

## Narnurs

He was exhausted. His head was pounding. He'd been eating antacids like candies since he'd realized Presley skipped town on him. His PR team were losing their minds because another story popped up this morning with a trending tweet questioning his use of steroids. His legal advisors wanted to sue her, but his father and her father were old friends and not to mention she was Odin's younger sister. Legal action was not going to happen.

He needed her to get back and x this s\*\*t. He sent her another text asking if she would at the very least release a joint statement. He already knew it was going to bounce back as blocked. He'd been blocked since Tuesday and when he'd texted her from his assistant's cell, she'd blocked it as well. She'd been gone four days. It was Friday now, and she was in the wind.

Cruz needed caffeine and he left his oce in search of something stronger than what his admin assistant made for him out of the instant coffee machine.

"Sir?"

"You brought me a coffee yesterday and it was as close to watching them pick the beans and then make me a coffee with it on the side of the road. Where did you get it?"

"There is a shop across the street, about ve doors down. The couple who owns it are from Brazil, and they import their beans from family they have there. You liked it?"

"I loved it."

"I can run and –"

"No. I'm going."

"Sir. You have a meeting in an hour."

"It's not going to take an hour to get coffee from a shop a few feet away. If it does, stall." He grunted knowing damn well the meeting was with his board of directors and they were still pissed off over the loss of the fty-million-dollar deal. Regardless of the fact he was certain he was going to get a more lucrative deal with a different company to make up the loss, the investors who were now board members were all pissed off at the sudden dip in prots.

When he reached the outdoors, he was immediately feeling better. The bright sunshine, salty ocean air from the bay and the cloudless sky were instant balm for his pissy mood. He looked left and right and then noted not far down the street on the opposite side the hanging sign of the coffee shop exactly as his assistant said it was.

Dodging cars, he crossed to the other side and then when he reached the coffee shop, he breathed deep, inhaling the aroma of the dark roasted beans. Thank God for coffee. He got in line and studied the menu behind the counter.

"Oh my god, is that him?"

He pretended he didn't hear the giggle of the four university aged women sitting at a table to his right.

"It's denitely him. I bet under his suit he's all ripped muscles and an eight pack."

"And what do they call that V-shape thing?"

"The Adonis Belt."

"I thought it was Apollo's Belt."

"I don't care whose belt it is, I want to lick it."

Cruz gave his head a shake at the blunt commentary and shot them a side eye surprised as hell they were staring him down. They all giggled again and buried their faces in their hands. He frowned at them. What the hell?

"It is denitely him."

He felt a shiver of worry trail down his spine and then thought of Presley. Were these more people who saw him on the internet when she'd trashed the date and then suggested they were role playing? He shot the quartet another irritated scowl and they giggled again.

One of them waved at him, "are you Narnurs?"

"What?" he turned his torso to face them. Their giggling reminded him of chattering monkeys at a zoo. He turned away from them and walked up to the counter. He ordered his coffee and then ordered an extra espresso. He recalled his assistant liked lattes and ordered her one as well. Maybe it would make up for him being an ass all week.

He paid and then moved to the end of the counter to wait. He noticed the four girls were all staring at him hard and then looking back to books in their hands. He wanted to yell at them and ask them what the f\*\*k their problems were, but he already was dealing with the fallout of losing his temper just over a week ago. He couldn't afford another freak out.

He was staring into space as he waited for his coffee, his arms folded over his chest, wondering how he could convince Presley to issue a statement. He knew she was on his mind far too much to be healthy, but he couldn't get her and her accusations out of his head.

She'd accused him of abuse. He'd talked with Anderson about it, when he and Anderson met for a beer leaving Odin out the night before. Anderson agreed abuse might be a stretch but then said as an adult and looking back at the s\*\*t they did, he could understand why she was feeling like she was. Then Sloane showed up, called him an oversized jackoff who gets off on bullying women half his size and said she was going to visit a witch to see if they could hex him until his d\*\*k fell off. He'd begged Sloane to tell her where Presley was so he could apologize in person, but she'd seen through his plea.

"Excuse me, sir? Are you Narnurs?"

"Am I what?" he was perplexed as the young blond, being encouraged by her three friends at the table extended a hardcover book towards him.

"Can I get your autograph? You're him, right? Narnurs? From the planet Cockaigne?"

"I do not know what you're talking about," he waved dismissively at her, wishing the barista would hurry up and get his coffees to him and sincerely regretting ordering his PA one since it was delaying his return to the oce.

"Narnurs," the woman shoved the book in his face, "the latest release from Perris Brooks. You're Narnurs, right? You are on the cover of the book?"

Realization hit him almost as soon as the dread did when he took the book from her hand and looked at the cover. His ngers clenched tight around the hard binding.

He knew the photo. The Rugby Association used it for promo material on the website. His team during the Olympics won a try and, in his glee, he'd ripped his shirt off. He was shirtless, veins popping in his neck, arms and chest and his face, despite the excitement, he appeared angry. He'd been emotional in the photo, and he loved the feeling he got from playing and loved this picture.

Yet, this wasn't the photo. It was his face. It was his body. It was digitally altered. For one, the man on this cover was red. Demon red was all he could think of. He was also gripping a futuristic weapon in his hand where the original photo held the remnants of his t-shirt. The leather and metal straps and rings which ran over his chest and met over the digitally placed skintight trousers cupping his balls were reminiscent of the cheesiest porn he could think of.

"Where did you get this?" he gasped at the woman holding up a pen.

"The bookstore across the street!" she smiled. "It's you, right?" she tapped the cover. "You have the same hair and eyes." She looked down, "do you also have two c\*\*\*s?"

"Excuse me?"

"My girlfriend skimmed ahead, and, in the book, it says Narnurs is the Cockaignian name for 'he who has two c\*\*\*s' and I'm curious if the author only used you because you match the description of the character after she wrote it or if you were her inspiration." The was looking him up and down and then pointing to the exceptionally large and clearly enhanced package the straps were wrapped around. "I mean it's evident on the life size cutout in the bookstore there is two."

He snapped his ngers in front of her eyes as she stared at his waist and licked her lips.

"Hey, lady, my eyes are up here. No. I do not have," he cut himself off. "Wait a minute. Life size cut out?"

"Yeah, it's in the bookstore. Every time Perris Brooks has a release, we're the rst in line to get her book. We preordered this one and we heard there might have been a delay because there was an issue with the cover, but we were thrilled to know it was only a rumor. Well, will you sign it?"

He pushed the book back in the girl's hand and left the coffee shop, wandering blindly, ignoring the honking of cars as he crossed the street towards the bookstore. There in the window was exactly what the girl in the coffee shop described. Pushing the door open, he heard the chatter come to a halt as he walked up to the cut out and looked at it.

"Oh my God! It's Narnurs in person!" a girl screamed. "Narnurs!"

He wielded the cut out like a shield as he found himself needing to escape back out the store as a swarm of Presley's fans swarmed him.

He arrived back to the oces motioning at security to block the entrance and he was aware they barely held back the twenty or so screaming women as he ducked into the elevator.

Cruz was panting, breathing heavily and sucking wind as he rued his hand through his hair.

He was ocially going to murder Presley Brookmore.