

LITTLE STRANGER

Chapter 4: Olivia

"I think I hate you."

Malachi looks offended as we walk out of the store he just bought his arachnid from. The box with holes is hugged to his chest while I unlock my car and grimace when he places the cardboard box in the back seat.

It trembles a little, and I shake my head. "There's no thinking about it; I do hate you. If you take it back, I won't revoke the big-brother card." Stop being scared.

"No. Fuck you. Why, out of all the cute little animals in there, did you buy a tarantula? When you told me you wanted to get a pet, I thought you meant a kitten or a damn dog!"

My brother narrows his eyes at me, so I roll mine and turn on the engine, heading for home. Our parents will still be out they have some sort of meeting about a new foster kid who could potentially be living here soon.

I hope it's not another brother-I adore Malachi, but he's a lot of work sometimes, especially with his possessiveness. It started to show more when I was sixteen and went out for sleepovers, girls' days, or even to the gym. Every time, without fail, he'd blow up my phone with messages, because obviously he can't call, since he still doesn't talk.

Once, when me and Abbi got drunk at her parents' house and I called him, I slurred every word and sent him my location before losing my phone, and he hunted for me on his motorbike for hours.

When he was forced to give up and come home, he found me asleep in his bed. I woke in the morning with my head on his chest awfully tangled in his limbs and the little devil on my shoulder told me to stay, but I knew it was wrong, so I snuck out and went to my own room.

Imagine another one of him in the house? I would go insane. I love him, I really do, but I have strange thoughts about him sometimes. When my fingers slip between my thighs or when I'm kissing someone else, it's shameless how many times his face has been at the forefront of my mind when I find my orgasm.

Then I'd have to sit down for breakfast or dinner or supper with him, our parents too, and pretend I didn't just get off to the thought of my brother.

"I need to get gas," I say when I notice my tank is close to empty. I turn into the closest station and glance at the box over my shoulder and wonder if he'll notice if I accidentally leave it on the roof of someone else's car.

Spiders give me chills. Small ones that run across your room floor, dangle from the ceiling, or casually chill on your face while you sleep are bad enough, but the hairy thing in that box isn't just a little spider-it's red and black and hairy and looks like it might eat me.

Rain patters down, making puddles on the ground as I fight with the handle and the gas cap- Malachi ends up twisting it off for me and sits on the hood while I fill up the tank. Arms crossed, he stares at me, and I narrow my eyes. "What?"

You don't have your lip gloss on.

I rub my lips together they're stained red from the lipstick I bought a few days ago. "I like this one better."

I disagree. You look like a hooker.

I slap his arm, and he silently laughs.

"Mom wants me to find a boyfriend because apparently I need a man to look after me." I roll my eyes. "She said they'll partner me up with that weirdo Parker."

Malachi's eyes darken, his jaw clenching. You're only eighteen.

I laugh. "Tell her that!" Twisting on the gas cap, I pat his shoulder. "Count yourself lucky Dad thinks men are power, or you'd be forced into marriage at a young age too."

He snatches my wrist before I can pull away then drops it to sign a reply. No, you aren't getting married.

I sigh. "I really suggest you don't fight our parents on this. Their tradition is that I've to be pure and innocent until I'm married, and you can do whatever you want. Just enjoy your freedom."

Before he can respond-probably something angry given the look in his eyes-I turn away, blocking his communication, and head inside to pay and grab some snacks.

While I'm waiting in line, a tap on my shoulder has me jumping and turning, and dropping my bags of chips on the ground. We both lower to our knees to pick them up, and my hand lands on theirs. My eyes lift, and I find Adam, who I used to sit beside in calculus, smiling back at me.

I haven't seen him in months. He dropped out of school and vanished, which was a surprise, since he was one of the best jocks, smart, and dare I say-handsome?

A voice in the back of my head is yelling at me to grab the chips and leave, but we end up talking for nearly ten minutes while the cashier waits, joining in when we comment on how terrible the weather's been for June, before the bell jingles above the door and Malachi storms in.

