

Loving Quinn Chapter 23

(Quinn)

Dionne tilts her head to the side as she stares at my naked chest. A smile plays on her red lips as her eyes appraise my body. Her lust filled gaze makes me feel dirty and I don't like it one bit. The look she is giving me is too friendly to my liking. It reminds me of the way she used to watch me when I was her patient.

All those sessions in her office while I talked about my battle traumas always felt her eyes on me in a very unprofessional way. It was like she was undressing me with her eyes as I poured out my demons for her. It is no wonder we ended up naked and sweaty in her office that day.

Shaking those thoughts away, I look at her with all the hatred I feel for her in my eyes. "What the f*k a**re you doing here, Dianne?"

Before I can stop her, she pushes her way inside, then spins us around so that my back is against the doorframe. One of her hands slips inside my pants to stroke my c**k while her other hand grabs the back of my neck to pull my-mouth to hers.

Anger fills me the moment her lips touch mine. I grab her arms with both hands before she can press her body to mine, then push her away from my body. With swift movements, I spin her around, then shove her out into the hallway.

"You smell like sexx, Quinn," Dionne says.

Her voice is thick with arousal. The desire in her eyes makes me sick to my stomach. We were once so hot for each other, but now the thought of her skin against mine makes me want to vomit. That is when I realize that I never really loved her. I desired her, cared for her in the way I thought I should, but I never loved her.

"Get out

out of my building now and don't come back."

"I miss you, baby. Seeing you at the hospital that day made me remember how good it was between us, I want that back. The way you responded to my touch tells me you do too."

"My d***k was already hard because I just f***d my fiancé. It had nothing to do with your touch."

Annora isn't my fiancé yet, but Dianne doesn't need to know that. From the look on Dionne's face, I can tell I shocked her, but she covers it quickly with a smirk. The desire in her eyes never fades.

“Oh, Quinn, I know you don’t mean that. We were so good together. Who is she?”

“Two years ago, you aborted our child. I could never get hard for any woman who would do that to her child because it was inconvenient timing”

She reaches out to touch me again, but I move back out of her way. That was when I hear Annora’s high heels clicking on the marble floor behind me. Rage fills me because of the situation I find myself in. I haven’t had the chance to tell her about Dionne yet. We haven’t really talked much about anything in the last six months.

Last night was the most we have talked since that night at the fundraiser. Our entire conversation was about Grace’s life all these years. Then later, when she came to my room, there was no talking. Annora is right about one thing. We don’t know each other anymore. It is -time to fix that.

After I get rid of my nightmare ex-girlfriend.

“DE: Masters? What are you doing here?” Annora asks.

What the f**k? They know each other? I turn to look at Annota and I can see from her angle that she has a clear view of Dionne’s face from the doorway.

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Da** me for not blocking the entire doorway. When I look back at Dionne, I can see an equally shocked expression on her face at seeing who is behind me.

How the hell do they know each other?

“Are you here to talk about getting back on staff at Mercy General? Couldn’t that be done at the hospital or their office?”

There is a tone in Annora’s voice that lets me know she is angry. I am sure that she is jumping to conclusions. Wrong ones on my part, but not on

Dionne’s. D**n this woman for possibly shattering the new beginning I have with Annora.

“Ah, Dr. Winters. It is nice to see you outside the hospital. I didn’t know you were on such good terms with one of the new owners.”

The tone of her voice, along with the insinuation she is making, causes me to glare at her. In a quiet voice, I whisper to her. “There is a restraining order in effect against you. Leave now and I won’t call the police.”

Dionne laughs at that statement. Her eyes glittering with an unknown joke. "She doesn't know about me, does she? Why don't we see how she feels when she knows that we almost got married."

I tense when I feel Annora step up next to me. "Why did you come to his house on a Saturday morning?"

Dionne spares her one glance, then strokes her hand down my chest in an all too familiar way. "I will leave Quinn to tell you about that." Stepping away from us, she walks down the hallway but calls over her shoulder before she presses the button for the elevator. "We are not done, Quinn. Not by a long shot. I know something that you don't, so I suggest you answer the next time I call."

I step back into my apartment, then close the door behind me. When I face Annora, her eyes are filled with the rage I feel. It is time to dredge up the ugly past thanks to Dionne's unwelcome presence at my door..

"Grace is on a video call with her classmates talking about their science project. She will be busy for about an hour. You have that long to

tell me what the f***k that was."

The steel in her voice along with the swearing makes it hard to not to want to pin her against the door and f*** her again. However, sex won't solve this problem, and if I want this thing between us to work out, it is time for full honesty.

"Dionne is my ex-fiance. Let's go out on the balcony for this conversation. I feel there may be some yelling directed at me."

"You bet your a** there will be."

Thankfully, she handed me a shirt as we walked to the balcony door. After what Dionne did to me just now, I feel very dirty, I pull the t- shirt on as I open the door, then sit down on one of the cu*d ch**airs. This is not how I was hoping to spend my alone time with

Annie.

"Start talking." Annie says when she sits down on the other chair. She angles her body to face me.

"Can I ask a question first?"

Ope," she says as she glares at me.

"How do you know her

“She was on staff for about six months, then she left after she got married. Her second marriage, from what I understand. She was from New York and came to take over for our head of Psychology. Now get to why your ex-flancé was here with that hungry look on her face.”

“You have absolutely nothing to be jealous of from her. I hate that woman.”

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“Tell me about her, Quinn.”

“After my first deployment, I tried to shove what happened aside, but it failed. They assigned me to a shrink. Dr. Masters. She was my doctor for years when I wasn’t deployed to active duty. Then one day we crossed the line,”

I lean my elbows on my knees as I stare out at the city below us. Not all my history with Dionne was bad. Just the ending.

“We dated off and on throughout my career until two years ago. I thought I was in love with her, so I asked her to marry me. That was the night she told me she was pregnant.” My voice c**ks at the memory of that night, “I was happy. I thought she was too,”

“What happened?” Annora’s voice was barely audible as she asks.

Looking up at her, I see pain in her eyes and anger. Here I am, telling her I was going to marry another woman. She doesn’t get to be angry at me for my past. She married another man. We lived our lives apart for twelve years. What did she expect?

“A few weeks before the wedding, she was

is out shopping, and I was packing up her apartment since we were moving to Boston after the wedding. Her phone rang, so I answered it. It was a call from a clinic calling to make a follow-up appointment after her recent abortion.”

“What the f**k?”

The rage in her voice calmed me down a little. “I confronted Dionne when she returned from her shopping trip. She didn’t deny it. All she would say was that it was a bad time to have a baby. With everything going on in our lives, a baby was an inconvenience to her.”

“An Inconvenience. Those exact words?”

“Yes. Our baby was an inconvenience to her. She had the abortion three weeks before that call. I left her after she told me. I haven’t seen her or spoken to her until Aaron and I bought Mercy General.”

“Wait, today wasn’t the first time she has come here?”

“I ran into her in the physical therapy room the day we made the announcement in the lecture hall. That was the first and only time I have seen her since I walked away from her two years ago. Until today. I don’t know how she found out where I live.”

“From the look on her face, she very much wanted to rekindle what you two had.”

“Well, she is out of luck. There is only one woman for me.”

“Is there anything else from your past that can hurt us, Quinn? If so, I need to know now,”

How the hell do I tell the woman I love that I have been a masturbator for the past two years? That will send her packing in an instant. However, if I don’t tell her, it will be worse in the end.

“After I left New York, I was a terrible man.”

Annora frowns at me. “You are not a terrible man, Quinn.”

“The conclusion you jumped to that day in the hallway when I told you I sent Rebecca home with a smile isn’t that far off. We had sex, just not after I had seen you again, I have used sex like a drug for the last ten years or so off and on, more over the last two.”

“Are you a sex addict?” Her brows raise in surprise.

“Not the way some are. PTSD can be terrible sometimes. When I was in the Army the nightmares were less frequent due to a lot of activities. I have had nightmares almost every night since I have been out of service. I have used a combination of alcohol, boxing, hiking, extreme sports, and sex to make me so exhausted that I just pass out when I come home. Anything to keep those nightmares at bay”

Annora looks at me with sadness in her eyes. The disgust I expected was nowhere to be seen on her beautiful face. However, I can sense

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from the tension on her shoulders that we are not out of danger yet.

"I was prepared to put all of that aside and go back into therapy after I found you again. That day in your office, then later when you told me about Grace, cracked open the wall I had around my heart. I ruined when I said those horrible things to you. So, I am going to be fully honest with you"

"You haven't stopped all those things. Havg you?"

"No. They were all that kept me sane."

"Will you stop now?"

"I can promise you this, if you give me a chance, give us a chance, I will not touch another woman but you for the rest of my life. Boxing and sports stay.

"I have an IUD implanted so birth control is covered on my end. Do I need to get tested?"

"No. God no. I am clean and always use protection."

I reach for her when she stands up to go inside. When she pulls away from me, my heart leaps into my throat. Please don't let my past ruin my future with her. I follow her inside to watch her walk to the chair that her purse is on.

Annora pulls out a manilla envelope, then turns back to me. "Sign this and we will go from there."

What the f***k? Is she asking me to sign my parental rights away? "Please don't take Grace from me. Annie, please don't do this."

I close my eyes as that thought makes me fall to my knees. That thought of losing my daughter is the worst pain I have ever felt. All the bullet wounds, shrapnel in my skin, and broken bones I have survived pale compared to this pain.

When I feel her hands cup my face, I look up at her with tears in my eyes.

"I am not taking her from you, Quinn, Read it."

I look down at the envelope in her hands, then take it from her with shaky hands. When I pull the document from inside, my eyes widen, then fly to her face. In my hands are not papers to sever my parental rights but documents, making me one of Grace's legal guardians.

-you are on

"You are on her birth certificate, but it occurred to me that if something were to happen to her, you might not be able to decide for her if I can't be there. I had these drawn up a

few months ago but have been waiting for the outcome of the custody hearing today to have you sign them.”

She isn't taking Grace from me.

“There are a lot of things we need to talk about, Quinn, but I am not backing away from you. All I ask is that we slow down and take our time getting to know each other again.”

“Like dating?”

“We did that the first time around and we should do it again. Go out, do things together without Grace, spend time together alone. No sex until I feel more comfortable with that part of your past.”

can live with that. Looks like it is time to find a good therapist again. Thank you.”

“For what?”

“For putting your faith in me after everything I just told you.”

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Annora tugged on my hands like she wants me to stand up. I do as she wants me to then just look in her eyes. So many emotions go through me when she smiles up at me.

“You were in my heart all these years. I would dream of you at night. See you in our daughter's eyes. Now we have a chance to rekindle that budding love we had for each other when we were eighteen. It burned so brightly back then. Twelve years later it is still burning deep inside me even if it isn't as bright as it used to be.”

She wraps her arms around my waist and hugs me tightly. I embrace her in my arms then just breathe in the smell of my shampoo on her hair. I will do anything for that dream.

“Let's make the future we dreamed of back then a reality, Quinn.”

Chapter Comments

Carmen Sang

You go girl! That is how things must be handled.

Loving Quinn Chapter 24

(Quinn)

The rest of the weekend passed in a haze of happiness. As cheesy as it sounds, it was the happiest I have been in twenty years. Even though Annora left after I told her about Dionne, she promised that we would speak later that night, after Grace was in bed.

Grace and I drove down to the marina to rent a boat on Saturday. We spent the entire day out on the water fishing. Sunday, we spent the day making a volcano for her science project. Her best friend, Emily, and her father, Gary, came over to help. It was the most domestic thing I have ever done in my life.

Gary and I got along well. He is an ex-Army guy himself. We swapped stories from downtimes on tours while the girls set up the work area. My dining room became a science lab with blue tarps all over the floor and tables. Those were brought over by Gary, which was nice since I hadn't thought that far ahead,

When I dropped Grace off, Annora blushed crimson as I whispered in her ear about what we did over the phone Saturday night. That was the first time in my entire life that I had phone sex. She called to say goodnight to Grace, but later called back to say goodnight to me.

I asked her how her day went, then asked her what she was wearing. Our conversation went straight to steamy after that. The way she moaned my name while she pleased herself for me was the most erotic thing I have ever heard in my life. All I wanted to do was drive to her house and replace her hand with my tongue, but because I agreed to her rules, it reduced me to m**on while her moans

drove me wild,

The night I slept better than I have since I was a kid.

Sadly, today is Monday, and I have to go to the office. We are bidding again on the property for our outreach center. Aaron and I have agreed to walk away from the bidding war if our offer is rejected again. We will go forward with the two empty lots he showed me.

The real estate agent is meeting with us for that later this morning. Then we have a meeting with Mac to go over the security for our two construction projects that have been sabotaged recently. While I have him there, I plan to ask him about security for my building.

There is no way I want a repeat of what happened Saturday morning. Dionne, showing up at my penthouse, threw me off guard. It was a move I hadn't expected from her. Until that morning she has always called me, then hung up. I should have added a security guard to my building after I filed the restraining order against her.

The only reason I didn't was because I was the only one there during the weekdays and on the weekends, Grace and I were rarely at the penthouse. I never saw the need for it. Now, I do.

