

6. Not Reckless, But Tempted

While my intention is to kiss him softly, I should've expected him to be rough. Ric's lips crash into mine, with a raw intensity that sends a shiver down my spine. Before I know it, he has lowered me to the couch with a swift move of his hand. His other hand slides up my thigh, slipping beneath the silk robe. I can feel my breath quicken, my heart pounding, as he takes control, and I let him. I'm melting into the couch, his fingers trailing higher, condent and commanding.

I'm losing myself to him completely. And I'm liking it.

But then, as his hand reaches for the knot of my robe, ready to undo it, a sharp thought slices through the fog in my mind—Is he married? The question slams into me, stopping everything. My body tenses, the heat I feel stalling, and Ric notices. His lips pause, his hand freezes on my chest just as I was about to tease myself, his fingers barely grazing my skin.

"Do you want me to stop?" Ric's voice is low, rumbling with restraint. His breath is hot against my neck.

I hesitate, unsure of how to voice the question that now feels like a brick wall between us. But I have to ask. I push myself up slightly, meeting his gaze. My heart races, pounding in my ears. "Are you married?" I ask, my voice barely above a whisper, shaking with nerves.

His reaction surprises me. That usual cocky smirk slips from his face, replaced by something deeper, almost regretful. He leans in, pressing a soft kiss to my cheek before straightening up, the atmosphere between us shifting. "I should've known you weren't as reckless as me," he says quietly, his voice holding a hint of remorse. "You're Elliot's little girl after all."

Anger ares in my chest. I scramble off the couch, standing in front of him, even though he towers over me. My sts ball up, trembling at my sides as I glare at him, feeling small. "I'm not a little girl," I snap, my voice shaky with frustration. "I'm twenty-ve."

His eyes soften for a moment, but there's still tension simmering between us. "And I'm almost twice your age, Natalie," he says, almost like he's giving up.

I can't let it go. My heart is still racing, my skin tingling, but I need answers. "Then why didn't that stop you from coming to me?" I blurt out, my voice lled with frustration and confusion.

Ric sighs, running a hand through his hair, the frustration evident in the way his shoulders tense. "I told you. I tried to talk myself out of it," he admits, his voice low. "Believe me, I did."

But it's not enough. I need to know more. "Are you married, Ric?" I ask again, my voice rm now, pressing him. "I'm not reckless. I may have done some crazy things, but I'm not that."

I think of Mike, of the betrayal, and the way it shattered me. It feels hypocritical to hate him for cheating and then turn around to be with a married man. I couldn't live with that.

Ric's response is swift, his voice steady. "No, I'm not married. Never have been. Never had a girlfriend either. Settling down with one woman has never been who I am."

A rush of relief washes over me. He's not married. And he's here, wanting me. Even if this ends up being a one-time thing, I intend to make the most out of it. I step closer, closing the space between us, my body pressing against his, my lips brushing the skin of his neck. "I waited for you that night," I whisper, my hand sliding up his chest as I guide his hand to my breast. "I imagined us doing all the things you implied you'd do."

He groans softly, a low, guttural sound that vibrates through his chest. "Did you touch yourself?" he asks in a whisper, his eyes closed. His grip tightens on my body, but when he leans in to kiss me, I turn my head, teasing him, letting my lips barely touch his cheek. My other hand moves lower, trailing down his body until I brush against the hard evidence of his desire. I feel his breath hitch, and I smirk, knowing what I'm doing to him.

"Yeah," I mumble, standing on my toes to nibble on his earlobe. "But it was your hands I was feeling."

He tries again, leaning in to capture my lips, but I turn my head once more, letting his mouth graze my ear. The way he groans, low and deep, sends heat rushing through me, and when his hand slides to the back of my neck, gripping it rmly, I shiver. God, I love how he holds me.

Finally, I let him kiss me, slow and tantalising, his lips moving over mine in a way that makes my knees weak. His hands settle over my breasts, and I reach for his zipper, feeling the tension between us rise. His breath is heavy and warm as he pushes aside the robe, ready to suck my n****s.

Then, the doorbell rings.

The sharp sound startles me, pulling me out of the moment. Ric growls in frustration, his arms tightening around me as he pulls me up, his mouth nding my neck, sucking on the skin there in a way that sends sparks shooting through my veins. I gasp, laughing softly even though I'm breathless. "Wait," I whisper, trying to pull away.

He's stubborn, not letting go, and I can't help but enjoy it. The doorbell rings again, louder this time, more insistent.

"I swear, if that's your father, he's got the worst timing," Ric grumbles against my skin.

I chuckle, trying to imagine my father interrupting this. "It better not be."

Ric pulls back just enough to look at me, his dark eyes still blazing with desire. "Shouldn't you ignore it?"

I bite my lip, torn. "I probably should check," I say reluctantly, even though my body is screaming for him to keep going.

Sighing, he nally loosens his grip, letting me go. I pull myself off him, adjusting my robe as I head for the door. My heart's still racing as I glance through the peephole.

And that's when my stomach drops.

It is my father.

A cold wave of panic rushes through me, freezing me in place. I blink, unable to process what I'm seeing. My father, standing outside the door of my penthouse. And here I am, half-undressed, standing just a few feet away, about to get laid by his friend.