His eyes are on the guy I've been talking to, and he looks mad.

No. Furious.

"Oh, sorry, I was just talking to"

He slams Adam's head into the wall with enough force that I cringe at the cracking sound. Once, twice, three times, and blood splatters as Adam goes limp on the ground. My eyes are wide, no sound coming out of my parted lips as the cashier runs to call the cops. Malachi's nostrils are flaring, and he turns to me, grabs my jaw, and signs, No.

"I didn't do anything," I breathe. "Why... why did you just do that?" My gaze drops to a passed-out Adam, blood oozing from a cut on his head, and I glance up. "Malachi..."

He shakes his head, lowering his raging gaze to Adam rousing and trying to get up from the floor, then snatches my wrist and pulls me out of the gas station.

He tosses me into the car then slams the door, and I'm frozen, barely blinking as he sits behind the wheel. He's signing something to me, but I'm not looking, my heart racing as he breathes out a huff and speeds out of the gas station.

He drives us home, and I sit in silence, occasionally glancing at his right hand, the one he just used to assault Adam. Shaking, he grips the steering wheel, and I gulp at the bulging veins in his arms, feeling a sensation between my legs that definitely shouldn't be there.

I shouldn't be turned on from watching him attack someone. His violence should be punished. I should be yelling at him for doing that; instead, I'm envisioning him holding me down and...

"Why did you do that?" I ask, trying to keep my tone calm and collected.

But I fail. Why does my voice sound all breathy and needy?

Why are my panties soaked?

Sick. Sick, sick, sick. And shameful.

Malachi ignores me and drives faster.

"He was a friend from school. He knocked into me by accident, and we were only talking. He wasn't being a dick or anything."

Shut up, he signs. I scowl, crossing my arms. "The cops are going to come for you now, and Dad is going to be so mad, and then Mom will get into a fight with him. Just drop me at Abbi's."

No.

"Malachi. Drop me at Abbi's place or I'll scream."

He glances at me, presses down on the accelerator, and signs, Then scream.

I shake my head and look out of the window. He doesn't take me to my friend's house; he drives us both home. As soon as he pulls into the garage, I throw open the door and run to my room.

Mom and Dad get home around the same time the cops arrive, informing them that Adam doesn't want to press charges. The entire time Malachi is unfazed, slouched in a chair with parted legs, his eyes glued to a spot on the wall as he blanks everyone out.

He gets a warning to be on his best behavior and possibly seek some help.

Mom's eyes are wet, and she keeps glancing at Malachi as if he's going to defend his actions, but he flicks his lighter and ignores them.

"What the hell is wrong with you?" Dad yells at him. "You're lucky he doesn't want any more trouble, or you'd make our family look like a goddamn disgrace!"

Mom sits up. "Adam's family did say they'd drop the charges under certain conditions."

"What conditions?" I ask, and she gives me a warm smile.

"One condition. We promise Olivia to Adam."

Malachi's hands fist, and Dad's eyes widen.

"I thought she had an arrangement with Parker?" Mom shrugs. "It's always good to have more than one option, Jamieson."

"And how many options do you plan on giving our daughter, Jennifer?"

When they use their names in those tones, things usually explode.

Swallowing, I drop my gaze to my lap, embarrassment coursing through me as they argue.

There's a kick against my shin, and I lift my watery gaze to see Malachi staring at me. His brows are knitted together, and while our parents argue, he signs, I will kill anyone who touches you.

I believe him.

But this is his fault.

The yelling continues, but he doesn't care. He doesn't even flinch when Dad knocks over the table in frustration. Mom starts shouting at him then, and as things escalate into a competition over who can raise their voices the loudest, Malachi gestures to the door, and we both slip out.

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"Thanks," I snap, moving away from his hand low on my back, leading me up the grand staircase. "Because of you, Mom is going to force me to date him too. I hope you're proud of yourself, big brother." And I turn away from him, storming left to my room.