Just thinking about what Dionne did to me makes me shiver in disgust. She got past my guard and reached into my pants. When her hand wrapped around my d**k, my mind hadn't quite registered what she was doing until her hand stroked up and down my shaft. Then she

tried to kiss me.

That hungry look she gave me over her shoulder as she walked away let me know she is trouble for me and Annie. This is not something! want to deal with at all. There isn't much I can do that I haven't already done other than put security in my building.

When I step off the elevator of our office, Aaron was waiting for me with a smile on his face, Something about the way he flicks his eye toward my office makes me groan internally. "What are you smiling at

"You have a package in your office. I opened it for you."

"Gee, that was nice of you. What did I get?" I ask. I walk towards my office, dreading whatever was sent to me. If it is making my best Inlend smile like an idiot, it can't be good.

"Find out for yourself. There is a card too, but that I left for you."

Dumping my briefcase on floor next to my desk, I stare at the white bar sitting on my desk, it isn't big enough to hold anything large.

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However, the label on the box instantly gives away how sent it. Dionne was always a fan of Calvin Klein menswear on me. Most notably, underwear.

"She sent me underwear, didn't she? For f**k's sake, that woman just won't stop."

Without opening the box, I grab the card off the desk and rip it open. Anger fills me as I read her note. What the f**k is this woman's game? Dionne destroyed whatever I felt f**g her years ago. Now, I just can't get her to go away.

I had forgotten how ***y you were until I saw you on Saturday. I miss us. I miss you. We were like fireworks going off every time we touched. You may be with her now, but I know you. I know what you be, how to get you to o**m fast.

Does your little doctor know about all your kinks? I bet she doesn't know you at all. I know the real Quinn Greyson, I have been in your

We are

head.

not done, and it is only a matter of time until you are back in my bed. Until then, I know something that you don't about your current construction issues. I can make them stop but only if you come to me willingly.

I hand the note to Aaron as I sit down in my chair. My mind is full of so many questions, but the one that stands out among all the rest is simple. Is she f***g crazy? There is no way I am going to give her what she wants. She does not get me ever again.

"Wow. So, explain what she meant by seeing you on Saturday?" Aaron laughs.

"She showed up at my place early Saturday morning." I tell him everything that happened after I answered the door that morning. Then I told him what happened after with Annora. By the time I was done with my story, Aaron was just shaking his head.

"So, let me get this straight. You and Annora got freaky in the kitchen, then your ex-fiancé showed up and manhandled your d**k. Not knowing that you had just had sex with the love of your life, she thought your h**** was for her. Man, what are you going to do about this new crazy version of Dionne?"

"When we talk to Mac today, I am going to have him hire a twenty-four hour a day security guard for the elevator to my penthouse. Then plan on informing the guards at the desk in our lobby here that she is to be escorted off the premises if she tries to come here."

"What about the hospital?"

"Since it is a public hospital, we can't ban her, but I will assign security to the private elevator that leads to the executive floor where our

offices there."

"Since she knows Annora, do you think she will try to ambush her?"

F**k! I hadn't even thought about that. I told Annie everything about my past with Dionne. Yet, all the intimate details, or the things I told Dionne while she was just my therapist, could hurt Annie. There is no way I am going to share the sexual details of my past with Dionne, with Annora. The stuff from my time in the Army is something I can share with her.

This will be ugly. I know she will ask about my time in the Army, eventually. Now I just have to decide whether to tell her the next time we talk or wait until she asks on her own. Those kinds of stories are not date night conversation.

“I will have to talk to Annora about Dionne again. I want there to be no secrets between us. Even if that means I must share some of what happened while I was deployed”

Aaron looks at his watch and then gave me a light tap on the shoulder indicating he has my back. He has been by my side since we were kids. There is no need for the words to be said anymore. He has my back and I have his in all things.

“Let’s go get this meeting with McAllister and the real estate agent done with. There is no doubt he will raise his bid, so we will be too

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low again. Are you ready to walk away from this if he does?”

“I love this location, but not enough to keep dealing with McAllister.”

As expected, when Aaron stated our new bid price, McAllister raised his counteroffer by a thousand dollars more than ours. He laughed when I told him we were done, and that the property was his. I don’t like the ominous feeling his laugh gives me.

This game he has been playing has been annoying, but I have never had a bad feeling about him until now. Maybe he is the one behind all the problems we have been having with our construction sites. I think it is time to look deeper into McAllister Industries and its owner. Something isn’t adding up here.

“We have never dealt with McAllister before until now. Why was he so determined to beat us out of this deal? De so bad?” I ask Aaron as we leave the office to head to meet Mac at his office.

deal? Does he want that factory

“The building is already fitted with everything he would need. There will be a few things to change, but from the blueprints he submitted to the city, it is a sound investment for him. However, I agree that there is something else going on here.”

“I think he may be behind all the accidents happening on our construction sites.”

“What would his motive be?”

“That is what I want to find out. We can ask Mac to investigate McAllister.”

An hour later, we pull up to Mac's office building. The front of the building is all glass, with Mac's logo over the door. His receptionist smiles at us when we walk in and tells us he is waiting in his office. Aaron sends her a flirty smile as we walk down the hallway to Mac's office.

"Don't mess with her, Aaron. Mac is very protective of his staff."

"I know that. It was just a smile man, relax."

As we walk down the hall, we pass Alaric, one of Mac's investigators. He gives a slight nod our way, then continues toward the front door. Alaric is ex-military, like most of the investigators that work for Mac. The entire company employees retired, or inactive military men and women. Between the corporate investigators, security guards, and all the private investigators, Mac's employee roster is over one hundred,

"Ah, here are my two favorite customers, Mac says."

He stands when we enter the room. From years of military service, it is habit to stand at attention when a ranking officer enters the room. Which would be me. I wave him to sit down. "You are not in the Army anymore, Mac. There is no need for that."

"Old habits die hard, man. So, what is this about wanting security teams for three construction sites at night? All night?"

Aaron goes over what has been happening, then explains what we want. He slides the file folder he brought with him over to Mac's desk. It has pictures of all the accidents and the one where there were tool marks proving it was done intentionally "If it were only one site, and only one time, I would say accidents. However, it is all three, and these are no longer accidents."

"Have they only been happening when no one is on site? After working hours?"

"Yes. So Far at least."

"Why don't we do a guard during the day for all three sits, then a team of three at night for all three as well. One at the front, one at the bick, and one rotating."

That sounds s like a good plan, so we agree. "That brings us to our second issue."

"Oh, you guys are so kind to me." 1

* Mac laughs. "What else can I do for you boys?"

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“What do you know about Ithah McAllister of McAllister Industries?”

“They build service vehicles like ambulances, firetrucks, and so on. I heard they are building a new factory downtown.””

“Yeah, we were in a bidding war with him for that property. We planned to turn it in to an outreach center, food pantry, and donation center for the homeless in that area. McAllister would up the bid by a thousand dollars each time. Not much, but it was enough to make the owner ask for more each time.”

“What do you want to investigate him?”

“We have never dealt with him before, but he just kept this one-ups going on the bids each time. Then when we finally backed out today. he laughed. It was like he knew we would, but it felt personal in a way.”

“What agenda do you think he has?” Mac asks. His eyes have gone sharp with interest. We have his attention now.

“I don’t know. We never met until this property war. Frankly, I am confused about what personal vendetta this man could have against us.” Aaron says. However, he looks over at me as if something has occurred to him.

What?”

“Tell Mac about Dionne.”

Aaron brushes my question aside and moves to another topic. Knowing him, he will probably want to think about whatever occurred to him for a while before he tells me. I have a feeling that I will not like it

“Dionne?” Mac’s voice is full of hate and surprise at the sound of her name. “I thought you were done with her after what happened two

years ago.”

“I thought so too.” I give him a run-down of the events that have happened since I ran into her at the hospital. When I got to what happened on Saturday morning, his eyebrows were raised in shock.

“So, she violated a restraining order and came to your penthouse to rekindle what you had back then?”

“It is how she did it that p***ed me off, but yes, that is the jist of it. I would like to hire twenty-four-hour a day security for my penthouse Not on my floor, but stationed at the elevator in the garage.”

“What do you think it is that she knows about the issues happening on your sites? How can she stop them?” Mac asks.

“I don’t know, but I am not falling for it. Dionne had her chance, she blew it, not there is no coming back from that. She can play all the games she wants, but I am done with her. She wants what she can’t have.”

Dionne Masters is a manipulative b**h. There will be blow back from my relationship with her but if I can tell Annie everything, have no secrets between us, then Dionne will be powerless. Just the way I want her to stay.

Then I will do all I can to get her the hell out of my life once and for al

Loving Quinn Chapter 25

(“Annona)

My weekend passed in a blur after the events of Saturday morning. Quinn certainly gave me plenty to think about. There are so many questions about his past that I want to ask him. However, rather than bombarding him with all of them at once, I will think about what questions are the most important to get answers to.

I want to know everything about his relationship with Dionne Masters. When she worked at Mercy General, we didn’t work together often. I knew of her, but I didn’t know her. Now, after seeing the way she interacted with Quinn, I wish I would have gotten to know her a little

more.

Only so I know what kind of woman I am up against. When I saw the hungry look on her face as Dionne practically devoured Quinn with her eyes, I must admit I was jealous. When he told me about how their relationship ended, I was angry, then heartbroken for his loss.

I When I found out I was pregnant with Grace, never once did the thought of an abortion cross my mind. With all the things I had on my plate at the time, I was overwhelmed but elated by the thought of having Quinn’s baby. My father tried to pressure me into an abortion, but my

mother intervned on my behalf. My entire family rallied around me when I gave birth.

What was going on in Dionne’s life that was so important that her baby was an inconvenience?

“Earth to Annie!” Shawna says. She snaps her fingers in my ear to pull me from my thoughts. Then she laughs with I just blink at her.

“Did you say something?”

“I asked how your weekend went. Then you got a far away look in your eyes and I knew I lost you.”

I look around, then shake my head when I realize we are still standing in line at the coffee shop across the street from the hospital. “It was eventful”

“Woman, you are blushing! What did you do?”

There is no way I am telling her about what happened with Quinn while we stand here waiting in line for coffee. “Let’s just say that I came to a decision about Quinn. I will tell you more later.”

“Did you finally decide to jump him?”

“We talked about Grace on Friday night. I gave Quinn all the copies of her baby pictures for his birthday. Then I gave him a second chance.”

“Did that involve getting all naked and sweaty with him?”

“Shaw, I am so not having this conversation with you here.”

“You did!” She says.

Her laughter makes my cheeks burn as I remember what I did with Quinn that night. “I will spill all the details later, so behave or you will get nothing”

“It is about time the two of you got all sweaty together. Those looks he sends you in passing could send any woman up in flames just by getting too close to you.”

I slap her arm playfully, then step up to give the barista my order. Thankfully Shawna is distracted by another nurse from the hospital after I grabbed my coffee, I took that as my cue to head to my office. My best friend can be relentless when she wants to know something-

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Telling her about how Quinn and I spent Friday night and early Saturday morning is not something I want to do with a crowd of people around us. I can hardly believe what happened myself. No, I take that back. I can believe all of it except Quinn’s ex-fiancé showing up to rekindle their relationship.

What happened Friday night between us was inevitable. We have been like magnets to each other since we were eighteen. We were always drawn to each other, no matter what, when we were eighteen. I tried to fight it at first this time around, but why fight something that I know is a losing battle. My heart and soul belong to him.

Quinn Greyson is my soulmate.

The complications came when we added sex into the mix, then and now. Our first-time together at eighteen was in the back of his car on an old dirt road. It was raining, and we were both nervous. The minute his hands touched the bare skin on my upper thigh, I let myself go to the feelings he gave me. Years later, that first time together after so long it was just as reckless.

Knowing what I do now know about him and his sexual exploits, a dark part of me wants to come out to play. That part of me that isn't a doctor, a mother, or a responsible adult. It is the part of me that is simply female. A grown adult who has had a very limited sexual

experience.

I am embarrassed but not ashamed to admit that I want more.

With flaming cheeks at my train of thought, I lowered my head, then enter the lobby of the hospital. I head straight to the elevator, then hit the button to the floor my office is on. After going through my morning routine, I slip my lab coat on, drape my stethoscope over my neck, then head to the pediatric wing.

However, I stop in my tracks when I see who is leaning against the wall outside my office door. "What are you doing here Dr. Masters?"

"I think it is time you and I have a chat," Dionne says. There is a knowing look in her eyes and a smirk on her lips as she looks me up and

down

"Does it have to do with a patient of mine?"

The tone of my voice is professional but firm as I stare at her. The nerve of this woman to come to my place of work, ambush me in the hallway outside my office, then just stand there with a smirk on her face.

Dionne gives a throaty laugh that just imitates me further. "You know why I am here. Quinn doesn't belong to you."

"If you have nothing to say about a patient of mine, then I am going to have to ask you to leave."

“Do your co-workers here know that you are ***g the owner of the hospital? Is that how you kept your job here?”

Rather than answer her, I turn towards the elevator and walk away.

“Quinn will never be satisfied with your little life. You have a daughter, and he just isn’t a family man like you are trying to make him. He will grow tired of you eventually. Then he will come running back to me.

“Why? So, you can kill another baby of his?” I throw over my shoulder as I keep walking away

“That is none of your business,” Dionne says.

