

Seal The Deal

Angela

Xavier had me pinned against the door of an empty hospital room. I knew it was inappropriate. My best friend and my father, were down the hall, waiting to find out the fate of a child. And here we were, getting hot and heavy.

But it didn't feel inappropriate.

It felt like dotting an "I" that had been forgotten for too long. It felt like the only option, the only way to get back to normal.

It felt good.

It felt so good.

So good that all the fear I'd had about Xavier still loving Claudia, about him choosing her over me, dissolved into thin air. He was here with me. He was kissing *me*.

He wasn't camped out waiting for her.

He was here, waiting this emotional emergency out.

He was touching me, all over, making me feel a way no one else could. I pressed my chest against him, feeling a blissful tingling radiate through me.

I placed my arms around his neck, touching his stubble. I loved the way it felt scraping against my bare cheeks, how it made my legs shake in ecstasy.

I drove my hands through his dark locks, pushing them back and pulling him closer to me.

That was when he pressed his lips against my neck.

I gasped as I felt his tongue draw intricate designs along my skin.

I didn't know what was hotter. The way he physically touched me or the way he didn't care if we got caught. He was so self-assured, so focused on me, that it was like he'd completely forgotten where we were.

Squirming beneath him, I brought my hands up between us, my fingers racing down the buttons of his shirt. Xavier's hands went to his belt, his slacks dropping to the floor around his shoes.

My dress came next, up and over my head.

As Xavier stepped back, his hooded gaze ran down my now-bare body.

Even though it still made me blush, I loved feeling his eyes on me, watching that naughty smirk appear. I knew he was imagining something insane.

An overwhelming sense of intimacy washed over me. Of love.

But Xavier didn't just love me.

He *wanted* me. All of me.

He desired me so much that it made me unafraid to desire him, desire the best, naughtiest parts of him.

Overcome with confidence, I whispered. "Do whatever you like, just do it fast."

He answered by spinning me around and bending me over. My hands dangled around my ankles, my hair falling around my face.

I could feel his breath on my spine, his body tracing along mine, and he leaned over me and placed a kiss on the back of my neck, between my shoulder blades.

I craved to feel closer to him and stood again, pressing each of my curves against his angles, intertwining our ankles, pressing my back against his chest, my head against his shoulder.

His hands reached around to cup my breasts as he rocked back and forth, his hardness sliding along my wetness.

Then his hands split off in different directions. One hand curved up to wrap around the base of my throat in a gentle hold, and the other slid down between my legs, swirling over my clitoris.

I let out a moan. "More."

"As much as you like," he replied and then drove right into me, making me scream out.

I shivered in bliss as I felt Xavier push further inside me, feeling his body stronger and deeper than ever before.

All I could do was scream for more.

Our marriage, our love, it wasn't a lucky lottery ticket. It was a Rubik's cube that we would have to keep solving as our colors changed.

It was a puzzle, not an obstacle.

It would be difficult, but if this were any indication, it'd also be damn fun.

Claudia

Have you ever had a *what the fuck am I doing* moment?

The kind of moment that makes you analyze your entire life, that makes you wonder where you took the wrong turn leading you to this desperate situation?

I didn't even feel present with his body over mine. How could I? His sweat was all over my skin, his heavy breathing right over my face.

Objectively, he wasn't doing anything wrong.

He was touching the right places, kissing that spot on my neck that I liked, dirty talking without sounding vulgar.

But even still, it wasn't enough.

Nothing was enough.

The money I got from the picture of Xavier and me—the picture I'd sold to the tabloids and the gossip blogs—filled up my bank account, but nothing else. I might've been able to treat myself to Chanel or a night at the Plaza, but that didn't mean anything.

Not to me, not anymore.

Money was just that.

Money.

It still left me wanting, left me needing, something else. Something warmer, more connected, more grounded.

Shit.

I wish I could take the money and run. Really, I did.

I wished cash was enough to jump-start my adrenaline, to make me feel as alive and rejuvenated as it used to, but it wasn't. Not anymore.

And then there was Xavier. Having to see him, having to see him with *her*.

Knowing that someone like him, someone like that billionaire *playboy* had found love—and I was alone—felt like having a permanent limp.

Reminding me of my weakness.

Of all that I didn't have, all that I couldn't hold on to.

And deep down, even when Xavier and I had been together, even when we had been happy, in love, I never thought he really wanted to marry me. He'd just wanted his father's approval—in the shape of a woman.

So I cheated on him. Daniel was everything Xavier wasn't—obsessed with me, generous with his affection, there when I needed him. But even after our secret got out, we didn't last.

We couldn't have lasted.

There was too bright a spotlight—too much hate and disbelief—angled right at us. It would be like getting married on a battlefield. A victory if we succeeded, but odds were stacked against us, shooting bullets into our vulnerable flesh.

"You're so ... hot ..." The man on top of me grunted, and my mind flashed back to the present. To the situation I'd put myself in because I wanted to feel alive again.

"You feel good," I whispered back. I was completely bored, but I could tell the poor guy was almost finished. So I might as well let him enjoy it.

With a final moan, he came, and then he rolled off of me. He pulled me close to him so my face was pressed into his pale chest. After a few moments, I couldn't hold my questions in any longer.

"Did you bring it?" I asked.

Ron nodded.

Our connection was one of convenience. We'd both been discarded by Xavier.

The billionaire had soaked up all we had to offer and left us like a lake with no water, a graveyard of sunken memories. When Xavier found out about Daniel and me, he'd shamed his friend in public, ruining his reputation and ensuring no one would dare end up with me.

And Ron, Xavier had fired him without so much as one good reason. After decades of serving his father, Xavier had inherited the assistant like he was a family heirloom. When he decided that Ron wasn't his taste, he spat him out.

Like me, Ron needed to fight back.

In ways Daniel never could.

All it took had been running into him after he'd been fired. Ron and I knew each other from when I was dating Xavier, all those years ago. Brad's assistant was never far behind Brad, so he'd be at family gatherings and social events.

And then I ran into him at a Starbucks in the Financial District a few weeks back. He'd told me what had happened, how he was still looking for work. How he was starting to get nervous. That was when I saw him for what he was: another person who'd been fucked over by the Knights.

Another person with intel that I could use.

And another person who, let's be honest, wanted to screw me.

So I let him into my apartment, and he let me into his mind. And man, did it have a big safe filled with top-secret Knight information.

"I brought it." Ron nodded, kissing my forehead before he reached over and lifted a briefcase onto the bed. He opened his briefcase, picking out a lengthy contract.

I grabbed it out of his hands. Delighted didn't cover it.

The document outlined an agreement between Angela and Xavier, an agreement to be married, in exchange for cash.

They hadn't even met before she'd agreed to be his wife.

It makes sense, I internally sneered. ~The only way Xavier could get a woman to be with him is if she hadn't met him, if she didn't know him. ~

Xavier had, for all intents and purposes, rented a woman. For a colossal price. But now his lease on her was up.

As I turned through the endless pages of the arrangement, I felt energized. That was the adrenaline rush I'd been looking for, the sense of liveliness that I so craved.

Soon the entire world would know the truth about Angela and Xavier.

I felt giddy.

I felt hot.

"Hey, Ron." I nuzzled back up to the tense man. "Ready for round two?"