"Are you awake, sweetheart?"

I pause the TV and sit up. "Yeah. Come in."

My mom opens the door and closes it quietly behind her, her eyes puffy. She and dad really went to war with each other earlier, and it's obvious she's only just stopped crying.

"Are you okay?" I ask. "You were arguing for hours."

"Your father wasn't pleased about my suggestion that you go on a date with that boy, but it was Adam's parents' condition for not having Malachi charged."

I press my lips together. "So to stop my him from getting charged, I need to go on a date. That's blackmail, and quite honestly, it sickens me that you even agreed to it."

"If you don't go, Malachi will get into a lot of trouble."

When I blankly stare at her, she adds, "Do you know why your brother did that today?"

Shaking my head, I reply, "No. I was just talking to Adam. He won't tell me why he did it."

She sighs and sits on the edge of my bed, running her hands through her hair-golden blonde and thick and not a hint of grey, despite Dad's hair being whiter than white.

"He won't talk to us. He hasn't for quite a while even when I cried for

him to communicate with me, he stared right through me. But he'll have a conversation with you."

My shoulder raises. "Yeah. We're close like that."

"Forgive me for asking this, but you can tell me the truth, sweetheart. Has he ever... hurt you?"

My eyes widen, and I sit up straighter. "What? No! Why would he?"

"Malachi isn't like us, Olivia. I'm not sure why we thought we could handle someone like him. So troubled and so... I don't know. His controlling and possessive tendencies over you are dangerous. Even when your father kisses your forehead, Malachi glares at him like he wants to slit his throat. He won't speak to a therapist and won't touch medication, and I fear he really needs both."

"Why would he need them?"

She nibbles her lip and flattens her lips. "Malachi has... issues. As well as all the trauma from his life before coming here that triggered his mutism, he isn't mentally normal. Have you ever heard of ASPD?"

"Sure, but Malachi isn't a psychopath or anything. He's just quiet and has a temper."

Mom shakes her head. "He was diagnosed at fifteen, sweetheart. And... your father and I think that, maybe, we should ask him to leave now that he's nineteen and at an age to support himself."

My teeth crush together as I throw my duvet off. "No," I force out. "If he goes, I go."

"Don't be stupid, Olivia. Why would you do that? Malachi needs space and no restrictions, and if he's living under our roof, he needs to abide by our rules. Your father can't even be in the same room with him without feeling uncomfortable. You can't leave you have... ties to our family. You're a Vize."

"I promise you, Mom, if Malachi goes, I will leave with him."

"Very well." Her shoulders hunch, and she gazes at the floor for a long minute. "If he messes up once more, I don't care what the repercussions are. Malachi will be told to leave. We raised him, we put clothes on his back, and filled his stomach with food. We already did our job. He's grown up now and will not bring shame to this family."

"Is that how you feel about me too? You done your job by raising me, so you no longer need to act like a parent? You'll just sell me off to marry someone else's son to secure more money for yourselves?" "God, no, Olivia. You're my daughter and always will be. I'm not afraid of you, and I don't feel uneasy bringing new fosters in with you here. But Malachi? He seriously assaulted someone just for talking to you. What will happen if a new foster wants to be your friend?"

Burning-hot tears slip down my cheeks. "Malachi is your son."

"He is, and I love him; we all do, but he's dangerous and unhinged and unpredictable. He can't feel remorse or empathy or regret or even love someone properly. He's a weapon."

"Get out," I grit. "Get out and never speak about your son like that again."

"I'm just looking out for everyone, sweetheart. If you can speak to Malachi and talk to him about medication and therapy, then we can help him not end up in prison-or, worse, dead from picking a fight with the wrong person. He didn't even consider the cameras or witnesses when he smashed that poor boy's head into the wall."

She tries to place a hand on mine, and I pull away. "I was speaking to Adam's mother on the phone. He's willing to go for dinner with you this weekend. I can rearrange your date with Parker to the weekend after."

