



Bonus Scene

FOREVER
Us

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Scarlett Avery

Nikolaj Confesses His Crush To Martin

Martin answers the phone after three rings.

“For the love of God, Nik, do you know what time it is here in Copenhagen?”

“Mart, I’m sorry, buddy. I know it’s the crack of dawn there, but I need to talk.” I have a hectic day in front of me and although I’ve done my best to focus on getting ready for a few important upcoming meetings, I can only think of Ciara. I know I should be more mindful of the time difference, but I desperately need my buddy’s guidance. The sultry American I met in Canada has taken over my world—I think of her all the time, I dream of her at night and I yearn to see her again. I don’t even notice any other women anymore. It’s as if I only have eyes for her.

What’s gotten into me?

One weekend of debauchery and I forget I’m a self-confessed bachelor.

“Are you seriously calling me at six o’clock in the morning to talk about this woman you met in bloody Toronto?”

“Sorry, but I’m dying here. I need your perspective.”

“You’ve been texting me all week about her. This woman must be really something.”

“More than words can say.”

There's a long silence and I can't tell if my incessant calls have pissed him off or if he's considering helping me in my moment of need.

"Let me get out of bed to have this sort of heavy conversation. Can you call me back in one hour? I'll get up, shower, and get some food in my system."

"I can't tell you how much I appreciate your help. I'll call you back soon."

"Nik, we've known each other since we were in boarding school and I've never in my life seen you make such a fuss over a woman."

"I know. I've never met anyone like her."

There's another awkward silence.

"Call me back and I'll help you figure things out so you can win her over."

"The next hour is going to be torture."

I can't believe Ciara ran away from my home in Toronto after I invited her to accompany me to the airport.

Fuck, did I push her too much?

But how can I not? I've never in my life met a woman I wanted like this.

When I saw her sashay her way into the bar, I knew I wasn't leaving without getting to know her. After a few drinks, I dared to gamble on the idea of fucking her. I knew she wouldn't be a pushover and I'd have to work to get her, but I figured I'd find a way.

I never expected to spend the night at her hotel and I surely didn't know we'd have a weekend of mind-

blowing sex. I've fucked women on every continent, but none of them measure up to Ciara.

I should have let that call go to voicemail and not let her out of my sight.

After I called and texted her numerous times, she only agreed to speak to me this morning after I inundated her office with flowers. I might have gone overboard, but I was getting frustrated at my failed attempts to catch her attention.

I check my watch.

I still have fifty minutes before calling Martin back and if I don't do something with myself, I'll explode.

It's ten past two in the afternoon here and I have plenty of time to run downstairs and grab a quick lunch at my favorite sushi place. I tuck my phone in my pocket and I'm headed for the door when a thought pops into my head.

I sit back at my desk and dial my assistant.
“Margaret?”

“Yes, Mr. von Henningsen.”

“I was heading out for lunch, but something came up and I have an important call in fifty minutes. Can you please order lunch for me and have it sent to my office?”

“Certainly, sir. What should I order?”

“I'm not picky. I'll take whatever catch of the day they have on the menu. Make sure to get two orders—I'm famished.”

“Very well, sir.”

I hang up with Margaret, open my laptop and type Ciara Herrera's name in the search bar.

It's no surprise her own website pops up at the top of the search results. Hmm, she's been featured in a lot of design publications and a number of New York blogs as the designer of the moment. Wow. She has an impressive pedigree. Smart, sexy, incredible in bed and super-successful. There must be a catch. No one is perfect.

I've been surfing the internet for thirty minutes when there's a knock on the door.

"Come in, Margaret," I say without peeling my eyes from my screen.

"Your lunch has arrived, Mr. von Henningsen."

"Thank you. You can leave it here on the desk and I'll devour the sushi in the next two seconds. I'm starved."

"At least here in Japan you don't have to worry about the food getting cold," she says. "I'll let you get back to work now, sir."

"Thank you," I say, ripping open the bags of food in front of me. I stop dead in my tracks.

A headline catches my attention.

*'COUNT LUDVIG WILMER THEODOR JÖNSSON
SNATCHES HOT AMERICAN SIREN AND LOCKS
HER UP IN SEX CHAMBER IN LONDON.'*

The count has so much time to waste. I'm not a Swede, but our fathers have done business together. I've met the selfish buffoon a few times and I've never been impressed. He's as empty as a barrel of Guinness in the wee hours of the morning following St Patrick's Day.

What a poor excuse for a man.

I don't know what compelled me to click on the link, but when I do, I instantly recognize her.

"Ciara?" I say in horror. "What the fuck?" I scroll down to read more.

First off, this is six months old. Calm down, she had a life before meeting you. But did she have to fuck him?

I read the entire article, amazed. Ciara had an fling with a man who's never had to work a day in his life and whose only claim to fame is the fact his father owns the most important fish farms and manufacturing plants in Sweden. He's been able to add a phony title to his name because the lucky bastard's cousin managed to marry the Princess of Sweden.

