

Max

Maximilian Villeneuve rocked on his heels in his oce overlooking the city and smirked. He swirled bourbon in his crystal tumbler and studied the lights of the city as they came on in the late evening.

He looked over his shoulder as his admin assistant knocked once and entered his space.

"Mr. Villeneuve, the last report you asked for is sent to your email. I'm heading out now."

"Thank you, Peaches," in his opinion it was a weird name for a woman, especially one who wasn't a stripper but considering his line of business it suited.

His cell phone rang just as she exited his oce closing the door softly behind him. He smiled at the name on the display, "hello, Papa."

"Hello Max." his father's voice was smiling. "How was your day?"

"Busy."

"Did you manage to complete your business endeavor?"

He had successfully taken over a competitor and sealed the deal this afternoon. "Yes. I did what I set out to accomplish."

"Your mother read the article on you in GQ today. She was mortied."

He gave a chuckle, "it was not my intention. I will apologize to her of course."

"Did you have to tell your interviewer in high school you stumbled across her vibrator and realized sharp pointy objects should never be near a woman's v****a?"

"Papa, she owned an old-fashioned battery operated which was straight. There were no curves or bends. It was not anatomically correct. She should not be ashamed. s*x is a normal biological activity and pleasure is important to —"

"Stop!" his father cut him off with a chuckle. "I am not discussing your mother's sexuality with you. You outed her use of dildos to the world, and she wants your head on a platter. If you keep talking to me like this, I'll hold the plate for her while she wields her carving knife."

He laughed at his father's words. "Fair enough. I will apologize and send her a gift basket."

"Not a gift basket from your company."

The horror in his father's voice made him laugh.

"I was thinking from the spa, Papa. The spa." In addition to his s*x toy empire, he also ran a reputable and very swanky, if he said so himself, collection of spa and wellness centers. Max Villeneuve made himself a fortune by learning how to please women and keeping them satished via any means necessary. As a scientist, he spent a lot of time in product and development sorting out what works best to make the opposite s*x feel good. He did of course have a line of products for men but apart from pocket p****s, c**k rings or prostrate stimulators, there wasn't much to expand in the market. Women were far more complex, their bodies each different with needs which varied from woman to woman. He wanted to make sure every woman, regardless of their shapes, sizes or s****i orientation knew pleasure.

"Did you talk to Ollie today?" his father changed the subject.

"She called me earlier, but I was in a meeting. Is she okay?"

"You didn't call her back?"

"I did but she didn't answer."

"Oh, she might have been with Lark helping her unpack."

"Lark?" his spine straightened, and he pushed away from the wall of windows he'd been leaning against. "She's home?" She once was his best friend, but she ghosted him years ago and refused to speak to him again. He didn't know why. She decided at the last second to accept entrance to a different university from him and Ollie. He saw her a handful of times over the last twelve years, but she'd avoided him like he personally killed her dog. He hadn't seen her now in person for at least ve years. She hadn't even come home for Christmas last year because according to her parents who still lived right next door to his parents, she went on a tropical vacation with her boyfriend.

"Yes, she is moving back to Dallas to work with Grady."

"No way. I thought she was living with the guy in Houston."

"She was."

His father wasn't telling him something and he knew it was important.

"What happened?"

"Not my story to tell, Max. All I know is she and Ollie were going for dinner and drinks and when I saw your sister earlier, she was teasing Grady about making sure he answers his phone tonight in case they get arrested."

"Where were they going?"

"I have no idea. You know your sister. It could be a dive bar to go line dancing or an exclusive club for bottle service. I wasn't asking her. I do know she stole a bottle of my bourbon."

"She was at the house?" he was surprised. His sister liked her privacy. When they were ten, their mother birthed the triplets and then three years later their youngest sister. The chaos of being new teenagers with four siblings under the age of four always getting into their things drove both of them crazy. When they graduated high school, Ollie opted to move onto campus for university and lived dorm life for four years. She then left college at twenty-one and went to Houston with their great-grandfather for six years. When she'd come back two years ago, she lived with their parents for a total of two weeks before the triplets who were teens by then danced so hard on her nerves she'd packed up in the middle of the night and moved to a hotel. She'd had a condo the next day.