The s**e of rage in her voice lets me know I hit a sensitive spot. Was she that touchy about it when she told Quinn about the abortion? From the way he made the entire story sound, she was very nonchalant about it.

“You made it mine when you showed up at his place on Saturday.”

How will you feel when he tells you about her?”

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Her? Now that makes me stop in my tracks to turn around. Is there another woman out there Quinn has not told me about? That thought sends hurt and anger through me. He swore to me that there were no more secrets between us.

“Who are you talking about?”

“The love of Quinn’s life, his first love.”

All the hurt and anger I just felt fades as pure joy fills me. I am that woman, but Dionne doesn’t know that. The feeling of knowing something she doesn’t know makes me smile at her in a sinister way,

“It gives me an obscene amount of pleasure to knone that woman isn’t you

“Quinn can never have her again, but he will always love her. How does it feel to compete with a dead woman?”

Turning around to face the elevator, I take the last steps towards it, then push the button and wait. What Tam about to tell her will shatter her illusions. It will make me immensely

happy to wipe that smirk off her face when I tell her that the love of Quinn's life is right in front of her.

"She isn't dead" I tell her as I turn around to face her again.

"Did he tell you that? I spent years as his therapist and lover. Trust me, she is dead. He would have told me if she were alive."

"No, she is very much alive and well" When I hear the elevator ding behind me, I smile at Dionne. "The reason I know that is simple. I am that woman."

The look of shock and disbelief on her face makes me feel slightly ashamed of my pettiness, but I ignore the feeling as I get on the elevator. Dionne opens her mouth to say something, but her words were drowned out when the doors close in front of me.

(Quinn)

After we arranged everything with Mac, Aaron and I head to Merry General for our first official board meeting with our new board members. We have asked Gayle Preston, the hospital's chief of staff, to sit in as well. She proved her worth in the first two months after we bought the hospital by getting things done that had fallen to the wayside. We have her everything she asked for to do her job without

hindrance from anyone.

When we reach the conference room, Gayle is outside talking to our new CEO, Dr. Andrew Perez. Andrew is a retired Army surgeon. He agreed to come on board if Rylan agreed to be the head of the Veterans program. Much to Aaron's dismay, she agreed.

Rylan is Andrew's half-sister. Now that she is on staff officially, Aaron will have no choice but to deal with her. I am going to enjoy watching my best friend fall at her feet.

"Is everyone else inside?" I ask Gayle.

"Yes, sir."

"Gayle, please just call me Quinn. Let's not be so formal."

She smiles, then relaxes as she nods her head. "You two are the last to arrive."

"Have you been waiting long?"

"No, Lauren and Marco got here a few minutes ago.

"Then let's get this meeting started."

The four of us walk into the conference room to greet the rest of the board members. Donna Thompson, our new CFO, stands to shake my

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hand as I walk to my seat. I

right.

t one end of the table with Aaron at the other end. Andrew sits to Aaron's right while Donna sits to my

Lauren Carter, Marco Torres, Katherine Green, Samuel Harris, and Gayle fill in the rest of the table. Lauren and Marco are both lawyers. Katherine and Samuel are accountants. We handpicked each of this board with Gayle's help. We also added more accountants to the finance department that will run under Donna..

As expected, the meeting passed quickly. Everyone was eager to get Mercy General back to the hospital it once was before Max Davidson drove it into the ground. When I get onto the elevator, I look down at my phone as it signals an incoming text message.

"That b**h?

"What's going on?" Aaron asks as he joins me in the elevator.

"Dionne ambushed Annora outside her office this morning."

"What the f**k is she playing at

"I am going to go find Annie now, then I will decide

le if it is worth confronting Dionne or not."

"I will meet you back at headquarters later and you can fill me in on what happened."

I nodded at him as I stepped off the elevator when we reach the floor Annora's office is on. I send her a text as I walk, telling her to meet me there when she is free. The minute I walk into her office, images of what happened the last time I was in here flash through my mind.

I would love to make use of her desk again, but I agreed to the no sex rule she put in place Saturday morning. We may have had phone sex later that night, but she maintained it didn't count. That is good to know, but not good for my libido,

Taking a seat on the chair in front of her desk, ideas form in my head as I think about all the other sexual activities that we can have fun with that are not intercourse. A smile forms on my face as I imagine her spread eagle on her desk, my face buried between her thighs, and) her hands in my hair.

“Do Leven want to know what you are thinking right now?”

Itum to look at Annora as she closes the office door behind her. “No, but I will tell you later, I promise,”

“Were you thinking about what we did the last time we were in here akne?”

The naked desire in her eyes has lust going straight through me. All I can do is nod my head as she walks towards me. The smile on her face makes me hopeful she will let me do what I want to right now.

“You never shared your memories of me with her.”

At first, I am confused at what she means, but realization hits me as she stops in front of me. “How did you know that?”

Annie steps back then leans on her desk. “Dionne asked me how it feels to compete w your life died, but you will always love her.”

Well, that wasn't what I expected. “Tell me everything she said to you.”

with a dead woman. Then she told me that the love of

“She wanted to get under my skin by trying to make me doubt myself. Telling me you will get bored with me, my daughter, and the dotnestic life I am forcing on you. I had the last laugh there.”

“How so?”

“When s

she tried to taunt me with the idea of another

you haven't told me about

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I frown. “There is no one else. Ftold you everything there is to know. Everything but my Army career or dy..

really don't want to know. You know about Dionne and all the other women."

"I know that now after she told me about your first love, the one you let her believe is dead."

with Dionne that you

My eyes widen as Annora says this. "She asked me one day about if I had ever been in love. I said yes, with my first love, but refused to say anything further. When we started dating, she asked me to tell her about the woman I loved. I told Dionne that the past was dead and buried. She jumped to the conclusion that the woman I loved was dead."

"Why didn

didn't you want to tell her?"

"Because I knew if I did, she would taint those e memories somehow. Sharing them with her felt wrong. I wanted to keep all those

memories for myself. What did you say to her?"

"Dionne told me I would always compete with a dead woman. The love of your life, your first love. I smiled when I told her I was happy she wasn't the love of your life. Then I smiled even more when I told her that your first love wasn't dead."

"You told her, didn't you?"

"I told her the reason I knew that woman wasn't dead was because I am that woman. Oh, the look on her face was worth the revelation."

The devilish smile on An

on Annora's face makes me stand up, close the distance between us, then fuse my mouth to hers. When I pull away, we are both breathless. "I love this side of you,"

"Will she back off or do you

think she will try harder?"

Knowing Dionne, what Annora told her will make her angry, then she will confront me. Or try. After the package she sent me today, I know she will not take no for an answer. Not even after this revelation. She will try harder."

"Then let's make sure she knows she that she

e can't have what was never hers."

Annora wraps her arms around my neck, then leans up as I lean down to kiss her. I made good on my promise to tell her what I was thinking when she walked in. To my surprise, she locked her office door and let me do what I imagined.

You go for it. He has plenty to teach and give. Lol...

Loving Quinn Chapter 26

(Quinn)

After leaving Annora's office, I headed back to G&C Enterprises. There is nothing else scheduled today, so that will give me time to figure out my next move with Dionne. The woman has no qualms about violating a restraining order against her. No respect for herself either. Not after showing up at the hospital to confront Annora.

The thought of Dionne's smirking face as she tried to drive a wedge between Annora and me, makes me see red in anger. What will it take to get this woman out of my life? Walking away from her and moving across the country didn't seem to get the point across to her.

As I pull into my parking spot at our building, my phone rings. Irritation has me ignoring it as I get out of my car. Without looking at the number, I send it straight to voicemail while I walk to the doors. However, it rings again right as I pull the glass doors open,

This time, seeing that whoever is calling will just keep calling, I glance down at the screen. It is an unknown number, and my gut tells me I know who is calling. Dionne.

"How do you keep getting my phone number?"

"With the help of a fantastic investment in a private investigator."

Her

voice is grating in my ears as she tries to sound s**y. What the **k did I ever see in this woman other than the very energetic sex Dionne is very limber.

"I have a restraining order against you and a cease-and-desist order for you to stop calling me. Shall I report this call too?"

"Why do you have to be like that?"

"Like what?"

"Pretending that you don't miss me by acting all tough."

"Let's get one thing straight. I don't miss you. I never did."

With that, I hang up the phone and call my lawyer. This is the last time I deal with this b**h and her games. I am still on the phone with my lawyer

en I reach the floor where G&C Enterprises is located. I greet our temporary receptionist with a cordial nod of my head, then I head straight to Aaron's office.

Aaron holds up his index finger to silence me as I enter, since he is on the phone. From the tone of his voice and posture, I can only assume that he is talking to his mother. Even as an adult, he still gives his mother his full attention when she is speaking

I haven't seen his mother, Tori, since right after I left New York. That was right after I left Dionne. Aaron's mother was there to pick up my shattered heart. It is time I go see her. There is so much to tell her. Tori will be thrilled when I tell her about Grace.

"Ok, mom, we will see you then."

The sentence gets my attention as I sit down in a chair. When he hangs up the phone, Aaron smiles at me. The way he is smiling lets me know what is happening. "They are coming to California?"

"They will be here on Friday and plan to stay for the weekend before they head home. I asked them to stay with me while they are here, but my father doesn't want to interfere with my bachelor lifestyle."

"Why not have them stay in your penthouse? Now that you are living permanently at your new house, the penthouse is empty."

Aaron nods his head. "That is a good idea, I will call my mom back later to let her know "

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"I will give their info to the guards in the garage so that they are cleared to enter the building"

I head to my office to make reservations at Giovanni's for Friday night, for I love Italian food just as much as I do. Then I make a call to a car service to arrange for transportation while they are here. With all my bases covered, I return to Aaron's office.

"I made arrangements for your parents to have transportation while they are here. Then I called Giovanni's for a table for three on Friday night."

"Why not a table for six? I figured you would want to introduce Grace to my mother."

"I will save that for Saturday."

“Are you nervous about telling her you have a daughter?”

Tori has been the closest thing to a mother that I have had since my mother died. She was there for all my childhood difficulties. The summer I met Annora, Tori was there to guide me in the ways to treat woman. How will she react to the news that Annie and I have a child together?

“Honestly? I am terrified. I think she will be as angry as I was with how everything went down, but once she meets Grace that will all fade away.”

Aaron gets up from his chair, gathers his phone, keys, and briefcase, then walks to me. “Mom will love Grace. She may give Annora a lecture, but she will come around to loving her too. Eventually. Now, let’s get out of here and go have a drink. We have a few details to go over for this new property we are going to put an offer on tomorrow.”

“Oh.

you

made an appointment?”

“We are the only ones interested in the place as of today.”

“Let’s just hope it stays that way.”

An hour later, we are sitting at the bar at an exclusive gentlemen’s club. It feels odd to be in a place like this after all I have seen in my life. The walls of the room are a deep rich wood with pictures of renown businessmen from all the United States. Some old, some young, and some long since dead.

There are hushed conversations, men sitting alone looking over papers, or those like Aaron and I that are sitting at the bar watching the sports channel at low volume, I would feel more comfortable at a sports bar than I do here.

However, since we are both now very prominent businessmen, Aaron says a membership here will do good things for our public image. All the influential men we can rub elbows with. I asked him who he was and what did he do with my best friend. The man who rarely gave a damn about what others think of him.

“I have another motive for being here,” Aaron says as he sips his scotch

Now, that is my best friend.

.

tel.”

Instead of saying anything. Aaron subtly looks to the end of the bar. The man sitting on the last stool has broad shoulders, thick brown hair and is wearing a black business suit. His powerful jaw is set in angry lines as he stares at an open file in front of him on the bar.

“Why are you pointing him out? Who is he?”

“That, my friend, is Eyan McAllister. The other half of McAllister Industries. He is Ethan’s twin brother.”

My brows rise as I look back at Aaron “How do you know he comes here?”

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“I saw both their names on the members’ roster when we joined.”

*What are you planning. Aaron?”

“Nothing at all. I just want to observe the man. Whatever he is reading doesn’t seem to be making him happy. So, let’s just go grab a table, get lunch, and watch our adversary.”

Reluctantly, I agree with Aaron for now, I have to admit that I am curious about both McAllister brothers. Does Evan have something against us like his brother does? Maybe I am reading more into Ethan’s hugh than there is or maybe my Instincts are correct.

“I still think we should let Mac investigate this issue.”

We take a table along the wall that allows us to still have a sile profile of Evan McAllister. When the waiter came over to hand us menus, I ordered another bourbon, then glanced at the menu. I draw my attention back to the bar when Evan slams his fist down on the surface and swears profusely.

Evan pulls his phone out to call someone. Anger pumping off him in waves. It makes me feel sorry for whoever is on the phone with him. Is it eavesdropping when the conversation on our end is so loud that everyone in the room can hear it?

“You promised it would stop, Ethan. They have done nothing to us that warrants this.” Evan listens to his brother. “This vendetta you have against them is not right. If you don’t put a stop to this b**it now, I will pull the plug on all of it, then I will walk away just like I promised.” Evan hangs up the phone, gathers his files, then storms out of the room.

“That conversation was interesting. I am more suspicious of Ethan McAllister now than I was before, but this proves nothing.” I tell

Aaron

“Indeed. I am very interested in what Mac will uncover now.”

