours,” he whispered.

Incoherent words were Cat's only reply. Myles pushed her legs apart and kissed the inside of her thighs. Cat took a sharp breath.

"Breathe, Catherine."

Myles kissed her wettest spot softly and heard Cat moan his name. He felt Cat's hand on the back of his head as she pulled him closer. Myles eagerly obliged. The tongue lashing Cat received was enough to keep her eyes in the back of her head for the next twenty minutes.

"Talk to me, baby."

"...I...I...can't."

"Oh, I think you can."

He stood up and reached into his nightstand drawer and took out a condom. He watched Cat as he opened the wrapper.

"Ready for me, Catherine?"

Cat sat up and took the condom from him. "I'm beyond ready for you."

She slowly put the condom on him and Myles leaned down and kissed her. He laid her back and when he entered her, Cat cried out.

"Are you okay? You want me to stop?" Myles asked quickly.

"I'm sorry. I..."

"We can stop. We don't have to do this. Not now."

"I'm so sorry. I can't...I can't."

"Calm down. Sweetie, calm down. It's okay."

Myles moved away and pulled her into his arms. He listened to Cat cry and repeat over and over how sorry she was.

"What happened?" he asked.

"...I can't. I can't."

"It's okay. It's okay, baby."

Cat tried her best to get control of herself. Embarrassed, she moved away and tried to get out of bed.

"Don't. Don't go."

"I can't be here. I've...I..."

"Listen to me. Listen to me. You don't have to leave. Nothing will happen to you here. You're safe with me. Stay with me. At least until you come down."

Cat nodded slowly, laid back and rested against his chest. Myles held her and waited for her to calm.

Cat finally calmed and said, "I'm s..."

"If you're going to apologize, keep it."

Cat looked up and expected to see anger, but she only saw kindness. She leaned up and kissed him. Myles immediately reacted to her kiss.

"Wait, wait, we need to stop," he said. "I want you to be comfortable with this. We don't have to do this. I can..."

"No...no. I want this. I do," she said, pulling him down into a kiss.

Myles kissed her passionately as he covered her body with his. He slowly pushed into Cat and watched her reaction. She nodded and kissed him as he began to slowly move. Cat lifted her hips to meet his.

“I missed you so much,” Cat said.

“Nowhere near as much I’ve craved and missed you. God, Catherine,” he said, as pushed deeper into her.

Cat had completely forgotten about everything that was outside that bedroom. That was outside that bed. This is what she wanted.

“Myles.” Cat moaned as she climaxed.

“That’s right, baby.”

“God!”

Myles thrusts faster and climaxed along with her.

“You have made me the happiest I have ever been,” he said, looking into her eyes.

“Me, too.”

Myles kissed her lips softly and then her neck. He moved away and laid next to her. He pulled her close and kissed her.

“I wish I could keep you here.”

“Careful, you’re sounding stalkerish again.”

Myles chuckled and nuzzled her neck.

“But I have to go.”

“Just a little while longer,” he said.

“What time is it?”

“A quarter ‘til eleven.”

“I really should go.”

“Not yet. I have one more thing to give you.”

“I think you’ve given me enough. More than enough.”

Myles turned over and opened a drawer. He turned back to Cat holding a long velvet box.

“No,” she said.

“You haven’t opened it yet.”

“I can’t take it.”

Myles sat up and opened the box. In the box was a necklace of emeralds and diamonds. She was too shocked to speak. Myles took out the necklace and draped it around Cat’s neck.

“Myles…”

“Shhh. I’ve noticed that you rarely wear jewelry anymore. I’ve also noticed there are a lot of things that you’ve stopped doing. Like smiling, being happy and I want to change that. I want you to have it.”

“Myles, it’s beautiful. Thank you.”

He kissed her and laid her back.

“Stay with me, Catherine,” he whispered.

“Yes.” Cat moaned, when she felt his fingers glide across her clit.



“I hate to let you go,” Myles told her.

“Me, too. I better get in there.”

“Lunch tomorrow?”

“Okay. Good night.”

“Good night, sweetie.”

Cat got out and headed to the door. Before walking in she looked back at him. Cat went in the house and locked up for the night. She was smiling to herself when she walked upstairs. Cat walked into the bedroom and went to the closet. When Cat walked out, she screamed. A dark figure was sitting in the corner of her bedroom. Dorian switched on the lamp next to him.

“Where you been?” he asked.

“I went and got something to eat.”

“With who? Because your truck is in the garage.”

“Myles.”

“Really?”

“Look, if you don’t believe me, call him.”

“You know, I would, but I have something else on my mind.”

Cat sighed and said, “And what’s that?”

Dorian held up Cat’s cell phone.

“Where did you get this?” he asked.

Dorian stood up and walked slowly towards Cat. Her mind had gone completely blank. There was nothing she could say to keep this moment from escalating.

“I asked you a question,” Dorian said.

“I...bought it...for work.”

“You need two phones? Is that the lie you’re going to go with?”

“It’s better than truth.”

“And what would that be?”

“That you’ve been tracking me through my cell phone.”

Dorian tightened his jaw and nodded. “When did you find out?”

“When I went to New Orleans and you showed up there. Which made me think of all the times that you showed up where I was before I even mentioned it. You’ve been doing this since we started dating, haven’t you?”

“I keep an eye on all my investments. I always have. So, you started carrying the phone only when you needed to. Smart.” He chuckled. “I didn’t think you had it in you.”

“I know.”

“Open the phone.”

“No. You figure it out. That’s how you opened the first one.”

Myles slapped her so hard she was knocked against the wall.

“You like being a disobedient bitch, don’t you?”

Dorian kicked her in the stomach and Cat folded and fell to the floor. Dorian raised his foot close to her head and Cat prepared herself for the kick. Instead, Dorian stomped the phone over and over until it was in pieces. Cat screamed. Out of fear or relief, she wasn’t sure. Dorian pulled her up and threw her to the bed.

“I’m gonna put your ass in your place. You will obey me. Whether you like it or not.”

“Dorian, please! Don’t do...”

Those were Cat’s last words before the screams took over.