"She was here for dinner. Margot tried to get her to let her intern for her for the summer. She wants the job experience before going into her senior year next year."

He laughed, "as if. Margot would spill her coffee and Ollie would re her on the spot. She'd do better to work for me, but this is an eighteen plus enterprise."

"Well, I don't know about her working anywhere. She's still young."

"At her age, my entire future was mapped out."

"At her age, you were making your way through the girls' basketball, soccer and eld hockey teams."

"Market research," he chuckled. "I developed the plan but needed to gain knowledge."

"And your excuse now?"

He gave a tilt of his head at the accusatory tone of his father's voice. "Say what you want to say, Papa."

"I'm worried for you Max. You haven't dated anyone seriously. You work fteen-hour days and you're growing the business in a way which you should be proud of. However, your life lacks meaningful relationships."

"I have friends. Good friends. Johan is my best friend. We hung out just last weekend and we're going out for drinks tonight."

"I meant a woman, Max. A meaningful relationship with a woman. Someone to talk to, to share your thoughts, your fears, your dreams with. Don't you want to know what it's like to have someone love you romantically?"

"Is this because the Villeneuve Witch ruined dinner last month?" His great-grandmother was a menace.

"No. This is because as your papa, I am worried for you. I love you. I want you to have it all. I feel you are missing out on the best part of life because you're focused on chasing the almighty dollar. There is more to life than money."

"Says the man who was a billionaire before it was fashionable," he scoffed at his father.

"Do not make my mistakes, Max. Your mother and I missed out on nine years because I was stupid."

"Are you calling me stupid?"

"No. I was stupid. I let the best thing in my life get away because of my pride. Do not let your pride stand in the way."

"What makes you think I'm letting my pride stand in my way?"

"Because I saw the text you sent Ollie yesterday when I was visiting her in her oce. She asked how your date went and you said the girl was beneath you."

"I meant literally. I was on a breakfast date yesterday with a model I met the evening before. Ollie texted and asked me how my date was going, and I said she was still beneath me. She was under my desk."

"Maximilian!"

He laughed, "don't ask things you don't want answers to. Stop worrying about me and meaningful relationships. I'm happy. I have a good life and I'm not lonely. I promise. My life is full."

"Is it? What do you want in your life, Max? Do you want a wife and kids?"

"I'm not thirty for another six weeks. I have lots of time to think on what I want. Right now, I'm young and enjoying my life."

"What if you miss the one?"

"The one?"

"Your mother was the one for me. I almost missed her. What if the woman who will own your heart ends up being the one who gets away and you don't get the chance to get her back?"

"You're not going to let this go, are you?"

"I am your father. I worry."

"There is no need." He looked up as his friend Johan poked his head into the oce space. "Johan is here, Papa. I need to go. We are going to grab some food and drinks. I love you. I'll talk to you tomorrow."

"I love you, my son."

He ended the call and exhaled, his cheeks pung as he looked at his best friend. "f**k me."

"What was that?"

"I'm telling you, my great-grandmother screwed me last month at dinner. He's been at me every freaking day to nd a good woman and settle down. She prophesized my d**k is going to fall off from overuse and he's freaking out." He grabbed his coat from the back of his chair and swung it over his shoulders. "It's my d**k, not his. He doesn't get to dictate," he smirked at his pun as Johan laughed, "where I put it."

"Speaking of places to put your d**k," Johan clapped him on the shoulder, "do you want to hit the new club my cousin opened tonight? It's bound to be chock full of gorgeous women."

"I'm in." He pushed the nagging feeling of his father's constant reminders of his single status out of his head and prepared for a night out on the town. Let the festivities begin.