How the hell did Ciara connect with Ludvig?

I click on a few photos to enlarge them.

Fuck, she's hot.

I'm torn between the desire to click away from this page and the urge to salivate all over her insane body.

Damn, there must be twenty photos of her here.

I should be furious at seeing her naked straddling the idiot count, but she's so beautiful, it's impossible for me to be mad at her.

I check my watch. It's seven o'clock in the morning in Copenhagen. I have to call Martin back. I quickly put a few pieces of sushi on a plate and dial my best friend's number before putting him on speakerphone.

"Is this a better time?"

"Yes, it is. I got up and grabbed some food and a cup of coffee. I have enough energy now to help you deal with your *drama*." I can hear the sarcasm in his voice.

"You're funny."

"I do my best, buddy. So what's up? What has this American beauty done to get you so worked up?"

"I've told you, she ran away from me simply because I wanted to get to know her better."

"Nik, I'm no relationship expert, but when a woman runs away, it might be a sign."

"Go to hell, Martin. When I spoke to her yesterday, she was as mellow as aged cognac. She loved the flowers I sent her, and I think I've made a good connection with her. I'm trying not to push too hard because I don't want to scare her, but I want to get to know her more."

"Whoa, Nik, slow down. Did you even breathe when you said that last sentence? You have it bad for her. You've never gone on so much about a woman before. Is it because she's the new flavor of the month?"

"Nah. I know what you mean. I've been interested in a few women in the past, but the lure usually fades away pretty quickly. I'll admit some women are phenomenal in bed, but once you come there's not a lot I

have in common with them and whatever we shared in the throes of passion isn't enough of a pull for me to stay. It's different with Ciara."

"How so?"

How can I explain such a beautiful, complex creature in a few sentences? "She's layered."

"That doesn't sound very sexy, buddy."

"On the contrary. Why do you love Eloise so much?"

Martin lets out a laugh. "She's magnificent—beautiful, smart, and she never puts up with my bullshit. She's the feisty Irish siren of my dreams who's willing to travel back and forth between London and Copenhagen to be with me."

"Exactly. Eloise isn't your typical damsel in distress and she's not a money-whore looking to score a rich husband in order to retire. She doesn't need to be saved. She's with you because for some reason unbeknownst to me, she actually loves you."

"Careful there. Do you want my help or not?"

"I'm joking, and you know it."

"Are you saying you're attracted to this American because she's not like any other woman you've met before?"

"You've hit the nail on the head, my friend. Why would I fuss over another fuck? I can get those without lifting a finger, but Ciara... she's a prize. I wish I could find a way to get her to warm to me and see what we

shared last weekend as more than just another weekend of debauchery with a stranger in a foreign country.”

“Prove it to her.”

“What? Martin, I know it’s early in Europe, but you’re not making any sense.”

“Flowers? Really? You’re the most daring and unpredictable guy I know. It must have cost you a fortune to fill her office with all those petals. Fly her to you instead, or why don’t you fuel up the jet and go to her? You’ll send a clear message you won’t take no for an answer.”

“You think I should be so bold?”

Martin taps his phone and blows into the microphone. “Hello, hello, hello. There must be a bad connection because my best friend is hesitating in being bold with a woman he’s crazy about. Nik, you would never have asked such a question with any other woman. Ciara has a strong grip on you and unless you want to drive everyone around you mad, I suggest you find a way to confirm it’s mutual. If she’s not interested, you’ll drive yourself nuts for no good reason. Not to mention if you ever call me in the wee hours of the morning like this again, I’ll personally fly out there to smack you.”

Bloody hell. I’ve never been this nervous around any woman like this before. Martin is right, I have to get to the bottom of this. “You win. I’ll send the jet to fly her to Tokyo.”

“And if she can’t leave New York, what then?”

“I’ll fuel up my private jet and go to her.”

Your Kiss Is Still On My Lips

After a steamy weekend of unspeakable wanton debauchery, Nikolaj von Henningsen finds himself on the opposite side of the planet from the woman he craves so desperately.

The time difference is brutal and her reluctance to return his calls or text messages only fuels his determination.

With very little options left, Nikolaj decides to send a long and explicit message to the object of his affection. He locks himself in his hotel room and pours his soul out.

Thirty minutes later, he's drafted his first confession, but at the last minute he decides not to send it. He opts, instead, for more drastic measures to drive the message home.

Ciara never gets to read this first love note, but you do.

Sweetness,

I'm usually quite good at keeping myself busy during the long trip from America to Asia, but this time around it was impossible for me to focus on anything other than you. Although I'm in one of the busiest cities in the world, ever since I met you it's as if I live

in a bubble, constantly surrounded by your magnetic charm. I'm certain you've received my texts and my phone calls, but they're so brief. How on earth can they possibly explain how you turned my world upside down?