After leaving the club, I drop Aaron off at his car, then head to my penthouse. Mac sent one of his men over to take up the post on the elevator. When I arrive, there is a big burly man standing next to the elevator. I smile because I know and trust the man who waits patiently while I park my car.

David Hale was one of the few men in my first unit that I trusted completely. His piercing grey always saw more than people thought they did. He was our spotter and did his job very well. The day he left the Army was a good day for him, but a sad day for our team.

They medically discharged him after a combat mission went south. He was one of three injured that day. I was one of the other two men injured, but unlike my injuries, David's career in the Army ended that day. I have only seen him twice since then.

“I didn't know you worked for Mac.”

“Off and on when he needs me, or I need the work.”

“This should be an undemanding job then.”

am to keep a crazy woman from reaching your floor. How crazy is she?”

I had to think about that question for a moment. Until recently, I had never thought about thonne as the crazy ex-fiance that I would have to take these precautions against. Sady, now I have to, but is she the kind of crazy that would hurt someone to get to me? I seriously hope not.

“She is crazy enough to violate a restraining order. I don't think she is violent. The reason I want a guard down here is for my daughter's protection.”

David's brows rise in surprise at the mention of my daughter. A smile blooms on his face and little wrinkles crinkle the corner of his eyes. He reaches into his backpack and pulls out his wallet, After flipping it open, he hands it to me to show me a picture of his family.

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“That is my daughter, Sabrina, She is ten. Her brother, Jacob, is seven.”

I mimic his movements, then hand him the photo of Grace that I have in my wallet. "That is Grace. She is eleven. I have her on the weekends and sometimes during the week. So, I want to make sure that while she is here with me, there will be no issues."

David nods.

"There is a security room right over there," I tell him. I point to the door a few feet from the elevator. There is a bulletproof glass window that looks out into the garage. "Everything you will need is in there. Press one on the phone to call directly up to my penthouse."

"Thank you for the opportunity to work with you again."

'T

I pay

y better than

the Army ever did."

David laughs, then heads to t

the security office. He gives me a wave once he is in, then I walk to the elevator. However, a car pulls into the garage, making me spin around to see who it is. David is out of the office as the headlights bounce off the walls. His eyes have gone hard and flat as he accesses the situation.

When I see whose car it is, I hold my hand up for him to stand down. I can see Annora's face in the driver's seat with Grace next to her. What are they doing here on a Monday night?

Grace hops out of the car after Annora parks and comes racing to me. Her face is full of joy as she hugs my waist. When Anhora gets out of the car, she opens the trunk. Curiosity has me leading Grace back to the car.

"As much as I love the idea of spending more time with Grace, what are you two doing here? It is a so

school night."

"My plumbing is going to be worked on this week. I forgot all about the work being done in the upstairs bathroom until the contractor called a few hours ago. I would go to my parents' place, but I had a better idea instead."

The look in her eyes makes me smile. However, I can tell she is up to something. “What are you planning, Annie?”

“Momma had something she wants to tell me. She said it was important, so we had to come here.”

“Well, then I suggest we get these suitcases upstairs so she can tell us both what she wants to say.”

I reach in to grab their suitcases, then after Annora closes the trunk, we all walk to the elevator where David is waiting. He is looking at Annora in surprise. He knows who she is from the faded photo I kept in my footlocker. David is the man who painted the cherry blossoms picture in my living room.

“David, I would like to introduce you to the two most important women in my life. This lovely young lady here is Grace,” I say. I motion to her as I say her name, then with a smile, I look at Annie. “This is her, David, my Annie.”

“I am happy to finally meet Quinn’s guardian angel. He kept that picture of the two of you with him throughout our first deployment.”

Annora shakes his hand, then surprises him by pulling him in for a hug. After a few minutes of the two of them getting acquainted, David leaves us to head back to the security room. The three of us get on the elevator.

Jean in to whisper in Annie’s ear to ask her what she is planning to tell Grace. With a smile on her face, she turns my head so she can whisper in my ear.

“I am going to tell her we are a together as a couple. Let’s make our daughter deliriously happy, Quinn, by giving her the family she has always dreamed of having.”

Loving Quinn Chapter 27

(Quinn)

In the span of an hour, my penthouse went from a quiet bachelor pad to a bustling hive of activity. Grace went straight to her room to unpack her suitcase, then do her homework. Annora looked undecided on where to take her bags, so I solved the problem for her by picking them up and carrying them to the third floor.

“If we are doing this, then you will stay in here with me where you belong. Not down on the second floor with Grace.”

Annie follows me into my room, then wanders around to look around in the light of day. This was something she didn’t really have the chance to do that last time she was in here. We were too wrapped up in each other to do anything else.

“Is that door for a balcony?” She asks.

I follow her gaze

and nod my head. “I can give you a

tour of the place later tonight.”

“Ok, let’s go order something for dinner. My refrigerator is empty of anything that would be edible for dinner. Then we can talk to Grace over dinner.”

We head downstairs, then we debate about what to have for dinner. It is the most domestic my life has ever been, and I love it. I want them with me just like this for the rest of our lives. However, I will take things at her pace like she has asked.

Chinese food for dinner. I ordered online and it will be here soon.”

Annie’s voice makes me look over at her from where I am standing at the refrigerator. She is sitting on a stool at the island counter in the kitchen. The same counter we had sex on the last time she was here. The pen in her hand was tapping idly on the piece of paper she is using to make a grocery list.

I walk over to her after I close the refrigerator door, then lean down to kiss her. The way she leans her body towards me just feels natural! We fit together this well as teenagers. I know there will be some bumps for us now as we get to know each other again, but this part still feels the same.

The two of us have always connected on a level that I have never had with anyone else before. My relationship with Aaron is like that of a brother or a twin, Almost symbiotic in ways, as he just gets who I am so well. That is a lifetime of friendship there.

Annora knows all my childhood traumas from that summer we spent together. Now this new stage of our lives will be to learn about all the interim years we spent apart. I look forward to getting to know her again. The years she spent in England, medical school, residency, and everything about her life since her family drove away at the end of September all those years ago.

“I am looking forward to getting to know you again, Annie. The all grown-up version of you.”

The clomping sound of Grace’s feet on the wooden stairs interrupts whatever Annora was going to say to my statement. Our daughter races into the kitchen a few moments later with a grin on her face when she sees us standing so close to each other.

“If you guys are together, can we move in here with daddy?”

That simple question from our daughter makes me smile. As much as I would love nothing more than to have the three of us under one roof, now simply isn't a good time. From the way Annora stiffens, I can tell she is having similar thoughts.

Does us being together make you happy, Grace?" Annie turns to look at her as she asks.

Grace nods her head repeatedly, enthusiastically.

Well then, I am glad you are happy, but us living here isn't a plan, Not right now, at least. We can stay with him on the weekends. The

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can

three of us c use that time to get to know each other as a family. Maybe one day we can all live together."

Grace pouts, but smiles a second later. "Can we use the pool anytime we want?"

You have an indoor pool?" Annorn asks in surprise.

"I am so going to want that tour after dinner."

"What's for dinner?" Gmce asks.

"I ordered Chinese," Annie tells her with a grin.

Grace lets out a whoop of excitement, then races out of the room. I peek around the glass wall that separates the kitchen from the foyer; I see she is going upstairs. When she is no longer in sight, I turn back to Annora.

"How long do you think she knew we were working things out between us?"

"I am not sure she did until today. However, she has been dropping hints about wanting to be a family, one where her parents are together for real."

"How long has she been doing that?"

"A few months now."

The shrill ring of my home phone interrupts our conversation. I move out into the foyer, where the phone rests on the hall table. When I answer the call, it is David telling me that our delivery has arrived. I call into the kitchen to tell Annora that I will be right back.

After we finished dinner, Grace insisted on going on the tour of the penthouse with us. The three of us wandered the first floor as Grace points out each new room to her mother. She made an excellent tour guide for Annie. By the time we reached the second floor, where the library was located, Grace was noticeably wilting.

I scoop her up in my arms, then toss her over my shoulder. She giggles as I walk to her room. When I dump her on the bed, she rolls off then heads to her closet for her pajamas. This is our routine when she stays with me on the weekends. I leave the room so she can change, then I post up against the wall outside her door.

This is where I wait while she changes, then heads to the bathroom to brush her teeth. Once that is done, I sit with her and read *The Hobbit* to her for an hour. The world Tolkien created has always been my favorite, so I started sharing it with Grace. To my surprise, Annora started reading it to her a few years ago but never finished.

Tonight, after Grace is in bed, her eyes close almost instantly, so there will be no reading to her. When I close the door behind me as I leave her room, Annora is waiting for me in the hall with a smile on her face. I give her a sheepish smile as I walk to her

“Grace told me you are reading her *The Hobbit*. She was so excited to read it with you. Is what I just watched your nightly routine while

she is here?”

It is. I love that magical hour with her while I read for her.”

“You are an amazing father,” she says.

I grab her hand, then lead her upstairs to our room. I leave her to change into her pajamas while I head back downstairs for two glasses and a bottle of white wine. When I come back, she is sitting on the bed in a white t-shirt with Mickey Mouse on the front and a pair of loose lounge pants.

She smiles at me as I grab a shirt, my pajama pants, then head into the bathroom to brush my teeth and change. When I walk back into

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the room, she already has the Wine open and two glasses ready for us. I could get used to nights like this with her.

e on the bed, with a glass of wine in one hand while her other is running up and down the A few minutes later, she is curled up against me on arm I have wrapped around her. This is the most relaxed I have ever been since coming home from my last deployment.

“Watching you with our daughter tonight makes me feel
el mixed emotions.”

“Why?”

“You are so good with her, for her. I am so sorry that I didn’t try harder to find you.”

Annora looks back at me, tilting her head up so she can meet my gaze. Tears spill from her eyes. I cup her face in my hands, then kiss her nose before I pull back. With gentle strokes, I wipe the tears away with my thumbs.

“I have moved past that. That is time we will never get back and there isn’t anything either of us can do about it. I love her so very much. I love you for giving me a daughter. Let’s go forward from here on out and just be grateful that we have this time now,”

The smile she gives me lights my entire world up. Sitting my wine aside, I motion for her to stand up. When she does, I grab her hand, then lead her to the balcony door. This one is much bigger than the one on the first floor. It takes up a third of this level. Out here is my telescope that I used to stargaze, but I plan on moving downstairs for Grace to use.

“You have a jacuzzi? Of course, you do.”

I stop next to it, then turn to face her as I turn the dial to start the heating process.
“Strip.”

Surprise crosses Annora’s face before she tilts her head to the side. Then, to my utter shock, she does just that. With a swift motion, she pulls her shirt up and over her head. Her perfect breasts are bare for my eyes to roam over. Then she shimmies out of her lounge pants to reveal a pair of pale purple lace panties.

With the same swift movements as hers, I remove my shirt, then toss it to the ground. My pajama pants join the shirt a moment later.

Now we each have one article of clothing left to remove.

Her eyes darken with lust as they roam my torso. “I never thought I would find tattoos so attractive, but I do now.”

“Most of them have a special meaning to me. I will tell you about them all. Now come here. I want you naked by the time you get here.”

With swift movements, Annora reaches to the waistline of her panties, then with a wicked grin that makes my cock throb, she slowly slides them down until they are over her hip and fall freely to the ground. Then she saunters over to me, utterly naked in all her glory.

nipples on breasts that are more than my hand can hold, creamy white skin, narrow waist, and her perfectly round ass that just can't wait to get my hands on. My boxers hit the ground before she reaches me. My erection jutting up against my belly in anticipation.

She tilts her face up to meet my lips as I lean down to kiss her. It feels like an electrical current sparks between us at the contact. Her hands wrap around my neck as I press her close to me. My hands grip her ass as she opens her mouth for my tongue. When I break the kiss, she looks just as dazed as I feel.

I test the water, then lift her up in my arms before I climb into the jacuzzi. With a smooth reaction, I sit down on the bench inside, then settle her on my lap. Annora surprises me further by straddling me, then crushing her lips back to mine.

The way she is grinding her body over my erection makes me grip her ass hard to keep her from wiggling more. Tearing my mouth from hers. I look into her eyes. Desire and dark promises fill those hazel depths.

“You are driving me crazy, Annie. I want you so bad.”

Her hand slips between our bodies to stroke my raging erection. The stroke of her hand, the heat of the water, and the way she is biting her lower lip make me moan. This encourages her to keep stroking me,

3/4

Tue, Sep 10

Chapter 27

ruck if you “Fuck,

keep doing that, I'm going to explode.”

“We can't have that happen yet,” she says as she wiggles off my lap. “I want to try something I have never done before. Can you sit on the

edge of the jacuzzi for me?”

My mind goes haywire at what she just said. The way she is licking her lips makes my cock throb hard in anticipation. So, to please her, I stand up off the bench then sit on the edge of the jacuzzi like she has asked.

A blush stains her cheeks as her eyes look down at my erection. She kneels on the bench between my thighs and looks up at me. I could drown in her hazel eyes. The dark shine of lust makes me want to just bend her over and have my way with her right now. I grip the edge of the jacuzzi when she leans down and flicks her tongue over the head of my dick. When her hand wraps around me and she takes me slowly into her mouth, I have to breathe hard and fast to not explode in her mouth.