Through my teeth, I grit, "How considerate of him."

"We can go dress shopping tomorrow. Pick you something nice and flattering."

I don't dignify her with a response as she leaves the room, and I hug my knees to my chest, hearing her words over and over again. Part of what she said is right: Malachi is a little... unhinged at times, but he isn't the monster she's trying to paint him as.

Taking out my laptop, I look up "ASPD," checking forums and medical reports, and the more I read, the more I realize that despite everything I feel towards Malachi-caring about him, wanting to spend time with him, and getting butterflies when we sleep in the same bed he might not feel the same way about me.

But then I inwardly smack myself, because he's my brother, so obviously he's not going to feel the same way I do. He's possessive of me because I'm his sister, not because he wants to fuck me into next week.

How does he see life? If he can't feel certain emotions, then what's it like to live in his shoes? Does he even care about living?

No matter what traits and descriptors say about Malachi's diagnosis, whether he's a psychopath or a sociopath or something else, he's my big brother, and I will never walk away from him.

Hours later, when everyone is asleep, I climb out of my window and balance across the ledge to his side of the manor. When I first did this years ago, I was terrified of the drop. Heights and I don't mix, but I've grown used to this one.

He never locks his balcony, so I slide across the door and slip in.

"Archangel" by MEJKO plays from his speaker, low enough that no one else in the house will be able to hear it. The clanking of metal, the gusts of breath he pushes out each time he raises the barbell above his head while laid out on the weight bench, the glistening sweat all over his chest and face -the combination sends a shiver through me, and I stay silent, watching, just like he does when he sees me cheer out in the yard.

He drops the barbell back onto the bench stand and sits up, panting silently and sweating and rubbing the towel across his soaked face. He's only wearing shorts, so his abs are on show, glittering with sweat as he gets to his feet, tossing the towel down and running his fingers through his already disheveled hair. He looks to the side, his eyes clashing with mine, and I fidget my fingers behind my back. "Hi. I couldn't sleep."

He towers over me, his chest rising and falling as he closes the distance between us, stopping in front of me and reaching for one of my plaits. He slips off the hair tie and unravels my hair, rubbing the strands between his fingers and bringing them to his nose inhaling and closing his eyes.

Normality for us went out the window a while ago, because I like when he does this. It calms him, and for some reason, it calms me too to know that. I tried to change my strawberry-scented shampoo once, and he threw my new one in the trash and filled my bathroom unit with a supply of the one he loves.

"Why did you do that today?" I whisper, my voice faltering as I look up at him through my lashes. That towering height, mixed with his muscles and dimples... I hate the fact that he's my brother. Why can't he just be a friend's brother, or someone I met by chance?

I'm starting to realize that I might have a crush on Malachi-the world needs to eat me up and spit me into space because what the hell? His silence is deafening, his breaths starting to calm from his vigorous workout.

"Mom told me to speak to you about something."

The tip of his head is slight, and he lets go of my hair and backs away.

"She thinks you need help. A therapist, and to be medicated."

He licks the salty sweat from his lips and reaches for a fresh towel, tossing it over his shoulder. He turns his back to me, and my eyes zone in on the expanse of it. He has a nice back, a tattoo on his

ribs travelling up his back and across his shoulders. It's still fresh-I went with him to get it done a few days ago and read a book for nearly six hours while he kept his eyes on me. I asked if it hurt, but he shook his head.

I would rather stick pins in my eyeballs than get a tattoo. Who wants to be punctured with needles over and over again? No thank you.

He told me that night, while we watched a movie, that he was going to find a tattoo gun and put his name on my thigh, then continued to grab it and make me squeal as he started tickling me. I ended up frustrated and crushing my thighs together while we watched a movie.

Totally normal sibling behavior.

I want that playful Malachi, not the one walking away from me and into his bathroom to turn on the shower. He walks back in, leaning over the glass tank to check on his tarantula.

He looks up. Come here.