Everything surrounding us is fast and furious. Trust me. I'm fully aware of it. I've tried numerous times to convince myself this relentless attraction to you is a passing thing, but I'm only fooling myself. I can't get you out of my mind.

When I close my eyes and think back to the weekend we spent together, it's as if I never left your side. I'm utterly mesmerized by your presence, completely engulfed in your aura and insanely seduced by your splendor. Your exquisite beauty and disarming smile lured me instantly and won me over.

Can you believe it? After forty-eight hours of being apart from you, your kiss is still on my lips.

I'm warning you now, I have no intention of allowing time to transform this delectable sensation into a distant memory. You've put me in a trance so powerful that the only way for me to halt

this persistent longing feeling I have is to be with you again.

I may have just landed on the other side of the planet, but already the wheels are in motion. I'm coming back to claim you, sweetness.

Yours, Nikolaj

Nikolaj Receives Ciara’s Text About Dylan’s Attack As He’s In The Middle Of Important Negotiations In Tokyo

Come on, Nik, focus on what Mr. Shimizu is saying.

I’ve already asked my host to repeat himself a couple of times since the beginning of the meeting because my mind keeps drifting to the woman I’m completely obsessed with—Ciara Herrera.

I’m sitting across from Mr. Riku Shimizu, CEO of Kapital Satoru, one of Japan’s most important gaming distributors. Japanese businessmen are known for being sharp and astute. They also have the bad habit of being one step ahead of their competitors.

Since my language skills are laughable, I’ve brought with me two key advisors who are fluent in Japanese, plus two of my directors. Misaki Ikeda heads Matsumoto Trading and she’s been key in moving these negotiations along. Her company specializes in bridging the language and negotiation gap between Japanese and Western countries. If she wasn’t sitting at this table with her business partner, Mr. Ryoichi Shibata, I’m sure we wouldn’t be inches away from inking one of the biggest deals for my company to date in the Far East.

Has Ciara been thinking of me half as much as I’ve been thinking of her?

If this wasn't such an epic deal for the future of my company, I'd have stayed in New York with her until she got tired of me. Once more I find myself struggling to focus on this important moment. Every part of me only craves one thing—to be with her

You need to get your head back in the game.

The glass door to the conference room swings open and snaps me out of my daydreaming. When Mr. Shimizu's new assistant walks back into the room pushing a cart filled with tea, cups and sweets, a thought pops into my head.

Before Ciara, I would have tried to connect with that sweet young thing later tonight, but there's no way any woman can come close to Ciara anymore—not even a twenty-something Japanese girl.

My thoughts are still shifting to Ciara while Misaki, Mr. Shimizu and Aksel Simonsen, my director of international development who is also fluent in Japanese, hash out a number of terms.

After three long hours, we finally bag a deal I've been working on close to one year. Aksel and I exchange a glance and we both know we'll party hard tonight. This deal represents several hundreds of thousands of dollars per day for my company.

I've signed the last of the dozens of contracts that are part of this deal and I'm about to get up and hand the papers to my host when my phone interrupts the moment.

I must have turned on my phone by accident since I've been fumbling with the darn thing like a nervous teenager.

I look up apologetically when the room turns their attention on me. "I'm terribly sorry. This stupid phone has a mind of its own sometimes."

Mr. Shimizu looks more amused than annoyed and I immediately calm down. The last thing I want to do is insult my host at the tail end of such important negotiations.

"Let me turn this off. Clearly, I've been too distracted to remember good meeting etiquette." I go to press the off button, but inadvertently click open a recent message from Ciara.

I blink when I make out a few alarming words from her text message.

What the fuck?

She sent this nearly three hours ago.

My gaze must have been focused on my phone for too long because Mr. Shimizu clears his throat.

"Good friend, is everything okay? You look quite concerned."

"Mr. von Henningsen"—before I can answer, Aksel chimes in—"if you need to take care of something urgent, I can take over for a few minutes." My director of international development looks at me, puzzled.

"I apologize profusely, but my girlfriend has been attacked." I guess I'll have to man up and make things official with Ciara since I've just announced it.

“May I step out for a few minutes? I’m not sure if I can still reach her, but I want to make sure she’s safe now.” I rake my hand through my hair, trying to contain the rage boiling inside me.

“Oh, of course. Please take as much time as you need. We’re down to formalities and I’m sure Ms. Ikeda, Mr. Simonsen, and I can take care of the last few details. It’s important you take care of your girlfriend. Let me call my executive assistant and she’ll accompany you to one of our smaller meeting rooms where you can have more privacy.”

I get to my feet and walk over to Mr. Shimizu and clasp his hand in mine, grateful he’s willing to be so accommodating given the circumstances. Before I’m able to finish shaking the hands of Mr. Shimizu’s VPs, his executive assistant walks into the room to accompany me to a quieter office. Once I close the door behind me I pull out my phone without even sitting to read over the message Ciara sent.