For someone who has never done this before, she is very good at what she is doing to me. When her free hand strokes my balls, I let out a loud groan of pleasure. "Oh, Annie, I am not sure I will last long if you keep that up."

Her laughter sends vibrations through my body as she continues her delicious assault. My shy Annie has turned into a little vixen and I fucking love it. Knowing this is the first time she has done this lets me know just how innocent she still is.

Oh, how I will love teaching her new things. Experiencing all the things she wants to try will be my pleasure and hers. With one last moan, I give her what she wants. I let go of the orgasm I have been holding back. When Annie sits up, she licks her lips, then gives me the

most seductive smile I have ever seen.

"My Jum."

What Annie does next takes my breath away. She stands up, turns around, then bends over to present that amazing ass of hers to my view. That is a very clear invitation, so I kneel behind her, then lick her wet core. The way she moans makes me want to do this forever. Her body is shaking with pleasure as she presses her ass against my face. Soon, a shudder wracks her body as an orgasm rushes through her. I lap her juices up with my tongue, then lean up to just look down at her.

"I want you inside

me.
Quinn."

"I thought you said no intercourse, Annie."

To tease her, I grip her hip in one hand, then rub my newly harden erection against her wet center. The moan she gives me and the way she pushes back against me lets me know she has changed her mind. However, I go no further because I need to hear the words.

“Please, Quinn, I need you now. I want this more than anything.” Annora moans my name.

give her what she wants without hesitating further.

Loving Quinn Chapter 28

(Annora)

Trauma warning

My entire body is still quivering with pleasure as I lay in bed snuggled up against Quinn. The warmth from his bare chest makes me

rub my cheek along his very sculpted pectoral muscles. His body is relaxed, but he isn't asleep. This is the first time we will sleep in the same bed together. Is he nervous or is he still recuperating from what we just did in the shower?

All that hard black marble was surprisingly warm against my back as he pinned me to the wall. My moans of pleasure and the echoes of wet flesh connecting with wet flesh were drowned out by the thundering noise of water coming from two shower heads. Each end of the shower has one and the water crosses in the center.

He had me against the wall between the heat of those twin sprays, his body pumping in and out of mine. Just thinking about it makes me crave to experience it all over again. This time slower. Much slower. Quinn has a sensual nature to him that just melts me.

To distract myself from all the sexual thoughts racing through my head, I roll over onto my side, h*k m**y leg over his waist, then lean up on my elbow to stare down at him. He opens those sea-green eyes of his to look at me. The expression on his face lets me know his mind is precisely where mine was.

However, after having sex in the jacuzzi, on the padded lounge, then repeatedly in the shower, my body is a little tender. I am not accustomed to having that much sex in one night. Kyle was a once a night kind of guy. Then a once-a-week kind of guy. Now I know why He was f**g our accountant.

No. Just drop that line of thought right now. That man does not belong here in this space. Not while I have the man I have always loved right here. Kyle can f**k off.

I peer down at Quinn's chest. There is what looks like a knife wound on his upper left pec. I can see the puckered skin of the scar peeking through a tattoo. It is a tribal symbol of a half-moon with the sun in the moon's curve.

“Does this one have a story behind it?” I inquire as I brush my fingers over the tattoo. As I caress the tattoo, I feel another scar hidden.

within the ink.

“No. It was mainly to cover the scars. They still show, but only if you look closely or do what you are now.”

“Show me one that bears meaning to you and a story behind it.”

He holds up his left arm to the moonlight that is shining through curtains. He has a full tattoo sleeve made up of many images. The one he points out stops my breathing for a moment as I stare at it. It is a St Michael’s medal. He inked my gift to him onto his body,

“Oh, that is beautiful, Quinn.”

When he brings his arm closer to me, the tiger lily at the base of the medal stands out in the light. My heart constricts in my chest for two more reasons. Tiger lilies are my favorite flower and he remembered that. However, it was the name on a white ribbon at the base of the flower that makes tears spring to my eyes.

My name is right there on his arm. With the gift I gave him and my favorite flower. He kept me with him inked on his body. A s**b escapes my mouth before I can stop it.

“Hey,” Quinn sits up, then cups my face in his large palms. “I put that there as an enduring reminder of the young woman who conquered my heart and branded her name across my soul when we were just eighteen. There is always that image of you on the shore of the lake in my head each time I look at this tattoo.”

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Chapter 28

“Oh, Quinn. I missed you so much. There wasn’t a day that passed by that I didn’t think of you at some point. You were with me even though you didn’t know it. You gave me the best gift I could have asked for. Grace. She was my reminder of you every day.”

Quinn laid back down hat rolled onto his side to face me. “When was the first time you felt her move inside you? What was that like?”

was in the middle of an exam at school. It felt like I swallowed a handful of butterflies, and they were fluttering around in ΠTY belly”

I had wished for nothing more than to hear his voice that day. To share with him the emotions that were bombarding me in waves. His voice was still fresh in my mind back then and his face was still so clear to me when I closed my eyes.

“I remember bursting into tears right there in the middle of class. My teacher looked so perplexed as I stood up and bolted from the room. Later, when I went back to get my

things, I explained to her what happened. She was sympathetic and allowed to let me make up that test right away, but that it would only be that one time.”

Quinn looks away from me for a minute, but when he glances back, there is a storm of emotions in his sea-green eyes. “What about the

first time you felt her kick?”

That memory brings a smile to my face as I look into his eyes. We are lying on our sides facing each other with our hands clasped together between our bodies. I have dreamed of being with him like this for so long. We spent hours together by the lake or in the cabin like this, just talking.

Dreaming.

T

was in my apartment studying for my midterm exams. I had just eaten some spaghetti, and I felt her kick me. Then, a few minutes later, she kicked me again. I went and settled down on my bed, put my palm over my belly where she kicked me, then just waited for her to do it again.”

His voice played through my mind that entire night. All the daydreams we had thought about that summer going through my head. Then I broke down and cried myself to sleep when I realized those dreams would never come true.

Except now they can.

“I cried myself to sleep that night.”

“Why?”

“I missed you so much and all I wanted was to have your arms around me in those moments. To have your hand next to mine on my belly as Grace kicked me. I should have tried to reach you again. I should have worked harder. Told someone that it was an emergency or about

the baby.”

Quinn lets go of my hand to wrap his arms around me. I snuggle close and press my face against his shoulder. I let go of all the pent-up emotions from the past as he holds me. Having his powerful arms around me feels like paradise.

“I am here now, shh. Nothing will separate us again.”

“Promise?”

He draws back so that he can stare into my eyes. "I promise I will do everything in my power to make sure nothing and no one will come [between us ever again. I am still enlisted, but they don't call on the reserves unless it is a critical situation. Other than that, I will be right

here. I am not going anywhere again without you or Grace."

With a smile on my face, I lean in to brush his lips softly with mine. "What was boot camp

like?

We spend the next few hours chatting about Quinn's boot camp experiences, then onto his first deployment. He goes silent after I inquire what took place on his first deployment that caused him seek therapy. The way he stiffens against me causes me to fear I overstepped my bounds on that question.

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Chapter 28

When he sits up and shows his back to me, I worry he is planning on leaving the room. His voice is low in tone when he speaks next. His back muscles are rigid, and his entire body is tense.

were driving back from a scouting mission. The vehicle I was in went over what we assumed was a pothole from a distance. When the front tire drove over it, there was an explosion. We had just driven over a bomb."

Oh, my god. Knowing it would be a bad idea to interrupt or touch him right now, I fight my instincts to hold him. He needs to get this out without my interference. The thought of what he went through that day scares me.

"We weren't in an armored truck, so the damage was catastrophic. Three of my y team died. It was a wonder the rest of us survived. The noises, smells, and pain of that day haunted my dreams and occasionally my thoughts when I was awake, for an extremely long time

afterwards."

When he shifts to glance at me, the look in his eyes is something I will never forget. One fact is clear to me now. I never want to put that look on his face again by asking him to share those memories with me. They are with him always, but I will never ask him to recall them for me.

Some things need to remain in the past.

There are no words to say in a situation like this. So, instead of talking, I close the distance between us and just hold him until he calms. Little by little, his body gradually loses its tension as I run my palm up and down his back.

“I am going to warn you now that I may have nightmares tonight after talking to you about it. If I wake up screaming just do what you are

“Is that why you used sex in the past to exhaust you? So that you wouldn’t dream?”

The slight nod he offers me causes me to understand his past a little better. Now I know what motivated him to be the man-w**re he was. This just means I have my work cut out for me. My days are tiring at work, but I will do all I can to make certain he doesn’t have to use another woman to drive away the demons.

“Think you can handle that?” His voice is **e and full of fear.

To answer his question, I move around his body, then straddle his lap. We are both still nude from our shower hours before. He isn’t erect, but I can feel his **k twitch as I settle over him. The way his shoulders move and the quiet laugh that comes from him let me know h figured out my answer to his question.

“From here on out, my arms, lips, and any part of my body you want to use are the only ones that will drive those demons away. Just talk to me. Tell me you feel them coming for you and I will do the rest. I lean in and capture his lips with mine.

Quinn breaks the kiss and stares at me. I can tell there is something he needs to say, but he is hesitant to say it. The feel of him growing firmer between our bodies makes me squirm over him. His hands tighten around my hips to keep me in place.

“Do you realize what you are taking on here with that statement?”

I swallow hard at the serious look in his eyes. No, I don’t know the entire scope of what I am volunteering for, but if it means that he is happy and healthy psychologically, then I will do what I must do. I will do whatever it takes to ensure he is healthy and here with me and our daughter.

I will be the wall between you and your demons.”

The moment those words are out of my mouth, Quinn

nn flips us over, so tam beneath him. I wrap my legs tightly around his waist. He growls deep in his chest, then moves my arms above my head. One of his large hands grips my wrists tightly as he pins them to the bed.

“Not everything I will do to you will be gentle or slow like it has been so far. I can tell you have so much to learn about sex, I want to Teach you everything there is to know.”

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Chapter 28

I wizzle beneath him when I feel him throb against my entrance. A moan escapes my lips as he pinches my nipple with his free hand. Involuntarily, I arch my back, pressing my upper body closer to his. This man is causing my system to go haywire with need.

Needs I could never have fulfilled. Needs that until now I didn't even know I have hidden inside me. Anticipation of all the things he will

makes me shiver underneath him. I nod my head to say yes.

"Tell me with your words that you want this, and you understand it may not always be gentle."

this. Let me help you."

"I want to f**k you right now, Annie, hard and fast. I want to make you scream my

my name 21 1

as I make you

cumi

for me.

The husky tone in his voice has ne

need for him, sharp and strong, tightening in my belly. "Then f**k me right now."

With a growl, Quinn thrusts upwards into me. This time, he doesn't hold back. The first thrust causes me to scream out his name. Partly in pain and partly in pleasure. Pain because we have been very sexually active tonight and my body is sensitive.

He looks down at for a moment, but all I do is lift my hips to encourage him to continue. Then, with a smile tugging at his lips, he lets go of his restraint and all I can do is hold on tight for the ride.

Each jarring thrust pushes us higher on the bed until we are up against the padded headboard. I don't mind at all. Every hard thrust of his body into mine is pure ecstasy. He fills me up to my limit, but I love it. I scream his name with every o**m that hits me.

Wow after wave of **c bliss slams into me as he **ks me in a way that I have only ever imagined. I will be sore and bruised in the morning, but it is worth it. My Greek God is a sex machine and I f**g love it.

When I run my nails down his back after his last thrust throws me over the edge of pleasure again, he lets out a loud growl that makes my core squeeze him tighter. I can feel each hot spurt of his seed as he finally reaches his release.

Much later, when we have finally learned to breathe again, we are lying flat on our backs, and Quinn looks over at me. "You really enjoyed that. Didn't you?"

He laughs, then pulls me against his body as he rolls over next to me. "Tam exhausted. Let's

"Can we stay home tomorrow? Send Grace to school and just stay home together?"

"I like the w

ay you are thinking, but sadly, I must go into the office tomorrow."

some sleep."

I nod my head, then snuggle against his side. Sleep soon sweeps me under its thick blanket of darkness. The last thought I have before it claims me is that I am happier now than I ever was without Quinn by my side.

A smile is on my face as I fall asleep in his arms. Heaven was waiting for me for twelve years. Home for me is right here in Quinn Greyson's arms.

Chapter Comments

Plana Jaycox

I love this story! I can't seem to put it down! Marvelous! Simply Marvelous!

Loving Quinn Chapter 29

(Quinn)

I woke to the most beautiful sight I have ever seen in the last twelve years. Annora is curled up next to me. The comforter is down around her hips, leaving her amazing breasts exposed. As feasts for the eyes go the picture before me could feed a starving man. As tempting as it would be wake her with my tongue on her nipples, the time on the clock tells me I am going to be late if I don't drag my a***out of bed.

What the hell, I am one owner of the company. I can be late for work it want to be. When she rolls over onto her back, my decision is made for me. Slowly as to not wake her, I lean up on my elbow, then lower my head to blow on her nipple.

It hardens instantly, to my delight.