Hesitantly, I move forward, standing beside him as I watch the eight-legged beast scurry into a burrow. But then Malachi reaches down to grab it, letting it crawl onto his palm, and I try to step back, but he snatches my wrist to keep me in place.

The darkness within his eyes holds me in place, my body trembling as he manipulates my hand to put my palm upwards.

The spider is on the back of his hand as he signs to me. Are you going out with that dickhead?

I bite my lip. "I need to. Mom set up a dinner date for the weekend."

His nostrils flare. He signs again. And the other guy?

My huff is louder than intended. "You already know I have to. It's what Vize women do apparently. I can't say no."

His jaw ticks, and I yelp as he snatches my wrist. "Please don't," I beg, barely able to stay still as the spider crawls down his arm, up his forearm, and settles in his palm. "Please, please, please don't."

Malachi tries to put the horrific thing in my palm. I yank away just in time, and it drops onto the floor. The shriek I let out as it scurries to my feet vibrates in my ears as I run to the other side of the room, throwing myself on his bed.

I'm still screaming when Malachi climbs on top of me and covers my mouth with his hand, fingers digging into my cheek. He raises his finger to his lips, telling me to be silent, but all I can focus on is his body layered over mine the hardness pressed against my inner thigh.

He's... hard. Aroused.

His cock is hard and it's pressing against me.

Me. His sister.

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I gulp, tensing everywhere to stop myself from moving, not breathing as I feel him twitch. His jaw is clenched firmer, his eyes hooded as he stares down at me.

I try to say something against his palm, but only a muffled whimper pours out of me.

Is he getting harder?

Oh God.

Not wanting to point out the obvious, because he might not even mean to be hard, or feel the heat between us rising, or the energy in the room altering as my own arousal coats my panties and because my mouth is covered-I lift my hands to sign.

I won't scream.He twitches again, and before he gets off me, he pushes down so his cock runs against my clit, and I bite my cheek to suppress a moan.

Sick, I'm so fucking sick. He isn't meaning to do it, but here I am, horny and wanting my brother to press his cock between my legs again. And the way it felt? He's well endowed, that's for sure.

I sit up and go to tell him that I'll sleep in my own room if he wants, but my words are lost when I see the tented, thick outline of his cock through his shorts. He isn't even trying to hide it as his music still plays in the background, his tarantula crawling up his arm to his shoulder.

I lift my eyes to his face, and I think he caught me looking at his dick. He just caught his little sister salivating over his size. Can this night get any worse?

He tilts his head, his hands fisting at his side before he lifts them. Get into bed. I'll be there in a minute.

He gestures to my side of the bed and turns away, placing his spider back in its tank and heading to the shower.

My skin tingles, and the butterflies are going insane, my thighs rubbing together as I lie under the covers and wait. They smell like him, and the way I'm feeling, the scent only makes me worse. I slip my hand between my legs, letting out a soft moan as I finger my wetness. With my eyes glued to the door of the bathroom, where he's naked and wet, I picture him on me again as I sink two fingers inside myself.

The door handle jiggles, and I pull my fingers free, needing to keep going but stopping as he comes out of his bathroom with a new pair of shorts on, rubbing his black wavy hair with a towel before dropping it into his laundry basket.He climbs into bed beside me, grabs his remote, and turns on the TV. His knee bumps mine, and he doesn't pull it away as his thigh presses to my own, and I wonder if he knows my fingers are still wet, or that my pussy is clenching on nothing, needing something.

Him.

I want to slap myself.

"Promise me you won't beat anyone else up."

No, he signs.

Crossing my arms, I shuffle away from him, but I shriek as he grabs my knee and pulls me back. Stop being a brat.

"Every time you attack someone, Mom is probably going to try to arrange a date for me. She's desperate for me to get married young because she did."

His head snaps to me. How many dates has she arranged?

"I've been on four so far. Two to go. Yay me."

He straightens. So far? You've been on dates already?

