Seconds

already spotted us anyway."

Xavier glowered.

Angela

I looked at the diners around us, at the hostess who had stopped to wait for us. "Don't be silly, Xavier. We have to. We

"No," Xavier said, taking a step back and crossing his arms over his chest. "I'm not going over there."

said we would." "You promised me it would be someone's grandma." He jabbed a finger toward the table where his father sat. "That's

no granny. That's *Penny*."

"I know," I told him, stepping closer, dropping my voice. "Please, let's just go over and see what they say. They've

Honestly, I was just as surprised as Xavier to see Penny sitting at the table with Brad.

I knew I owed them the benefit of the doubt though.

Maybe their relationship was platonic. Maybe they were just friends. Maybe they weren't, but who was I to judge?

"Please," I said. "For me?"

His nostrils flared, a muscle in his jaw jumped, and then he said, "Fine." I gave a small smile to the hostess, and she began leading us toward the other couple.

"Angela, Xavier," Brad announced as we approached the table. He threw his arms open, jumping to his feet.

before."

So much for them being just friends.

Slowly, Penny stood at Brad's side. She looked stunning in her slinky silver dress, and if the smile on her face was

anything to go by, she was happy. Really, genuinely happy. I wrapped my arms around her as well. "Good to see you again."

each other at that speed-dating event that you signed me up for, Angela. We've been inseparable since." I raised my eyebrows and looked at Penny. "You were at a seniors' speed-dating event?"

"Well, of course we first met at my retirement party," Brad began, taking Penny's hand. "But then we bumped into

restaurant. I sang for cocktail hour."

I would have almost preferred it if they'd just started making out instead. It was nice to see Brad so happy. I had to admit it was a little much though.

Brad beamed at Penny, and the two shared a look so intimate that I had to look away. I blushed, my eyes fixed on my

"That's wonderful," I told the couple across from us. "Really. Congratulations."

Holding Xavier's hand in public made me blush.

Did he know that she was Jacques's ex-girlfriend?

Jacques, who had kidnapped and tried to rape me?

in on more than one occasion.

Penny knew though.

Did she tell him?

She was worried.

I wasn't sure which it was this time. Maybe both.

Penny cleared her throat. "It's okay, Angela."

plummeted.

pointed right at us.

from me.

Only Xavier had no interest in listening.

"Me? How dare you! You knew he was my father."

Didn't he see what she was doing? Who she was?

She didn't love him. She loved his money.

"No, let's talk about it now," I shot back.

chosen to be modest.

To be a decent fucking human being.

the cameraman. Because they were all on us.

Only, this time, I could only half blame him.

uncontrollable his tantrums were.

My mouth fell open.

My father had already had the love of his life.

"No, it's fucking not okay," Xavier spat out. "Does he know?"

I didn't want her pity. Her comfort. I just needed this to end. Quickly.

So, once the waiter disappeared, I looked Penny in the eyes and spoke.

lap.

Did Brad know that Penny and Xavier had slept together?

He couldn't possibly, could he? Xavier

Like she actually meant something to him. Like she was a replacement for Mom.

Not only had Dad fallen for someone who was less than half his age, he'd chosen one of the women I'd been balls deep

Memories of Penny kept flashing through my mind. Memories of her lips wrapped around my cock, of her fat ass

I'd known this dinner was a mistake from the start, but this was so much worse than I could have imagined.

jiggling as I pumped into her, of her moaning my name, her fingers clawing into my back.

He couldn't know, could he? My father wasn't that fucked up.

Did he care?

She was always worried. For me or about me.

My breath caught in my throat as silence settled over the table, Xavier's question hanging in the air. "Xavier, don't," I said and reached out to lay my hand on his leg.

watching us. Watching Xavier.

We'd caught the attention of more than just a few restaurant guests.

Xavier

The fury was bubbling over now. Impossible to hold back. Fueled by vodka and Parmesan breadsticks. "Let's talk about the fact that you're dating a woman that I've fucked. That I've made scream with pleasure. That's begged me to come inside of her."

"You've crossed the line, Xavier!" Dad said, his face red.

This was nothing but sex and lies, and I wasn't about to let them believe anything else.

Was I the only person who could see this situation clearly? Angela

I knew my cheeks would be flushed, from the attention, and the shame at Xavier's actions.

someone that they themselves had dated first. No matter who was right or wrong, I needed to get Xavier to calm down, before he did something he'd really regret.

His dark eyes did flash to mine for a second, only to shoot back to his father. "You want Angela too, don't you?"