Carefully, I maneuver my body over hers, then sup her breasts in my hand. Annara wakes slowly as I lick her nipple. Her hands delve into my hair as she arches her back, bringing her nipple further into my mouth.

“Mm, baby, I love how your body responds to my touch.”

We make love hard and fast, then when our breathing slows to normal, Annora races into the bathroom to shower. I don't join her since I know it will lead to sex again. We both have other obligations this morning, or I would be in there with her now.

The clock on the wall says if I leave in the next hour, I will still make it on time for the meeting with the realtor. I grab my clothes for the day and rush downstairs to the second-floor bathroom for a quick shower.

After I am dressed for the day, I head downstairs to the kitchen. Grace is at the counter with a of cereal and some orange juice. Annora is munching on one of the granola bars I keep in the cabinet. From the massive list she made last night, I can only assume she will stop by the grocery store on her way back here.

Grace looks up at me when I enter the kitchen. She smiles as she chews her breakfast. Seeing both her and Annora in my kitchen first thing in the morning makes me smile back at her. Having them here with me permanently would make me deliriously happy.

“Good morning, Grace.”

“Can we read for two hours tonight since I fell asleep last night?”

“We will see how things go tonight. If the time allows, then yes. It is a school night, Grace, so no late nights like we do on the weekends.”

Hearing only that I said yes she wiggles her body happily. I look over at Annora and she is adding something else to the grocery list. That reminds me she will need a key to get in the house on the off chance that I am not home when she and Grace are.

I walk out into the hallway to grab my keys off the hall table. I take the key to the front door off the keyring, then walk to Annora to hand it to her. She looks confused for a moment as she looks at the key in my hand/

“Here, this is for you. I have a spare at the office, I have made David and his daytime counterpart Gavin aware that you and Grace are staying here this week, so they will let you up when you two come home at any point during the day or night.”

Annora nods her head, then motions for me to step out of the kitchen after she takes the key from me. I follow her out and into the foyer, where she walks to the stairs, then stops. She turns around to look at me. Concern and curiosity are all over her face.

“Why do you have security-now? Did you hire them to keep Dionne from coming up here again?”

“I have a restraining order against her, Annora. That woman has already proven she will break it to see me. She has also proven that she will not stop. So, I hired security for my home.”

She walks away, then back to me.

1/5

Chapter 29

“What about your office building and your office at the hospital?”

I reach out to gently grip her shoulders. “I took care of all that yesterday morning. That was before I knew about her visit to you. There will be a guard posted at the elevator to the executive floors. Since it is public hospital, I can’t have her banned, but I will make sure she can’t get access to the floors where my office is, or any doctor’s offices are.”

Annora nods her head, then steps closer to me. I embrace her tightly for a moment, then step back.

“I will do all that I can to keep her away from you and Grace as well. My first instinct was to hire private security for both of you, but I figured that would be an overstep. At least without talking to you first.

“If she violates the restraining order again, please have her arrested. I am tired of that woman butting into our lives.”

“Already taken care of. I called my lawyer yesterday to have him talk to a judge about it. Police will be sent to her home this morning.”

Relief shows on Annora’s face.

“Now, I have to leave for a meeting with Aaron and the realtor for this property we are trying to buy. Will you two be ok here?”

She steps close to m

“We can see our way

then stands on the tips of her toes and kisses me when I lean down for her.

can see our way out and lock up when we go.”

I give her one

e more lingering kiss before I step away from her to grab my briefcase. When I step out into the hallway, my gaze lifts to the corner of the ceiling right outside the door. While I was at work yesterday, Mac had a team install two security cameras in the hallway. One at each end to show the entire hallway, my doorway, and the elevator. There is also now a camera in the elevator car itself.

If Dionne gets past my security, which I highly doubt will happen, I will have her on camera, As of yesterday, the restraining order now includes the entire building my penthouse is in, my entire office building and Annora’s home.

I had to grease some palms with hefty donations for a judge to sign off on all of that, but the money will be well spent if she violates the restraining order one more time. I almost want her to, just so I can watch her face when I have her arrested.

Oh, to be a fly on the wall at her home today when the police show up to serve her with the new paperwork for the revised restraining order. Maybe then she will know that I am serious about everything I said to her. Not just what I said yesterday, but a thing I said two years ago as well.

I hate that woman.

A few minutes later, I exit the elevator into the garage. Gavin is standing next the door when I step out. His blond hair is still in that military buzz cut from our Army days. He has worked for Mac for about three years now

We have met on a few occasions and from what I

have observed; he is very reliable.

“Good morning, Gavin.”

“Quinn. It is good to see you, man.”

You know the situation?”

“Yes. Mac gave me all the details and I will do my best to keep the crazy out.”

I laugh at how he summed up the situation, Dionne is crazy. All I can do is hope she does nothing drastic.

“Alright, well my girls are still up there, but they should be leaving soon

Roger that, sir.” Gavin says with a nod

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Chapter 29

With a laugh, I head to my car. By the time I reach the property we want to buy, I am five minutes late. That isn't too bad, considering Aaron hasn't even arrived yet. Normally, he arrives at any meeting ten minutes early.

The realtor, Erikka Miller, waves at me as I step out of my car. I button my suit jacket, then walk to where she is standing. The large, empty parking lot has grass poking up through cracks in the pavement. There is what looks to be an eight-foot-tall metal link fence around the property.

The grass is turning a pleasant shade of green in the empty field. From what I saw of property next to this, it will make a great playground for the kids who come with their parents. I can see it all form in my head as I look around the fenced in area. This is the perfect location for what we want to build,

Mercy General is only ten minutes away. For the homeless community we will reach out to, a major hospital will be very beneficial. The fence will have to be removed once we are ready to open

Until then, it will stay. If the issues at our other construction sites are any indication, someone has it out for G&C Enterprises. I feel it isn't the company they are gunning for. Aaron agrees with me. He thinks it is us personally they are after.

After hearing what Evan McAllister had to say to his brother yesterday, I have a gut feeling I know what and who is behind this. I have no proof, but that is why we hired Mac. He and his team will find everything there is to know about the McAllister brothers and their

company.

The sound of a car pulling into the lot makes me look over my shoulder as I am walking towards Erikka. Aaron's SUV pulls up next to my car. When he gets out, the look on his face tells me he had a wild night. Those are common for him.

However, like I used to, he has a strict no sleeping over at his date's house.

“Don’t

“Don’t ask,” Aaron says as he reaches me.

From the sound of his voice and the angry set of his jaw, I decide to leave it alone. For now, at least. When we get to the office, I will see if his mood has changed before I bring it up. Together, we make our way toward Erikka.

“Good morning, gentlemen.”

“Good morning, Miss Miller. Sorry that I was late.” Aaron says.

Erikka reaches out her hand to shake each of ours, then she gestures towards to empty field. Then she launches into the acreage and all

the one next to it. the details of the property. Once that is covered, she moves on to t

“I think what you two are planning here is a perfect idea for the community in this area.”

“The homeless population in this area is st***g. We want to create a place where they can come for food, shelter, clothing, medical treatment, as well as a sense of safety. We will also offer drug treatment for those who need it or want it.”

Miss. Miller looks at Aaron and me with wide eyes as we explain our vision. When her phone rings, she steps away to answer the call. This leaves me and Aaron alone for a moment.

“I can see this working here, Aaron. This just feels like the right place. The factory was in a suitable spot, but this place just feels like...”

“You feel that buzz in your gut like it belongs here too, don’t you?”

ww

“Do you remember that Christmas when my mom made us volunteer at the homeless shelter?”

That was the same Christmas she caught us smoking behind the garden shed.”

3/5

Chapter 29

Aaron laughs as he remembers that day. It was cold as heck out, but we snuck out into the backyard with his neighbor, Tommy, to have a smoke. We were thirteen. It was also the first time either of us has tried to smoke a cigarette.

Tori came around the corner of the shed just as we were puking up our dinner. We both followed her into the house with our hands on our stomachs and our head hung low. I was just praying she wouldn't send me home to my father with the smell of smoke clinging to me.

She didn't. Instead, she gave us both something to help settle our stomachs, grounded Aaron for a week, then told us what we would do on Christmas Eve. We both went willingly. That was the best Christmas of my life.

It was also the most inspirational. Because of her, I was inspired to build this outreach shelter. I will be forever grateful for Victoria Carter. She helped save my life as a child more times than I care to count.

"That was the basis for this project for us both. I want to help this community, Quinn. So many of the homeless around here are retired veterans that our government and medical system let fall through the cracks."

The passion in his voice about what we want to accomplish here, I feel just as deeply as well. We have had donations come in from all over California to help us fund the center. We will set up a website to allow people to volunteer and apply for jobs once the center is ready to be opened.

I just hope the people we are trying to help make use of it.

"We may have a problem, gentlemen." Miss. Miller says. She walks back to us with an angry look on her face.

There is that gut feeling again. Something about the way she is looking at the paperwork in her hands makes me feel that what she is about to say is going to be bad. If I was a betting man, which I am, I would bet money on her telling us there was another bid on the

property.

I also have a guess about who it will be.

"I am so sorry, you two, but someone just put in a bid on the place. What do you want to do?"

"McAllister Industries," I say as I look at Aaron, then back at her.

The way Miss. Miller's eyes shift away from us, I know my guess is correct. The man has it out for us, and I am going to find out why.

"How much did they bid over the asking price?"

“I can’t really tell you that, but I will I don’t want to see a factory here when this community needs what you two are trying to give it. Five million dollars over asking price. The owner is eager to sell. What do you want to do?”

“Can we go straight to the owner with our offer?”

The way she smiles shows she likes that idea. I am happy she is on our side. Now is the time to play hardball. Let’s just hope we get to the owner before McAllister has the same idea.

Loving Quinn Chapter 30

(Annora)

After dropping Grace off at school, I head back to my house to let the contractors in to start their work in my upstairs bathroom. My brother Max will be at the house later this morning to monitor the work. He is staying with our parents for a few days while he is in town to talk to a divorce attorney.

I sent Lorelai his number so she can represent him. She is the best attorney on the west coast. It is still hard to believe what Max told me about Leita. While Max was working long hours at his construction business, his wife was spending her days off with another man. This other man is Max’s best friend. Well, ex-best friend now,

When he found out about their affair, Leita told him it wasn’t what he thought. She adamantly denied that there was anything going on other than friendship. Max believed her at first. For the sake of their unborn child, he believed his wife.

That was until he came home early one afternoon to surprise her. He planned to take her out on a lunch date to her favorite restaurant. He expected to find her working in the nursery, What he found instead was his six months pregnant wife vigorously riding his best friend’s **k.

There was an ugly scene, but in the end, my brother packed his clothes and left. After he told me all this, I was so angry with him. We all

treated Leita like family. I even looked at her like the sister I never had. Her actions shattered my older brother’s heart.

When he went back to New York after I ran into him at our parents house recently, Leita tried to tell him it was a mistake. She tried to beg for his forgiveness. However, when Max spoke with his best friend, the full truth came out. They had been having an affair for three months. So Max did what he thought was best for everyone.

He left.

I urged him to have a paternity test done once the baby is born. He agreed with me. I offered him the spare room at my house since I know him staying with our parents won't last long. He laughed when he realized I was right to offer.

Once I let the workers in, I take my briefcase out onto the back patio to go over some patient files. I have three consultations today and one surgery later this afternoon. After that, my schedule is clear. The grocery store will be my first stop.

Quinn was right when he said there wasn't much to eat in his kitchen. I don't go tonight, we will eat takeout all week. What will it be like to cook a meal in his kitchen for us to sit down and eat as a family! I absolutely love the idea of coming home to Quinn and Grace every night for the rest of my life.

Right now, it would be too soon to live together. Even though I can see us doing so in the future. I can't seem to stay away from him for too long. After all the time we spent apart, I can't really say I am surprised. He is like a whirlpool in the ocean that I can't escape. I wouldn't try, but I would go happily into the swirling water.

"Hey, Annie."

Max's voice makes me look up from my patient file to look behind me. His auburn hair is a shade darker than mine and is currently messy. Almost like he has been dragging his fingers through it in frustration. It is a habit all my bothers picked up from our father.

"You look tired Max."

"Stress will do that to a person."

"Sit with me for a few minutes before I have to go to the hospital. Tell me what Lorelai told you."

Max sits across from me on the second lounge chair on my patio. He puts his elbows on his knees and his head in his hands. A sigh of frustration leaves him a moment later. This isn't a good sign. Max is normally upbeat. Leita's betrayal has changed him.

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Chapter 30

"I had her draw up the divorce papers. She asked me if I wanted to have them expressed delivered or if I wanted to give them to Leita in person. Annie, I don't know what to do there. If I go back to New York, may cave and forgive her."

I close my file, put it in my briefcase, then give Max my full attention.

“Leita has been a part of your life since your freshman year in college. She is a part of you. I know you love her and your baby.”

“If it is my baby.”

“Do you think Jake lied, and that they were together for longer than he said?”

Max looks up at me with raw pain in his eyes. As tears slip down his cheeks, I know he believes they were. If the child he loves so deeply turns out to be Jake’s, I will hate Leita for doing this to my brother.

“Distract me, Annie. Tell me what is happening with you, Grace, and Quinn.”