Ciara: I miss you like crazy. I’m off to bed after an exciting night.

Ciara: I’m lying. It was scary.

Ciara: My ex, Dylan, hadn’t resolved his feelings about our breakup and he let me know in no uncertain terms.

Ciara: He was hiding in the bushes waiting for me—as drunk as a skunk.

Ciara: The bastard got a little (okay, a lot) rough with me.

Ciara: Thank God my best friend came over to return my phone or else I honestly believe he would have seriously hurt me.

Ciara: I'm fairly shaken, but Harley insisted on sleeping over at my place. I'll talk to you tomorrow.

That fucking Dylan. I'd send a couple of guys to take care of the asshole if I knew his last name or where he lived. I can't believe the coward put his hands on Ciara. Real men don't resort to force with a woman under any circumstances.

I pace the room like a trapped cougar, my nostrils flared, trying to calm down the seething volcano scorching my insides.

There's no way I'm going to be able to stay here and focus on these negotiations. I have to fly back to her. She needs me.

Without a second thought I dial my assistant to get me back to New York as fast as humanly possible. "Margaret?"

"Yes, Mr. von Henningsen. How are the negotiations coming along? Are we close?"

"Something urgent came up. I need to rejig my schedule for the rest of the week."

“Certainly, sir. Are you still in the meeting with Mr. Shimizu?”

“Yes, but I received a text from a good friend of mine back in America. I think she’s in danger and I need to be by her side immediately.”

“I’m looking at your week and you have quite a few important meetings lined up. Do you want me to cancel them all?”

“Heavens, no. That would be professional suicide in a country like Japan. Call a meeting with all my directors at the hotel in precisely one hour. And I mean all of them. Please contact the concierge at the Mandarin Oriental Tokyo and book one of their meeting rooms because there’s a lot to discuss and I don’t want us all crammed in my suite. If they’re not in a critical meeting, I expect them to drop everything and meet me there in sixty minutes sharp.”

“Absolutely, sir.”

“Good. In the meantime, get the jet ready and please also call the reception desk at the Mandarin Oriental Tokyo and make the necessary arrangements to check out of the room by end of day. Pay whatever cancellation fees are required. I don’t care. I need to get out of this city.”

“I understand, sir. I’ll take care of this immediately.”

“Please make arrangements with a chauffeur in New York. I don’t want to have to wait for a car when I

arrive and you know how JFK Airport can be challenging due to the traffic.”

“Of course. I’ll call the pilot and ask him for your estimated time of arrival.”

“Excellent. I’m also going to require a few things before I leave. I’d like you to call Pomellato and have one of their sales people waiting for me. I need to grab a small gift before I leave. I need chocolate. What do you recommend?”

“I’ll call La Maison Du Chocolat and buy a large assortment of their bestsellers.”

“Excellent. I’ll swing by and pick the chocolates up on the way to the airport.”

“Consider it done.”

“Champagne. I’ll need champagne as well. I’ll grab flowers when I land in Manhattan.”

“If I may ask, sir...”

“Of course, Margaret.”

“Mr. von Henningsen, this friend in New York who is in danger might require the help of the police or a doctor more than champagne and chocolates.”

“You’re lucky I can’t live without you or else I’d have your ass fired for such a smart remark.”

“Can you blame me for teasing you? You’re a notorious bachelor. You’ve never asked me to take care of a ‘friend’ like this. You usually keep it to a simple bouquet of flowers, but this siren is different, isn’t she?”

“She is indeed, Margaret.”

“She must be if you’re willing to fly back to New York considering you landed in Tokyo only two days ago.”

“She needs me and I’m not going to sit around waiting for her next text message to find out if she’s safe. I need to be by her side to protect her.”

“By the sound of things, she has you by the balls and the heart, sir.”

“Jesus. I’m surrounded by cocky Irish—first Martin and now you.” Nothing I say can camouflage the fire of desire I have burning for Ciara. “Yes, if you must know, I like her very much... enough to fly halfway across the planet for her at the drop of a hat.”

Nikolaj Watches Ciara Tour The ‘For Your Eyes Only’ Club

Ciara has been consuming my thoughts since I left New York. No matter how many times she allows me to have my way with her, it’s never enough. She’s a drug I can’t do without.

She’s everything I’ve ever wanted in a woman and the fact she loves me as much as I love her is the icing on the cake. I’ve fallen wholeheartedly for this American siren.

I still remember how consumed with rage I was when I walked into that ballroom to surprise her on her big night. After fighting off Jakob’s legal team in their determination to kick me off the board of directors of my own father’s company, I was able to get away long enough to be with the woman who makes my heart stop every time I lay eyes on her. Thank God I turned on my heel when I saw her embracing a stranger or else my first introduction to her brother-in-law would have been my fist against his jaw.

Make-up sex is the best sex.