"Xavier, there are people watching," I said and grabbed his hand, squeezing tight, making him look at me.

"You're always going on about how similar she is to mom," Xavier continued. "You're dying to fuck her."

"I've had enough of this, Xavier. Leave, now. Before you embarrass this family any further," Brad told his son.

Cameras flashed. People clapped. Penny ran off through the crowd, Brad quick on her tail. Xavier stormed off in the opposite direction.

"It's good to see you," I told Brad as we embraced. "Thank you both for coming," he said. "I would like to introduce you to my girlfriend, Penny. I believe you've met "That's one way to put it," I heard Xavier mutter darkly beside me.

"You too," she said and then looked over my shoulder. "And you, Xavier." Xavier didn't reply. He simply dropped into the closest chair and flagged down a passing waiter. "Vodka. Straight up. With lime." "So," I said as the rest of us took our seats, "how did you two, ah, meet?" It seemed like a natural question. Even though I'd known Penny for a while now, I didn't know how she and Xavier's father had crossed paths in an ... intimate way.

"Where else is she supposed to meet sugar daddies?" Xavier said under his breath. Penny laughed lightly, though I saw a brief flash of discomfort in her eyes. "No, my band was setting up in the same "I haven't been able to keep my hands off her ever since," Brad said, placing a kiss on the back of her hand. "My lucky Penny." The waiter arrived then with Xavier's drink. Xavier ripped it from the server's shaking hands and downed the glass in one gulp. "Another, please."

And even though Brad and Penny weren't *technically* doing public displays of affection ...the two of them should really have saved that for when they were alone. Especially when we were meeting them as a couple for the first time. Especially when Xavier looked more like he was about to explode with every passing second There were other question marks popping up as well. Darker ones. The kinds of questions I was fairly sure would ruin some couples.

I downed my third vodka. I couldn't stand watching my dad look at Penny like that, all googly-eyed.

Then the memories changed. And it wasn't me her hands and lips were on; it was my father. I slammed my empty glass on the tabletop and reached for Angela's wine. There wasn't enough liquor in the whole goddamn world for this. This was the kind of thing that took years of therapy and hard drugs to straighten out.

Did he like it? I took a long swig of red wine and swirled it around my mouth. "Xavier," Angela whispered from beside me after she'd finished placing her order.

"Does he know the truth?" Angela

"You *made* this the place, Dad." Xavier sneered. "You're the one who decided to tell me that you were dating again, in public. You're the one who picked a woman three times younger than you." "I think maybe it's time to go," I suggested softly, placing a hand on his shoulder. If people hadn't been looking before, they were now, having been attracted by Xavier's yelling. Half the restaurant was

"No," Xavier said, shrugging my hand off. "We're meant to get to know each other, let's get to know each other."

"Xavier—" I began again. I had to tell him. To warn him. There was a man, half hidden behind a pillar, with a phone

Out of the corner of my eye, I caught a movement. As I turned to face the far side of the room, my stomach

"Son, please," Brad said, glancing around to be sure no one could hear us. "This is hardly the place—"

"How about I tell you how well Penny and I know each other, hmm?" I smiled devilishly. "Have you told him about the lecture hall in NYU? Or how about when you and I secretly fucked in the library?" Penny gasped, suddenly having the decency to look as outraged as I felt. "How dare you, Xavier."

"Why don't we talk about this later, Xavier," Dad said, pulling Penny against him. Protecting the gold-digging whore

Well, it was too late. "No, it's you two that have crossed it," I spat back. "Xavier," Angela whispered again from beside me. I felt her tug on the sleeve of my coat. With my luck, my wife probably sided with them. Probably bought their lies.

The man with the phone had moved closer now. He stood only a few tables away, not even bothering to hide himself.

Xavier was making such a spectacle the man didn't have to hide. There wasn't a single eye in the restaurant looking at

We hadn't been in a situation that caused Xavier's rage to show itself in a long time. I'd almost forgotten just how

Beside him, Penny watched with wide eyes. She'd wrapped her arms around her waist—as though she'd suddenly

He was hurting. I could see that. I didn't expect that any child would take well to one of their parents dating someone new, much less when it was

"Don't worry," Xavier said, standing and throwing his napkin onto the table. "You and that whore have already caused more embarrassment to this family than I ever could." Before anyone had the chance to reply, Penny shot up from the table and slapped Xavier across the face.

"The fish?"

I sank lower into my seat as three waiters arrived, their arms full of hot plates.