Max has never met Quinn, but he listened to me talk about him many times. An idea pops into my head. While Max is in town, it will be the perfect time to introduce him to Quinn.

“Would you like to come to dinner with us tonight? Grace and I are staying with him while the work here is being done, I would love for

you to meet him.”

Max looks surprised. “Are you two a couple now? I thought after what happened when you told him about Grace, you were going to keep it on a friendship basis for Grace’s sake. What happened?”

I can feel my face heat up when I remember the events that have happened since I spoke to my brother last. So much has happened between Quinn and me in the last ten days that it is hard to describe it. It was so much more than mind-blowing sex.

“Quinn was there for me during the custody case with Kyle. He did everything that Lorelai asked of him. From the DNA test to the statement from his commanding officer. Then he was there the day we went to court.”

“Did he do that all for r you or just for Grace?”

“Oh, Max, he is so good with her, I have seen that over the last six months when he drops her off on Sundays. Last night was different. I got to see their routine when she stays at his place. He is so patient with her.”

Annie, that is for Grace. What part of all that was for you?”

“Do you remember when I told you I gave him a St. Michael’s medal before he had to go to bootcamp?”

Max nods his head.

“Last night, he showed me something that made me cry. C

name. He said it was his way of keeping me with him.”

On his left arm he has the medal as a tattoo, but at the бага is a tiger lily and my

The sad look returns to his face, and I feel bad for the reason it is there I am finding my second chance at love while my brother’s life is going up in flames. I am a horrible sister.

am sorry, Moy.”

“Don’t be. I asked, I am happy for you, Annie. What time is dinner and where will it be?”

I grab a notepad and write Quinn’s address. “How does spaghetti sound

“With that garlic bread you make?

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Chapter 30

“Yes,”

“It sounds perfect.”

“Then show up around seven tonight.”

Max takes the paper I tore out of the noted, then stands up when I do. He wraps me in a hear hug gather my purse, briefcase and car keys, then walk to the gate at the side of th

a bear bug and then walks back

ck into the house 1

When I get to my car, I send a text message to Q**m telling him wo will have a guest for dinner. He doesn’t respond, so I make a note to check my phone when I get to the hospital. I am suddenly nervous alxit Max meeting Quinn for the first time.

Out of all my brothers, Max is the one whose opinion means the ment to me. As the oldest, Max would often be the babysitter on nights both our parents were out for charity events. He was also the one who encouraged me to follow my dreams,

Not the dreams our father had for me, but the ones I had for myself. If our father had his way, I would have become a cardiothoracic surgeon like him. I wanted to work to save the lives of children. So, I listened to my older brother and followed my dreams.

When I was eighteen, I found something else to dream about. Quinn Greyson became just that at the end of the summer. A dream of the future. Since that dream is becoming a reality, I want Max to meet him. I know that there isn't really anything that I should be nervous about

I just can't seem to help it.

With a sigh, I get out of my car after pulling into my designated spot in the employee parking lot. After grabbing my belongings, I head inside. Even though I was told about the new security guard at the executive elevator, seeing him standing there startled me.

After he scanned my hospital credentials, I headed up to my office to grab my lab coat and stethoscope. Shawna is waiting for me when I walk out of my office. The look on her face is one she often has that says she heard some juicy gossip and needs to tell me.

"What is the news today, Show?"

"Where are you headed?"

"Down to my practice. I have some consults this morning, then a surgery later this afternoon."

"I'll walk with you."

We head back to the elevator to go down to the pediatric ward where my private practice has a suite.

told you she left to get married. I could have sworn her fiancé came to the

"So, remember when you were telling me about Dr. Masters? I tol hospital once."

Now she has my full attention. I turn to look at her as we get on the elevator. She is practically dancing as the waits for me to ask her the question that will prompt her to tell me the next part.

"So, did he or didn't he come here to see her?"

"No, but we have met him before. It was at that big charity ball for the cardiology department the year she came on staff."

I frown as I try to remember what charity event she is talking about, "That was the year Mr. Davidson tripped and knocked the punch bowl over

"Yes. So, picture this man in your mind. Tall, athletic build, jet-black hair, and steel-grey eyes."

A face pops into my mind, and I frown because I remember him. I just don't remember his name. The only reason I remember him is

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because he

was yelling at Dionne for something. Her back was to me, and she couldn't hear her responses well.

"That man was her fiance?"

"Yes. His name is Ethan McAllister of McAll

McAllister Industries. He and his twin brother co-own it"

"Automotive industry. I remember reading about them in the paper

paper recently. They are rehabbing an old factory not that far from here. They will create new jobs for the area. Even if we don't really need a factory in that area."

*They are based here in California now after moving their headquarters from New York."

Something about that sparks a memory in my mind about how Quinn said he and Aaron moved here from New York recently, too. I wonder if Quinn has met Dionne's husband before. Wait, if Dionne and Ethan are still married, or ever got married at all, why is she after Quinn?

The thought that she is a married woman and shamelessly coming after a man who wants nothing to do with her makes me sick. I know that not all marriages are happy ones. If Ethan is anything like Kyle, I can understand, but why not just get divorced and find someone

Someone other than the one man she can't have. Is it the thrill of the chase that she enjoys? Does she not have any pride or self respect? If she did, then she would have left Quinn's penthouse when she saw me there. She wouldn't have tried to plant seeds of doubt in my mind to break us up.

"I felt sorry for her that night."

"Well, she is a patient here."

My head snaps back to Shawna. "How do you know that?"

“I was filling in for Maddison down in the physical therapy rooms. Dionne was there for an injury to her arm. I had to help her with her stretches. That woman is a piece of work. She treated me like I was beneath her just because I am a nurse.”

“I think you have described that woman accurately.”

The elevator doors open, and we step out onto the floor of the pediatric department. I take a step to walk toward my practice, but Shawna grabs my arm. When I turn to look at her, I notice there is a guard on the executive elevator on this floor as well. She nudges her head to indicate the guard.

“What is with the security on all floors stationed at the executive elevator?”

I motion for her to walk with me away

from the elevator. When we get there, Quinn really is taking this Dionne situation seriously.

As we were almost to my door, I stop then look at the guard, then back to

Quinn. “Quinn hired guards to keep her from reaching

her from reaching his office or any other doctor’s office in the hospital. Mine included. His partner wanted to just ban her from the hospital, but since she is a patient here, that would look bad for them.”

I have told Shawna everything that has happened since the Saturday morning when Dionne showed up at Quinn’s penthouse. We talked about it over lunch in my office yesterday. I am not sure who was angrier about Dionne’s action, Shawna or me.

“I still can’t believe she tried to get you to doubt yourself and Quinn’s love for you.”

“I can. Had you been there and seen the way she was devouring him with her eyes, you would know she is capable of anything

Shawna leans in to give me a hug, then walks off to go back to her duties. I take a deep breath to shake off all thoughts of that vile woman. Then I open the door and go about my business. There are two sick kids that need my help.

Loving Quinn Chapter 31

(Quinn)

Aaron has been on the phone since we all climbed into my car. We are headed to the meet with the owner of the land we want to buy. Miss. Miller called the man while we

waited patiently and, to our surprise, he was interested in meeting with us. So, we all piled into my car since it was the only vehicle that would fit three people.

My mind is going crazy trying to find anything in my memory about Ethan McAllister. Until our recent dealings with him, we had no known associations with McAllister Industries. His reason for black balling us in business is a mystery.

I have my suspicions, but there is no proof,

“Ok, so Mac hasn’t come up with anything just yet, but he is putting more investigators on it. Miss. Miller, do you think we have a good chance of convincing Mr. Montgomery to sell to us?” Aaron asks.

“Clifford Montgomery has lived in this area for most of his life. I think he will want to see your program succeed.”

“Why did he move out of San Francisco?”

“He moved to be closer to his daughter and grandchildren.”

The long drive to the Montgomery Estate takes us two hours to do. When we pull up the gated entrance, a guard steps out of the booth, then after seeing our identification, he clears us through the gate. The large wrought-iron gate swings open inward, allowing us to enter

The driveway winds up a small hill, then into a wide parking area in front of the front door. The house is bigger than I expected. What surprises me the most is that Clifford is waiting for us at the door. His stark white head of hair is tidy. I can feel his gaze on me as I get

out of the car.

There is a wisdom that only comes with age in his steel-grey eyes. “You must be the two men who want to build on my land. Come insidey and give me your sales pitch.”

An hour and a half later, after we have shown Clifford our plans and all the data on the homeless population in the area, he smiles at us. Not one of those fake smiles rich men give to other rich men when making deals like this one. The smile he gives us feels genuine.

“Erikka, pull out the papers for me, and let’s get this deal done. I will sell both plots of land to you boys for half the asking price.”

To say I am shocked is an understatement. Under asking price is one thing, but half the price is something that is almost unheard of. It makes me wonder if there is anything wrong with the property if he will sell so cheaply.

“Why would you sell it to us at that price?” Aaron asks.

As always, my best friend seems to know what I am thinking before I even say anything. This is why we make excellent business partners. I glance at him before looking back at Clifford,

“What you want to do for the community is much better than McAllister’s plans to build a tire factory. You boys will not only be creating jobs, but you will help those who more often than not fall under the cracks of society. Your project is worth selling my land for half the price

Miss. Miller reaches into her large briefcase and pulls out the file containing the deeds to both properties, the sales slip, and the documents for her company’s records. Once everything is signed by the four of us, Clifford’s lawyer signs then, then takes the documents to make copies. One for him, one for us, and one for Miss. Miller.

*1 will have these filed with the city tomorrow morning. Then, when it goes through, I will let you know when you can start Tonstruction. Clifford’s lawyer says as he hands each copy to the designated party.

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Aaron looks down at his phone to confirm that the wire transfer is complete. “The money is now in your account Mr. Montgomery.”

“Can I ask you a question before we leave?” I ask Clifford,

“Certainly.”

“When we finish construction, and are ready to open the doors. Would you come to the opening ceremony?”

I can tell that request surprises him by the way his eyebrows raise. A slow smile spreads across his face before he nods in response. We all stand, then I reach out to shake his hand. Aaron does the same after I step back. Erikka gives Clifford a polite kiss on the cheek, then she

leads the way out of the house,

Once we are outside, I glance down at my phone before I get in the driver’s seat. I have a message from Annora. We are having a guest over for dinner tonight, is all it says. Who would she have invited for dinner?

I have already met her parents. None of her brothers live in California. The only person I can think of that I haven't already met would be her best friend, Shawna. From what Annora has told me about her, she is also a veteran. This could be an opportunity to meet someone from Annora's life that has been there to support her.

After we drop Miss. Miller back at her car, Aaron and I head back to the office. A bad feeling settles over me when I enter our building. The head of security is standing at the desk, waiting for me. Edward usually always has a smile on his face. He is just a cheerful guy. The fact that he is scowling now makes me angry at whoever or whatever caused it.

"What's going on Edward?"

"You had a visitor this morning. The woman you warned us about."

Goddamnit. Why can't she just leave me the fuck alone? If the police delivered the new parameters of the restraining order this morning, that could have prompted her visit. That is another violation.

"Did you call the police?"

"I stated to, but she said it was unnecessary, handed me a package for you, then left."

Edward walks behind the front desk where two other security guards and two receptionists are sitting. He reaches out and grabs a manilla envelope, then holds it out to me. I don't want whatever is in it. I eyeball it like it is a bomb ready to explode at any moment.

The frown leaves Edward's face as I look at the envelope in his hand. "It isn't a bomb, but there is something metal inside. Whatever it is, it is small."

Reluctantly, I reach out to take it from him. Aaron steps up next to me as I do. He looks at the envelope exactly the same way I did. On front, written in Dionne's flowing handwriting, is my name. The little red heart drawn under my name makes me shake my head. She would do that on notes that she left for me in the past.

I thought it was sweet back then, but now I find this entire situation annoying.

"What is that?" Aaron asks.

I give Edward a nod before walking to the elevator. Aaron follows behind me. I wait until the elevator doors close before I answer him.

"Dionne came by here this morning. She left this."

Wow, that woman just won't stop. What do you think is in it?*

tilt the envelope from one side to the other to feel the weight of whatever is inside. It is small and lightweight. So, without hesitation, I rip it open and reach inside. My fingers connect with the cold metal of what feels like a key. I pull it and the scrap of paper out of the

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Chapter 31

envelope.

The key looks like a door key. I am sure it is the key to her house or apartment. Unfolding the scrap of paper, I find an address written on it. Under the address is a message.

Meet me here tomorrow morning at eleven. There is something you need to know. If you don't show, I will be forced to take matters into my own hands to make you talk to me.

I hand the note to Aaron, then clench my hand around the key. This woman is not making this easy. For two years she has been calling me only to hang up when I answer. In all that time, she could have told me whatever it is she needs me to know. There is nothing she can say that will make me change my mind about her.

Annora and Grace are my future. Dionne Master was my past and will remain that way. I hate that woman and everything she did to me. One thing I know is that I have to tell Annora about this package and the one before it. 1

to use what she assumes Annora doesn't

Knowing Dionne, if I don't meet with her, she will try to ambush Annora again. She will try to know. To avoid that, I have to be open and honest about what is going on.