Rolling my eyes, I huff. "I'm eighteen."

And? Did you fuck them?

I gasp. "I'm not talking about this stuff with you!"

He tries to sign, but I grab his hand, lacing our fingers. "Watch the movie, Malachi, or I'm going back to my room."

I somehow fall asleep, waking a few hours later to find Malachi plastered to my back. His strong arms encase me as his soft, gentle breaths breeze against my neck, making those forbidden sensations return between my legs.

I can't get back to sleep especially since his cock is hard as granite and pressing against my ass, his arms tightening around me as I pretend to shift and rub my ass against him.

Then I stop, freezing in place with my eyes wide-did I just... grind my ass against my sleeping brother's dick?

He shifts, and his hand drops to my inner thigh, gripping it, and I stifle a whimper as his fingers dig into my skin.

I want to slide his hand upwards, to press his thick fingers to my clit, to feel his touch-am I insane?

I glance over my shoulder and stiffen when I see that his eyes are open, glaring at me. "Did I wake you?" I ask, trying to ignore his hand; the prodding cock or the fact I just grinded my ass against it.

He shakes his head.

"Are you okay?"

I shouldn't mention the fact he's hard. We've slept in the same bed since we were kids, and I don't think this has ever happened. Sure, he'd have morning wood now and again, and one time I woke up with my hand on his bulge-I never yanked my hand away faster than I did that morning. But right now, we're both awake, and neither of us is moving from our current positions.

I'm still looking over my shoulder, my breath hitching as he tightens his grip on my inner thigh, pulling me firmer against him, causing his cock to press harder between my legs. I part them a little, his head oh so close to my clit. Being so turned on by this is insanity. Maybe I'm the one who needs to see a therapist?

He releases my inner thigh and his fingers twist in my pajama top, causing a button to pop.

He suddenly lets go and rolls onto his back, his arm still under me. He rubs a palm down his face, looking at me again before closing his eyes. I turn to face him, pressed up to his side, and he doesn't move me away- and when I hike my leg up and onto his thigh, he holds it there.

Wearing sleep shorts was a bad idea or maybe good, the skin on skin, and fireworks are going off, my nerve endings sizzling and making me have to fight to keep my breathing steady. He seems to be thinking, brows narrowed, his lips parted as he runs the tip of his tongue along his bottom lip before capturing it with his teeth.

Then Malachi releases my leg and takes my hand, not looking at me as he pulls me even closer, and my eyes widen as he places my hand on his cock over his shorts.

"Malachi..." I hesitate, even as my fingers curl around the thickness of it. He doesn't respond, or even look at me, but his dick pulses, and when I say his name again, needing him to look at me, to talk to me to confirm what's going on, he gets thicker, harder, thrusting a little into my hand.

I try to pull it away, but his eyes ping open and he stops me.

"I'm your sister," I argue. "We... No, Malachi." Wanting to do something and actually doing it are two different things.

He closes his eyes and raises his hips a little, making our hands rub against himself while he curls my fingers around him again and rocks his hips once more.

"We're brother and sister," I urge, but he's not listening as he drags my hand up to his waistband, pressing it to the taut muscles of his abs, the warmth of his skin, before sliding both of our hands down again.

As much as I want to touch him, to please him, I remind myself that it's forbidden, and the world would never allow something like this to happen.

I'm sick, and if we do this, I'll make him sick too.

I pull away before I reach the heat of his smooth skin. "We can't," I say firmly. "You know it's wrong."

Don't grind your ass on my cock and I won't accept the invitation.

My mouth falls open, and I'm unable to speak for a long minute, even as he closes his eyes, folds his arm to rest his head on his hand, and shoves his other hand down the front of his shorts, tucking himself into his waistband. I can still see the outline of him, and my mouth waters.

He tilts his head, and I'm caught staring at his cock again.

I flatten my lips and lie back. "Do you see me as your sister?"

Without looking at me, he lifts his free hand and signs one last thing before falling asleep.

You're mine.