

Briar POV

I'm not even sure how I made it to my car, but I did. I slide inside the driver's seat and all the tears I've been fighting start to flow down my cheeks. My heart feels like it's being split in two. How could Calob do this to me? How could he betray me with her? I thought he loved me. I'm not sure how long I cry before I finally manage to pull myself together. I put the key in the ignition just in time to see security escorting a screaming Lucy to her car. I know I shouldn't, but I can't stop myself as the feeling of heartbreak is replaced with red-hot anger. I step out of my car and slam the door shut to get their attention. The security guards and Lucy look in my direction. I hear one of the security guards say "oh sh*t." I take a few steps toward them and look at this woman I considered a friend. "Why" is all I manage to say. "Look Briar, I know I'm being a b**ch, but the answer is simple. I want him and based on how many times we have f**ked in the last month, he wants me too," Lucy says. "You're right Lucy, you are a b**ch. A disillusioned one at that, because, by what Calob said, you were just a warm place to stick his d*ck and nothing more." The guard from earlier chuckles at my comment. Lucy turns her head shooting daggers in his direction before she turns back to me. "A pathetic woman like you that can't find your own man so she f**ks someone else's husband, isn't worth my time. Good luck finding a new job Lucy" I say as I turn and walk away. "You f**king b**ch" she screams as I slide into my driver's seat.

I pull out of the parking garage, but I don't head in the direction of the place I considered my home up until a few hours ago. It takes me twenty minutes to reach the gallery that is located in the heart of the city. I step out of the car and cross the street to find Lola. Lola and I have been best friends since we were roommates in college. Despite not having the same major, we became fast friends. I consider her a sister. I step inside and Brian is standing behind the counter. "Briar, Lola didn't say you were stopping by today. Is everything alright," Brian asks. He is Lola's brother and an artist for the gallery too. "It will be. Is she available?" He smiles "you know that she is always available for you. She is painting in the back room" he says. I walk down the hallway and push open the door. Lola picks up her head and smiles at me until she sees my face. She drops her brush and rushes toward me. "What's wrong Briar," she asks, pulling me into a hug. I don't even care that she is covered in paint. "Calob" is all I manage to get out through my sobs.

"Is Calob hurt" she asks with panic in her voice. "No, I caught him f**king Lucy today." Her arms around me stiffen before she pulls back to look into my eyes. "Are you f**king kidding me?" "I wish I was Lola. I wish I never had to see it, but I did." "Oh Briar, I'm so sorry. I can't believe he would do that to you. He has always acted like you were the only woman in a room when I saw you together," Lola says. She is right. I have never even seen my husband check out another woman when he was with me. "I thought the same thing. I guess he fooled us both. I spoke to Mr. Coleman after I caught him this morning, and he approved for me to have a couple of weeks of vacation time." "You mean smoking hot CEO, Derek Coleman" she says, wiggling her eyebrows at me. "Really Lola, my life is imploding, and you're talking about how hot my boss is." "You know what they say Briar. The best way to get over one man is to get under another." "I think I'll pass. First of all, he is a lot younger than me and, secondly, he is my boss." "Eight years is no big deal, and who cares if he is your boss? I'm sure he wouldn't mind helping you get a little revenge on that cheating ba**ard if you asked him to," Lola says. "I'll keep that in mind. On a happy note, that sl**ty b**ch I once considered a friend was walked right out of the hospital," "Good, she deserves that and much more for what she did," Lola says.

"He deserves more. He is the one that stood before our friends and family in church and vowed to keep himself only to me. He vowed to be faithful and he broke that vow. As mad as I am at that b**ch, he is the one that broke every promise he made to me." "I'm so sorry Briar. What are you going to do now?" "I am going to head to the condo before he gets out of his surgery and pack some of my things to take to a hotel until I figure out where I'm going to live. Then I'm going to contact a divorce lawyer to start the legal process." "You know you are welcome to stay in my spare room if you want," Lola says, and I smile. "Your apartment will be the first place that Calob will look. I can't talk to him right now. I know at some point I will have to face him, but I can't right now." Lola pulls me into another hug. "I love you, Briar." "I love you too, Lola. I'll call you later after I get settled in the hotel." I head out of the gallery and back to my car. It takes me thirty minutes to reach the condo. As I sit and stare at the building, a wave of nausea rolls through me. Did he ever bring her to our home? Were they ever together in our bed? I try to shake those thoughts away. It takes everything I have in me to walk inside.