Later that night at Qulon's

The aromas that hit my senses when I open my penthouse door make my mouth water. The sound of male laughter makes me frown as I put my briefcase on the hall table. Who the hell is that? Grace's giggles help me relax.

If my daughter knows who that man is, then it can't be bad. I follow the sound of laughter and jazz music into the kitchen. Until recently, there has only ever been one woman to cook in my kitchen. Tori picked out everything in my kitchen for me when I moved in. I rarely cook, not that I don't know how, I just don't have the time.

T

Annora is at the stove stirring something in a large pan. From the aromas I smell, I am pretty sure it is marinara sauce, Grace is sitting at the island counter next with her back to the doorway. There is a man leaning against the end of the island counter looking at Annora.

From his side profile, his auburn hair a shade darker than Annora's, my best guess is this is one of her brothers that wasn't there the summer we met. It is either Max or Eric. There were pictures of them at in her grandparents' house, but that was twelve years ago.

Whoever he is, he is the first to notice me standing against the glass wall that separates the kitchen from the rest of the living room area He stands up straight, which causes Grace to look over her shoulder. Her eyes light up when she sees me, and she hops off the stool to come greet me with a hug.

"Daddy, Uncle Max is here to have dinner with us."

Grace wraps her arms around my waist in a hug, then races back to her seat. So, this is the oldest brother, Max. Annora turns around from the stove to look at me. She has a smile on her face that just lights up the room, I am not sure who that smile is for. Me or the fact that her brother is here.

When she puts the wooden spoon that she was stirring the sauce with on a plate next to the stove and walks to per, I know the smile is for me. I feel bad that I even had to ask. Jealousy has never been something I have dealt with before. Maybe I am feeling it now because I have to share my time with Annora and Grace with someone else tonight.

Annora leans up on her toes and I meet her halfway to kiss her. I can feel Max's eyes on us as we kiss. It is like he is looking for something in the way we interact with each other. When Annora rests back on her feet again, she turns to look at him. Something passes between them and Max nods his head.

Max walks towards us, then holds his hand out for me to shake. "So, you are the man who stole my sister's heart when she was only eighteen. It is nice to finally put a face to the name. You are not quite how I pictured you."

"Give me a few minutes to change out of my work clothes. Then we can sit down to get to know each other."

Max nods his head, then walks back to where he was before. Annora follows me out of the kitchen as I walk to the stairs. I can feel her

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nervousness as I stop at the stairs.

“Are you ok with this? I didn’t really as

Loving Quinn Chapter 32

(Quinn)

As we eat dinner, Annora and Max share childhood memories with me and Grace. It is interesting getting to know Annie through her brother’s eyes. When we first met twelve years ago, the size and closeness of her family overwhelmed me. Her grandparents welcomed me to everything they did as a family, while her parents were not always as welcoming. However, by the end of the summer, they had warmed

up to me.

Being an only child, their family dynamic was foreign to me. I was both Intrigued and nervous to spend time with them. As I got to know them over the summer, it became easier. More comfortable. Almost like belonged there with them.

Tonight, with Max, I feel completely at ease. I think part of it is the fact that he asked about my tattoos like a man who has sat with a tattoo artist before. It was also the smile he gave me when I came back down after changing. It was genuine and that helped me feel less

nervous

“So, this one night, Eric was sneaking out of the house to go hangout with friends. Annie heard him sneaking across the roof by her window. Being the little sister she was, she opened her window after he passed by and screamed at the top of her lungs. BAT!! BAT!!* ”

“Oh my goodness, I remember that. Eric spun around so fast he lost his footing and slid down the roof. It was pure luck that he landed in the pile of garbage bags we had filled with leaves that afternoon.” Annora sheepishly smiles at Max. “I got the wrath of Eric for weeks after that. The gum in my hair was when mom call an end to or feuding

“You had to cut your hair so short to fix it. I am not sure who cried more at that, mom or you.”

“Mom.”

“Mom”

They both say in unison before laughter fills the room again. I envy their closeness, but then I recall that I do have a brother, one of my choosing, but not by birth. Aaron has been a brother to me for most of our lives.

He graciously shared toys, sometimes his clothes, and the most amazing thing he shared with me was his family. The Carters folded me into their family seamlessly. So much so that I would sometimes call them my parents when introducing them people later in life.

“How is your construction company doing, Max?” Annora asks.

Max’s face changes from a happy to an annoyed expression in the blink of an eye. The heavy sigh he lets out makes me pay more attention. He owns his own construction company. An idea forms in my head, but I will wait to hear the way this conversation goes.

“My last project wrapped up before I flew out here. I am unsure if I will take the next offer I receive. Not with my marriage in ruins.”

I glance at Annora, and she gives me that universal ‘I will tell you later look.

“Leita called again as I was driving over here. The crying act is getting old fast. If she was sorry, she wouldn’t have been sleeping with Jake for the last three months.”

Now there is anger in Max’s eyes when he looks at Annora.

“What kind of construction does your company do?” I ask. A change of topic is a good idea.

Max sends me a thank you look, then he talks business through the rest of dinner. Later, after all the dishes are cleared from the table, semi-washed, and put in the dishwasher, I lead Max out onto the balcony for a stronger drink than wine. He gives me a grateful look

“How long are you in San Francisco?”

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Chapter 32

“Has my sister told you what caused my marriage to implode?”

I shake my head no.

I caught my wife, who is six months pregnant with our first child, on the couch, screwing my best friend. So, I am getting a divorce and a paternity test done. There is no way I am going back to New York until the test results come in.”

“How would you like to work while you are here?”

“I am so not a business suit kind of guy.”

“My partner and I just closed a deal on some land about five miles from Mercy General. We are going to build an outreach center for the homeless in that area. We haven’t hired a contractor or construction crew yet, but we have the building plans ready.”

“L... wow...”

“Think about it. We can’t start until we complete the sale through the dry.”

“None of my crew is here.”

“How many do you

have on p

payroll?”

“Thirty.”

“How many of them would be willing to move out here for the duration of the construction?”

Max tilts his head to the side as he thinks about it. He bobs his head from side to side as if he is thinking about all those on his crew. He shakes his head a few times as if to say no about a name that pops into his head.

“About fifteen. Man, I appreciate this offer, but I learned my lesson about mixing family and business together in the past.”

“We are not family. So, there isn’t a conflict there.”

“No, not yet, but with the way you and my sister look at each other, you will be soon enough.”

“Is that your way of saying you approve of us being together?”

“Oh, I really do. You make both of them happy, and that is all I want for her. Her ex-husband was nice when we first met him, but I saw past that mask of his pretty fast.

You, on the other hand, are like an open book around them. All you feel is right there in your eyes.”

I hadn't expected that from him. At least not after our first meeting. It makes me happy to know he considers me to be family already. I would marry Annie with or without her family approval, but having it makes me feel better

From the way her parents reacted the day I met Grace; I have a feeling that I already have their approval. Though I want to spend some time with them to let them know I am in this for the long haul. To assure them I am not leaving this time.

“I tell you what, if you agree to my offer, we will keep it purely business, contracts and all. Make it all official. That way, if there is a breach of contract, there are no misunderstandings or hurt feelings.”

“Let me think about it, then. When you have everything ready on your end, let me know and I will give you an answer,”

“That sounds fair. We should have the bill of sale completed tomorrow. However, we have three other projects in the works already. One of which will be wrapped up by next week if all goes well”

“If all goes well?”

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Chapter 32

I briefly tell him about all the minor accidents and the ones wer

on purpose. I don't tell him who I think is behind it

have no proof yet, only a gut feeling. So far Mac has found nothing we don't already know about Ethan McAllister. Which is reason enough for me to be concerned

“Will there be a concern for

irthust stuff

to happen at the new site?-

Annora comes outside after he says this. She snuggles up next to me on the lounge I am sitting on. She has a curious expression on her face as she looks between me and Max.

I

“Don’t worry, Annie, I wasn’t telling Quine about the time you got your foot stuck in the fence when we stole apples from our neighbor’s yard.”

I can’t help the laugh that escapes me at the look on her face.

“I think having you for dinner was a bad idea.”

“Oh, no Annie my love, this entire night has been very illuminating. Were you a wild child or were you just trying to keep up with four brothers?”

“The latter, Phated being left out. What construction accidents were you two talking about?”

I briefly outline what has been happening and then tell them both that I have hired security guards to watch over the sites at night. Max pods his head in approval. Annora looks worried.

“Well, I am going to head back to mom and dad’s house. It was great to meet you, Quinn. I will think about your offer.”

“I will walk you out,” Annora says

She stands up, then follows her brother to the door. I take this opportunity to go check on Grace. I glance at my watch as I walk to her room. If she gets ready for bed now, we can read for about thirty minutes before she needs to sleep. When I close the door to Grace’s room! after she fell asleep. Annora is waiting for me in the hallway

“Is it bad that I already want this eswry night?” She asks as we walk towards the stair to head to our room.

I would love to have them bene with me permanently or in another house of our own. Somehow, I just don’t think now is the time for it.

Even if it is what we both want

Dionne is one of them.

“I need to tell you a few things that have happened. One of them today

When she turns to look back at me, the look on her face makes me not want to tell her anything at all, but I know that I have to for us to have a real chance. She holds her hand out to me and when I take it, she leads me up the stairs and into our bedroom,

We both go about getting ready for bed. I watch as she picks out a t-shirt to wear to sleep in, but when she goes to grab a pair of cotton shorts, I take them from her. The knowing smile she gives me as I put them back in the dresser drawer makes my c**k twitch with need

for her.

However, I shove the thought of sex aside because I really need to tell her what Dionne has been up I know Annie may mad that I didn't tell her about the first incident, but in all honesty, it slipped my mind since she has been here with me.

After getting dressed in my pajama pants and brushing my teeth, I sit on the edge of the bed. When she finally comes to sit next to me, all I can do is stare at her beautiful face, now clear of make up. Tu me she is beautiful, just like this.

nable to resist the temptation of her lips, I lean in to kiss her, but before it can go further, I pull away from her. "I have to tell you about the envelope I received today."

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Chapter 32

Annara stiffens, but she looks at me to continue.

"It is the second thing Dionne has sent to my office."

"The second? When did the first one happen?"

The edge of irritation in her voice is justified. I didn't tell her about it when it happened, and I should have, I am an idiot,

twas on Monday after she showed up at my place."

"What did she send you that has you hesitating to tell me? Why didn't you tell me?"

"That was the same day she ambushed you outside your office, I was going to tell you, or I should have told you about it when I was in your office later that day. We got a little distracted. If you recall, I had you spread open on your desk with my face between your thighs for

about an hour."

Her cheeks turn crimson at that reminder.

She sent me a pair of Calvin Klein boxer shorts and a note telling me that she will be there when you and I fail. She is positive that we will because she knows me better than anyone else ever can.”

Anger flares in Annora’s eyes instantly after I tell her about the underwear. I expected anger, and I was right. When she stands up, she turns her back to me, but when she spins around to face me, there is rage pumping off her delicate body in waves. She jabs her finger at me and stomps her foot.

If the situation wasn’t so aggravating. I would find her actions s**y as hell. The way her hazel eyes are glittering with outrage, her cheeks flushed, and her heavy breathing as she tried to control her temper, is such a **g turn on right now.

I should be ashamed of myself for even thinking that way, but goodness, she is an amazing sight to behold when she is angry. The urge to pick her up, toss her on the bed, and have angry, passionate sex is so powerful right now.

“What did you send you today?”

I take a deep breath to calm my raging hormones before I reply to her. This woman has reduced me back the days when I was a randy teenage boy. Sex was always on my mind that summer. More so after she let me have her for the first time in the back of my old beat-up Ford

“A key and an address with a note attached.”

the f** is this woman’s problem? Why won’t she

leave

you alone, Quinn?”

“I have no intention of meet her. Whatever it is she has to say can’t be that important, or she would have told me long before this She had two years of hang-up phone calls to say whatever it was she had to say, She didn’t”

“No, go to the meeting.”

My brows rise in surprise. “No. There is no way I will be alone with that woman. She makes me feel dirty when she looks at me.”

“You won’t be going alone. I am going with you. We will present a united front to her. It is time we show her she can’t break us apart.”

I love the way you think, Annie, but nu. I am not playing her games. It is time she faces the consequences of her actions. She has violated the restraining order far too many times, and I am done with

“Don’t you want to know what she has to say to you?”

I stand up off the bed, gather her in my arms, the look her struight in the eyes. “I have something far more Important to focus my

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attention on. We waited long enough to have this chance, Annie. Let’s not waste any more of our time

“But... what if...”

uu

her.”

I stop her with a press of my finger to her lips. “You and Grace are my priority. Let’s not give in to Dionne’s games. The more we talk about her, the more she gets what she wants.”

“How so?”

“By playing her mind games. To cause corfflict and doubt between us. Don’t let her get to you.”

“I won’t as long as she doesn’t get you in any way.”

I grab her hand, then place it over my semi-hard d**k. “I meant what I said when you gave me another chance. This and every part of me belongs to you and only you. More importantly...” I-move her hand to rest over my heart. “This has always belonged to you and always will until the day I die.”

The way her eyes go from angry to soft in that instant lets me know she understands what I am telling her.

“I am

all in, baby,” I whisper before I capture her lips.

R10

“What did *she* send you...”

