Two

After eating lunch with Ethan in the cafeteria and receiving more odd looks than I'm comfortable with, he takes me to the human resource floor to handle all my information which takes quite a few hours to finish. It all becomes quite official when he hands me my ID badge before sending me home with my temporary money card for dinner. I didn't want to take it and he knew it, but I knew not to fight it. I'm going to have to start accepting his kindness whether I like it or not.

As I'm leaving the building, I flip the card over and there is a number to check the card balance. I unlock my phone and dial it as I pace towards the bus stop. When I punch in the card's number and security code, I literally trip over air when I hear the balance. $1000 for dinner?!

What the hell? What does he think I'm going to eat for dinner, fresh seafood served on a gold platter at a table with Jesus and his disciples? I hang up from the number and turn back towards the building ready to give him back the card, but what's the use? All he will do is turn me away.

Sighing, I turn back and continue towards the bus stop. I need to get home and prepare for tomorrow's home visit and shopping trip. The thought of it makes me feel like I'm being adopted and the family wants me to look like I belong to them.

The thought of Ethan seeing my apartment makes me want to vomit. His reaction should be more than interesting and I won't be surprised if he drags me out of there and puts me in an apartment or something outrageous like that.

Hopefully the roaches take the day off and the landlord doesn't visit for his weekly "evaluation" which only includes him trying to get in my bed couch table. The perverseness he exhibits calls for a class action lawsuit, but I assume everyone else in this building also needed their apartment just as bad as I needed mine.

Desperation makes you settle for some pretty horrible things. If the landlord copped a feel on my ass I would probably let it go for the sake of my apartment, but I'd never let him know that. I've convinced the man that I will cut his wrinkled abandoned balls off if he ever lays a finger on me. Doesn't stop him from taking my clothes off with his eyes.

When I get off the bus in my less than missed neighborhood, I stop at a pizza joint and splurge on a large extra pepperoni extra cheese pizza with a liter of Coke. I also stop at a Chinese place for Shrimp fried rice as well as a convenient store for cereal and milk for breakfast. The man said he didn't want me missing any meals.

As I get to my apartment building, I remember that there isn't crap to do in my apartment. No tv. No laptop. No form of entertainment. Sighing, I walk right past my building and down the street to the only person I know who will let me in to take advantage of their television. Knocking on the door of the much nicer apartment, it opens within seconds.

"Thea"

"Hi, Greg." Greg eyes the pile of food in my hands and raises an eyebrow.

"Celebrating?"

"Actually, yes. I got a new job and he gave me a little money card for dinner. And well I thought I could share this yummy food in exchange for some tv time. Please?" I put on a small pout and after a few seconds, Greg sighs, stepping aside.

“Come on." He mumbles, grabbing the Chinese box off the top.

Greg and I used to date when I first got here. We met on the street when I slammed into him trying to get to the bus stop on time. After that, I managed to see him again every morning for a week before we actually had a conversation.

We were together for about 3 months before we broke up due to the fact that he sucked at commitment. However, every blue moon, we hook up when I get a little lonely or when he doesn't have another girl to attend to.

Sitting on the couch, I place the pizza on the table before flipping the top open. The aroma fills my nose and I smile hard. "God, thank you for this pizza"

"And the Chinese food" Greg mumbles, mouth already full of shrimp and rice. He sits the box now and there are two spoons in it. Greg grabs the remote and flips through the channels before stopping on HBO to let me watch True Blood. Smiling, I turn to him.

"You know me so well"

"That's because I can't get rid of you"

"And you don't want to" I shoot back without a beat. Greg gives me a side eye look before smirking.

"True"

It's blatantly obvious that the chemistry is still there and strong, but getting back together is never in the stars for us. We sit quietly, watching tv and it helps take my mind off tomorrow. Well that is until Greg asks about the job and my boss.

In between the Sookie and Bill saga, I talk about Ethan and how he is the owner along with the home visit tomorrow. Greg knows about my situation and at first he tried to help out, slipping money under my door or in my bag while I wasn't looking, but I always knew it was him. Cheating or not, he is a good guy who takes care of me when I let him. Which isn't too often.

After eating and nursing a mean tummy ache, it's nearly midnight. I help Greg clean up and thank him for letting me use his apartment for a few hours.

"It's no problem. I enjoy the company." He shrugs as he folds the pizza box in half, shoving it in the trash can.

"Well I should get home. I have an early start in the morning."

"I'll walk you" Greg says and when I'm about to object, he holds his hand up "Not letting you walk down the street at this time. I'd never forgive myself if you got hurt"

"Fine. Old softy. If only you had shown this much compassion in our relationship" I roll my eyes as we walk out of his place.

Pacing down the side walk, Greg updates me on how crappy his job still is at the local newspaper. He is sports journalist, but only gets to cover mediocre events.

Greg walks me up to my floor and at the door, I unlock it and turn to him "Well thanks again for letting me sit at your apartment. It gets a little boring around here sometimes."

"And lonely" He adds. I nod and look down before clearing my throat.

"You were the one who said that if I ever get lonely that I should call you"

"I did, but you don't have to call right now. I'm right here" He steps a bit closer, closing in space between us. His hand lands on my waist and he presses me back against my door.

"Aren't you going to invite me in?"

Our eyes dance with lust as the soft light in the hall illuminates our bodies.

"And what if I don't extend an invite?" Smirking, I feel his hand flex at my hip, gripping my shirt. With his other hand, he slides it around to my backside, squeezing it hard, trying to get a reaction out of me. It's working.

My lips part as I press my hips against his, feeling the rising tent in his work slacks against my stomach. Greg begins pulling my skirt up.