I make my way to our bedroom. I grab a suitcase out of my closet and start to pack enough clothes for at least a week. Once I'm done, I head into the bathroom to grab my toiletries off the sink. My eyes land on my ripped panties from this morning and I can no longer hold back the urge to vomit. I rush to the toilet and empty my stomach. I wipe my mouth with the sleeve of my lab coat that I'm still wearing. I pull it off and toss it to the floor. I slide down to the floor and rest my back against the wall. Why did he do this to me? Was I not enough? No, I will not do that to myself. This is about him, not me. He is the one that created this problem and I will not blame myself. After a few minutes, I get myself together and finish packing. I take one last look at the room we shared before I make my way back downstairs. I'm tempted to leave my key, but I will need to get the rest of my things at some point. I push open the front door and head to the parking garage. I'm shocked, to say the least, to see Derek Coleman leaning against my car. How does he know where I live? I almost want to roll my eyes at myself. He owns the hospital, human resources would have our address. I approach him and steps toward me. "Mr. Coleman, what are you doing here?" Lola's words from earlier play over in my mind and I chastise myself for even thinking about doing something so stupid.

Derek POV

"Briar, we aren't at the hospital. You can call me Derek." "Alright Derek, what are you doing here?" "Well, I knew you were upset, and I wanted to come to make sure you are alright. It looks like I got here just in time." "As much as I appreciate you checking on me, it seems a little inappropriate given you're my boss," she says. I smile "I may be your boss, Briar, but I would like to think that you consider me a friend. What kind of friend would I be not to check on you?" "I'll be fine. Thank you for your concern. Now, if you'll excuse me, I need to go get a hotel room and make a few phone calls," she says, trying to step past me. "Briar, I know how strong you are. I have watched you in action with your patients and I admire your tenacity, but that doesn't mean you don't have the right to feel broken before you dust yourself off and push forward." I can see the unshed tears in her eyes that she is fighting to not let fall. Without a second thought, I pull her into my arms. She stiffens at first before I feel her shoulders moving with the muffled sobs I can barely hear.

After a few seconds, she pulls back and wipes her face. "I really need to get going Derek" she says, not acknowledging that she just broke down in my arms. "Briar, I'm going to take you to get something to eat, and then I will drop you off at my hotel." She looks at me confused. "I own many businesses I just choose to be involved in the day to day running of the hospital." I expect her to fight me about taking her for something to eat, but she doesn't. "Dinner and then you will drop me off at the hotel." I nod and lead her to my car. Once I open her door, I place her bags in my trunk. I slide into the driver's seat. "Do you want me to have someone bring your car to the hotel, so you are not without a way to get around?" "No, thank you. Calob picked that car out, and honestly, I don't want anything that reminds me of him right now. I'll buy myself a new one," she says, and I nod. I pull out and drive the forty minutes to the Royal hotel. There is a four-star restaurant that my aunt runs just off the lobby. I round the car helping Briar out before I hand my keys to the valet. "The bags in the trunk can be taken up to the penthouse suite" I say. I can see Briar wants to protest, but I put my hand on the small of her back and lead her inside. As soon as the host sees me, she leads us to my usual table. I pull out Briar's chair before I take my own. The waiter quickly rushes over and takes our drink order. I smile when Briar orders a tequila sunrise. I order two fingers of Glen Levett neat. Once we are finally alone, I look at the woman sitting across from me. I hate the pain I still see in her eyes, but I vow to myself to do everything I can in this life to never see it again.