All that pent-up energy... I knew taking Ciara in that bathroom would be an unforgettable experience, but she caught me off guard when she slipped out of her goddess-like purple dress. That clit toy she passed off as underwear had my already hard cock standing alert. The sight of her nearly caused me to have a heart attack. She’s

daring, gorgeous, sexy, smart and she's willing to be as submissive as I want her to be. I've never had so mind-blowing an orgasm in my life.

When I come, it's more than just a release. With Ciara it's like a communion of the soul. I'm shaken after she's made me climax and it's nearly impossible for me to catch my breath.

But I want more. How can I heighten all of the intense sexual experiences we've shared so far?

A thought crosses my mind.

I pull out my phone and dial the number of one of the richest men in Britain—my friend, Christopher O'Pry.

Chris owns the most lucrative commercial real-estate addresses in London and he also owns a fleet of exclusive *For Your Eyes Only* clubs around Europe. If anyone can help me create a magical night of debauchery with Ciara, Chris is the man for the job.

"Chris, it's Nik, the Great Dane. Am I catching you at a bad time?"

"I always have time for old friends, even if you've been ignoring me lately."

"I'm sorry, buddy, I've been in North America for the past eleven months and I'm constantly traveling. You know how it is. I haven't set foot in London in so long."

"I heard. Martin and I had dinner a few months ago and he filled me in on how you intend on taking on the US and Asia by storm. You're so ambitious, you make me look like a slacker."

We laugh.

Chris is one of the hardest-working men I know. He could sit idle on his fortune, like I could, but he gets up every morning with such determination. I have great admiration for him.

“How’s Martin? Is he still in love? Is that why he’s not coming by the London club as much?”

“He’s very much in love, but who can blame him. Eloise is charming and she’s gorgeous.”

“I saw her photos and you’re right on the money on that one. Our Irish boy scored big time.”

Martin is a self-confessed voyeur and he’s visited Chris’s club every time he’s in London. He takes pleasure in watching others get off. The fake acting in porn videos on the internet pales in comparison to watching people fuck live.

“Are you calling me because you’ll be in London and you’d like to connect?”

“I’m actually stuck in Copenhagen dealing with my brother’s bullshit, but I’ll be in London next week.”

“The saga never ends between the von Henningsen brothers. You know your brother would be lost without your father’s company.”

“I know. Everyone knows. My father knows, but my mother has my dad wrapped around her little finger and she adores her firstborn—he can do no wrong.”

“If you’re going to be in London, we should meet up. Perhaps we can have dinner and you might come by

the club to watch or be watched... unless you've also met a feisty Irish woman who's stolen your heart."

I pause, uncertain how much I'm willing to reveal. "She's not Irish, she's American."

"Jesus, Nik. Are you telling me a woman caught the most notorious bachelor I know? I never thought I'd see the day. She must be something else."

"She is. That's why I'm calling."

"You've got me confused, buddy. Are you looking for my blessing?" He laughs.

"Nah, I don't need your blessings."

"So what can I do you for and how can I serve your lady?"

"I want a night with her at your club."

"That's not a problem, mate. Are you willing to share her or allow others to watch?"

"Hell, no. I'll rip the head off anyone who touches her or even looks at her with lust in his eyes."

"Why my club, then? You have a pretty impressive home in London and I'm pretty sure you can afford any room at the most expensive hotels in the city. Heck, you can afford a room at Buckingham Palace if they were willing to let you in."

"I want a private VIP room, but I'm not looking for anything crazy. I just want to be able to have her in a kinky setting. I've heard you have exclusive rooms where anything goes—even if it doesn't involve whips and chains."

I've only been to Chris's club with Martin. Watching was a turn-on, but I've never had the desire to go there on my own.

"We do. We have a few rooms on the upper floors for the high rollers like you who don't want to mingle with the crowd. The rooms are private and you can do whatever you want up there. The minute your lady arrives, we'll shut off the cameras and you're welcome to take her as you wish—without anyone watching. I only allow people I trust to use these rooms. For security reasons we have eyes everywhere in the club, but we make an exception for those private rooms."

"That's what I'm looking for. What's in those rooms? I mean, do they look like kinky dungeons?"

"We're very flexible. We can have it ready however you wish. If you want a table, a bed, a swing, chains, ropes, sexual contraptions or anything else, we can have it available within twenty-four hours. Most times we can turn things around within half a day."

"Is there a bar in those rooms or will a waiter come in and out?"

"Staff is not allowed up there when patrons occupy the rooms. We'd stock the fridge behind the bar with your selections and we're happy to cater a feast of your liking. I'm certain you won't run out of alcohol or food for the evening."

There's only one thing I want to devour. "That's excellent, Chris. I'd only need a large chair and a few

tables around the room. You know I'm a cognac kind of guy and my girl loves champagne."

"Your girl? Wow."

"She had me the moment I laid eyes on her."

"We have an endless supply of champagne. What else?"

"What about music?" I want to set the mood for what I have planned for Ciara.

"We have surround-sound speakers everywhere in the club. In the VIP rooms, you control the selection for the night via a playlist on your phone."

"You've thought of everything a man could desire."

"Of course I have, Nik. This club is an extension of my own deep, dark fantasies all the way to the twelve-foot-high uncovered windows you'll find in every one of the VIP rooms."

"Can anyone see us?" I'm concerned we'll end up with an involuntary audience.

"Not at all. I selected this secluded industrial area of London because it's still undeveloped. Most buildings are low and since our VIP rooms are on the upper floors, no one will see you. I've had the pleasure of testing each and every room myself."

"Wow. You've taken this fantasy up a few notches." This club is his passport to sin.

"I'm happy to oblige, dear friend."

Good. "One more thing."

"Name it."

“I want to watch her every move from the moment she sets foot outside the chauffeured car. I want to read every expression through her eyes. I want to know when she’s turned on and when she’s shocked.”

“Your American girlfriend caught you hook, line and sinker.” He chuckles.

“Guilty as charged.” No point in denying it.

“That can be arranged. I’ll get my assistant to set up a live camera feed on a laptop and we’ll set you up in one of the empty offices on the fifth floor. You’ll have a private show of your own. When she’s ready to come meet you in the VIP room, I’ll have one of my staff take you down the second set of private elevators and you’ll be ready for her.”

“Brilliant.”

“Nik, you’ll be seeing everything she sees—that means any room she visits, you’ll also catch a glimpse of the naughty action.”

“Is that a problem?”

“No, both you and she will have signed our standard waiver, but you’re going to get incredibly turned on by the time she sets foot in your private room. I want to make sure you realize that. It would be wrong not to warn you.”

“Just thinking of her turns me on. The more insatiable I am before she comes to meet me, the more memorable this night will be for both of us.”

“In that case, you’re in for a good night.”

She's been resisting giving herself entirely to me, but this kinky night will force her to submit every part of her sinful body. If watching her take pleasure from all the kinky action that takes place in the club means I'll have a hard-on that rivals that of a stallion, so be it. It simply means I'll devour her with more fervor and I'll leave her panting for more.

Nikolaj Prepares His Paris Apartment To Receive Ciara

This secret chapter kicks off at Eloise and Martin's place. Weeks after Ciara ran away from the von Henningsen vodka company's head office after Jakob manipulated her into believing Marna's son was Nikolaj's. Nik is spending a relaxing evening among friends.

* * *

“Thank you, Eloise. The meal was delicious. Your beef stew hit the spot and I can't thank you enough for taking pity on me and preparing your scrumptious toffee pudding dessert.”

“I'm happy you enjoyed it, Nik. I'm so relieved you were willing to finally come out of the cave you've been hiding in for five weeks.”

“I had no desire to be around people. I've been so heartbroken since Ciara left. Jakob's evil ways nearly destroyed me.” I miss her with every fiber of my being.

“Yeah, Nik, Eloise is right. I was also getting worried. We text and talk every day, but she's right, you've been hiding. You wouldn't even come out to meetings. You locked yourself in that castle of yours. Other than for last night, you've been M.I.A.”

“Martin, without you, Bryce, and Diego, I wouldn't have survived these past weeks.”

“I’ve known you since we were boys and I’ve never seen you fall so hard. I knew you were hurting—it was painfully obvious. I couldn’t let Jakob destroy you like that without a fight. It’s the Irish in me. We don’t back away from a good fight.”

“Oh, I can attest to that.” Eloise’s comment makes us all laugh and eases the mood.

“Your idea of contacting Bryce for help was pure genius,” I say. “I had no idea the British private investigator he recommended would uncover such a bed of lies.”

Martin’s expression hardens. “Jakob is a piece of shit.”

“You’re right, he’s a prick.”

Eloise and Martin have been trying to get me to come out of my Copenhagen home for weeks to no avail. They’ve even camped at my door to make sure I didn’t die of starvation in my own home. Eloise took turns with my three sisters and my mother to bring me meals. I asked my chef and cleaning staff not to come to the house. I just couldn’t handle seeing anyone.

Tonight is the first time I’ve shaved in five weeks and it’s the first time I’ve ventured out since Ciara left the country. Yesterday, the private investigator I hired confirmed everything—Jakob is a masterful liar and a cheat.

“Everything is out in the open,” Eloise says. “No more lies. You can go to America and claim back your princess.”

“Yes and no.”

Eloise casts a worried glance at me as she helps Martin clear the dining table we’ve been sitting at for the past two hours. “What do you mean?”

“Yeah, mate, that sounds confusing,” Martin says. “Are the investigating team and the police still gathering more facts?”

“No. I think we have it all covered. It’s my mom.” I rub my hand over my face. “My dad wants to talk to her before the news goes public.”

“Of course, she’s going to be crushed. The poor woman.”

“Eloise, with all due respect to Nik’s mom, she’s known her eldest son was a selfish manipulator since she gave birth to him—”

“She’s still his mother.”

Martin shakes his head.

“Don’t be too hard on your boyfriend,” I say.

“*Fiancé!*” Martin purses his lips.

“I beg your pardon. It’s still so new. *Fiancé.*”

Since Martin is more of a brother to me than Jakob has ever been, I cast aside my despair and made the effort to attend last night’s lavish engagement party. My mate masterminded a surprise party and flew in Eloise’s entire family for the big day.

“My mother knows who Jakob truly is. She may not admit it, but she knows, and that’s why she’s always been there to pick up his shit. It infuriates my father to no end, but my dad is so in love with my mom, he’d give her

the moon if she requested it. Now, my father has to find a gentle way to let her know the son she idealizes so much is a thief, a cheat, and he's broken her youngest son's heart—that's a lot to take in. My father has asked me to wait until he breaks the news to my mother before contacting Ciara."

"That's a big request."

"It's only a few days, Martin. I've waited five long weeks, but now that I know I'm not the father of Marna's child, and Jakob played us all for idiots, I can handle having to wait a few more days."

"Bryce gave you the contact of a real pro. This guy and his team make every mystery movie I've ever seen look like a comedy."

"I agree. He hacked Jakob's phone, computer and our entire computer system at the vodka company. I expected he'd find dirt, but I never expected we'd find out Jakob had been blackmailing an employee and diverting funds from my dad's company to take care of Marna's needs."

"Yeah. I can't believe your accountant is now in jail."

"He'll be there for a long time."

"What about Jakob?" Eloise asks the question with such worry in her eyes. "I mean I hate the bastard, like the pair of you, but no one wants to see someone you know end up behind bars."

"It was a hard decision for my father and after weeks of sleepless nights turning the question over in his

head, he found out my brother skipped town with Marna and ran off to Sweden to avoid facing any charges. Jakob isn't man enough to take responsibility for his own actions—he'd rather run like a weasel."

Both Eloise and Martin look at me in shock.

"What about money? Your brother has access to all of the company's accounts."

"My father shut him down weeks ago, but never told him. Dad was determined to make him sweat. I think Jakob started clueing in when he couldn't access money and he latched on to poor Marna to save him."

"Wow. Your father cut him off?"

"Yup. Dad was merciless. Jakob can't access any of the vodka company's accounts. My brother's credit cards have been frozen and a few days ago the Audi dealership repossessed the company car under my father's orders."

"This is serious, Nik."

"There's more. My father has been seeking legal advice to disown Jakob since he heard of my brother's attempt to frame me for the paternity of Marna's son. By the time we discovered he was stealing money, my dad didn't want to have anything to do with Jakob anymore."

"What a drastic move," Eloise says. "Your dad must be infuriated to take such measures."

"Honey, Jakob was a scumbag. He took advantage of everyone around him and he was quite disrespectful of Nik's dad and the efforts he had invested to build his vodka company. He would claim to whoever

was willing to listen he was the brainchild and marketing genius. The bleeding idiot couldn't find his way around a toilet. How could he manage to build what Nik's dad built?" Martin crosses his arms with indignation and rolls his eyes.

"Martin is right. Jakob would say terrible things about my dad and since my brother is clueless, he didn't understand my father would eventually catch wind."

"So what exactly does it mean for Jakob?"

I meet Eloise's gaze. "By disowning him, my father legally states Jakob has no financial rights to my dad's estate and that decision cannot be reversed—ever. Jakob won't be able to manipulate my mother if my dad passes away. It also means Jakob's heirs will never have any claim to our fortune."

Martin shakes his head.

"It's going to crush my mum, but the alternative is for my father to start procedures to force Jakob back to Copenhagen to face trial and end up in jail."

"What a mess," Eloise says.

"It's the kind of mess only my brother could make," I say. "Once my dad speaks to my mum, this horrible nightmare will be behind us all."

"So next week you can fly to New York and tell Ciara the truth."

"Yes and no."

He frowns. "I don't follow."

“I’m not going to fly all the way to New York just to tell her how Jakob screwed things up for us. I have much bigger plans—”

“Oh my God, Nik.” Eloise drops the plates she was holding on the dining table and brings both hands to her mouth.

“What? What am I missing, Eloise?”

She smiles from ear to ear, and Martin is looking at her as if she’s lost her marbles.

“I’m going to call Diego tomorrow, Martin.”

“Why do you need to call Diego to fly to New York to claim back your girl—”

“No, you daft Irish. Nik is going to ask Ciara to marry him.”

Martin widens his eyes.

I turn to Eloise. “How did you guess?”

“You love her and I’ve seen how she looks at you. It’s undeniable—the two of you were meant to be together. For the love of God, a blind man can see the love oozing from the pair of you. Had it not been for your stupid brother, we would’ve had a double engagement party last night.”

I smile. “I’d never rob you and Martin of your moment of glory, but yes, I would have asked Ciara’s hand in marriage a long time ago. I wanted to fly her to Copenhagen to meet my family because I knew the night I nearly broke Jakob’s jaw, I couldn’t live without her.”

“Buddy, you’ve been holding back on me. How could you?” Martin says.

“I wasn’t. You’ve met my feisty American princess. There’s no way she would have accepted a life with me had I been the father of Marna’s son. Now, I hold in my hands indisputable proof and I can claim her.”

“What if she’s moved on?”

“Martin!” Eloise hits Martin in the stomach.

He frowns. “Honey, I’m simply covering all the bases here. I don’t want my best friend to get his hopes up only to come back from America crushed.”

“She hasn’t moved on.” Eloise declares that with certainty. “They love each other. You don’t erase such passion in a matter of weeks.”

“How do you know? Are the two of you best friends now since the gala? Is that what you’re telling me?”

“We don’t have to be the best of friends. A woman knows.”

“Oh, there we go.” He rolls his eyes.

Martin and Eloise bicker, hands flying everywhere.

Those Irish are so passionate.

I jump in to calm them down. “The question had been haunting me for weeks until I asked Ciara’s mom how she was doing.”

Martin tilts his head to the side. “What did she say?”

“It was a short phone call after I had spoken to Diego about the latest developments in the case. She said Ciara was broken and she missed me like crazy, but she

was too stubborn to admit it. Bryce also confirmed the same. I have a chance to get her back. She hasn't moved on."

"What a beautiful ending."

"Yeah, Eloise. I hope so."

"So you're going to ask Diego for her hand in marriage? Taking a page out of my book, mate?" He grins.

"No need to gloat."

He flew all the way to Ireland to beg Eloise's dad and six brothers to allow him to marry her. There's nothing wrong with being old-fashioned.

"I'm going to speak to Diego," I say, "her mom and her father Emilio. She means the world to me and I need the support of her family to make this happen. Once I've spoken to her mom and both her dads, I'll call Bryce and ask if I can speak to Ciara's sister, Sofia. I'm going to need her help to go out shopping for a dazzling ring that will leave Ciara stunned."

"This is so exciting." Eloise claps like a giddy schoolgirl. "Where are you going to propose? Central Park? Rockefeller Center? The top of the Empire State Building? Oh, what's the name of that movie where the two main characters meet at the top of the Empire State Building after speaking to each other over the phone for weeks? It's on the tip of my tongue."

"I should hire you as my wedding planner," I say with a laugh.

“You’re going to make me blush. I’m sure Ciara will want to have a say in designing her big day.”

“My God, this is going to be the wedding of the century.”

“Martin is right, Nik. It’s going to be an opulent affair, but you still haven’t told me where you plan on proposing to her.”

“You can’t put pressure on a man, honey.”

“The setting for the proposal is so important. You should know. Your sisters told me how much you agonized about our big day.”

Martin turns beet red.

These two are perfect for one another.

“For the past three weeks, I’ve been getting renovations done at my Paris apartment since I’ve been renting it out for so long. I want to fly Ciara to Paris so we can arrive early on Christmas Eve. We’ll stay at my place, and I’ll casually suggest we go for a late-afternoon stroll. I’ve already hired a local band and a few bodyguards—”

“You’re going to hold her down, serenade her and force her to accept your proposal?” Martin’s interruption makes us all laugh.

“I was hoping to seduce her, not scare the hell out of her, but thanks for the suggestion, mate. As I was saying before you added your two cents,” I say, rolling my eyes as I smile at my best friend, “I plan on asking for her hand in marriage on the *Pont des Arts*, near the Louvre museum. I’ll find out her favorite love song to melt her

heart. The bodyguards are to keep the crowds away until she says yes.”

Eloise gasps and grabs her chest. “What a romantic scenario, Nik.”

“As a woman, would you be swept off your feet if I flew you to Paris and proposed near the Louvre at sunset?”

“Are you kidding me? She’s going to lose it. The *Pont des Arts* is one of the most romantic attractions in Paris.” She arches a brow. “Will you be able to wait until your dad speaks to your mom or will you give in early and pop the question?”

“I love Ciara so much. There’s no denying what’s so blatant to see, but I also love my mother even though she seems to prefer my brother. I’ll allow my father to talk to Mum. I’ll fly to New York early next week to give myself time to shop for Ciara’s ring and settle my nerves. Once my dad gives me the green light, I’ll have a courier drop off Marna’s son’s birth certificate as proof and I’ll wait outside her home. If she agrees to see me, it will simply be a matter of convincing her to escape to Paris with me. She won’t see it coming.”

I can’t believe I can finally ask the woman I love to be my wife. No more drama. No more tears. No more pain. No more obstacles preventing us from spending the rest of our lives together.

“This news deserves a celebration,” Martin says, “Let me run to the wine cellar and grab a bottle of

champagne. The most eligible bachelor in Europe is getting hitched.”

* * *

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