"Then I'll have to f**k you in this hall way"

"Hm, I'm not that kind of girl"

"Never know until you try" Greg bites his lip as my skirt continues to rise, revealing my bottom. Grabbing the door knob, I twist it and open the door.

"Would you like to come in?"

"Hmm, I'd love to come" Suddenly, Greg lifts me up and pushes the door open.

Legs around his waist, he carries me in and closes the door with his foot. Making our way over to my bed...couch table, he lays me down and begins stripping away his clothes before removing mine.

Knowing my place so well, Greg reaches over into a small wooden box and retrieves a condom that he left here the last time. Legs spread, I run my fingers over my wet bud, as Greg strokes his already hard member while ripping the condom open. Through the open window, a cool breeze blows in, sending my n*****s aching and erect.

As he rolls the latex over his length, Greg watches my slick fingers slip in and out of my core with anticipation, the thick vein in his girth throbs as blood rushes through the organ. Greg then takes my hand, removing it from my core. He kneels down over me and we both watch as he slides into me slowly. A sharp hiss escapes through his teeth.

"Damn, you're so tight"

"Four months since the last time we had s*x" I whisper as a shiver runs through me with each inch he inserts.

He fills me generously until his girth is completely buried inside of my walls. As far as male organ size, Greg was average as was his performance. He knew just what to do to get himself off and it was out to me to get myself to the finish line.

As his thrusts quicken, I slip my fingers back between my folds and think of the s*x I should be having. Don't get me wrong, the s*x between us felt good, but who wants just good all their life where you don't even think about it the next morning. However, when you're lonely and single, sometimes you have to settle for just good.

Closing my eyes, the scene of slowly passionate s*x plays in my head where my lover attends to my every need before their own. Sometimes my lover is a woman and sometimes a man. My bi curious thoughts always stayed tucked away in my head with no intentions of ever getting out.

My lover's tongue dives into my depths and sends me shaking with feverish orgasms, one after another. Moaning at my own thoughts, Greg takes that as a sign of pleasure and thrusts harder into me, causing my body to slide back. A loose spring in the bed, scratches across my back and I hiss.

"f**k!"

"Oh yeah, baby" Greg replies and I almost want to laugh.

Letting the sting in my back go, I feel myself getting closer to my own downfall. I know that if I don't let go soon, Greg will triumphantly finish without me and award himself an undeserved gold trophy when bronze would more likely suit him. I work my fingers faster as his grunt grow more frequent. When I feel my core squeezing around his length, I let the wave take me under.

When I open my eyes, Greg is flopped down next to me with his arm around my waist. In his eyes, he looked more than satisfied with his performance and I will give him some credit for giving me my own release.

He wasn't bad at s*x, it just wasn't enough for me. Maybe his other girls worship his manhood on both knees. Maybe they don't have to go the extra mile for an orgasm. And that's good for them. But I just needed something more. I didn't know what though.

Greg stays until the early morning and I watch him get dressed to leave as the sun is peaking in my window. He kisses me gently, thanking me for the night before heading out. Laying there wrapped up in my sheets, I roll onto my side and drift back off.

I don't know how long I'm out, but I wake to a knock on my door. Sitting up, I run my fingers through my hair and pick up my phone to see that it is 7:56 in the freaking morning. Jumping up, I hug the sheets around me as I stomp to the door. I grab the door knock and swing the door open.

"What the fu-" I stop when I see Ethan standing at my door with coffee in hand. He smirks, letting his eyes roam over me.

"Good morn-" I slam the door in his face without letting him finish.

I didn't know what else to do. I'm freaking naked for Christ sake and my apartment....oh don't get me started on this apartment. I totally forgot that he was doing a home check.

Flinging the sheets off my body, I quickly pull on an oversized shirt and a pair of sweat pants. Before racing back to the door.

I open it slightly and slip out, closing the door behind me.

"I'm so sorry, Ethan. It totally slipped my mind that you were coming" I sigh trying to catch my breath as he stands there with an amused look on his face.

"Obviously. It's my fault though. I didn't exactly tell you what time I'd be here. I'm sorry I woke you. Peace offering?" He holds out a cup of coffee and I take it.

"Thank you"

I take a sip and stare at him. A few seconds pass and he clears his throat.

"So the point of a home visit is usually to see the home, not the hall"

"I can't let you go in there. Please just take my word for it. My place isn't...." I trail off trying to find the words to explain my apartment. If he walks in, he'll freak. He asks me how I could live this way. I wouldn't be able to explain.

"Let me in, Thea."

"I can't. I won't"

Ethan frowns and suddenly, he reaches forward, grabbing the door knob. As he turns, he steps forward causing me to quickly step back as we enter my hole in the wall. I give in and let him pass.

Deciding not to look for a reaction, I look down at the floor as he walks around. While leaning against the closed door, I don't hear a peep from him. No hum of displeasure or disgust. Just silence. His own footsteps barely make a noise. He walks around for about 10 minutes before joining me at the door. When I finally look up, his expression is hard and serious.

"Thea, this place is unlivable" Wow, don't spare my feelings. Please, just slap me with the truth.

"I know" I mumble. "It's all I could afford when I first moved here and if it weren't for you hiring me, I would've lost this place"

"That wouldn't be that bad" Ethan says smugly.

"Yeah, but I'd rather live in this unlivable place than out on the streets." I frown as I raise my voice at his arrogance. Ethan nods "I'm sorry. I didn't mean to come off as an ass."

"It's okay"

"No. It's not. I'm sorry, Thea, but I can't let you stay here"

"Let? You can't let me stay here? I'm sorry, but you're not my father. I can live where ever I want"

"But do you want to live here?"

"Of course not, but who are you to tell me that I can't?"

"I'm your boss"

"Well, I quit" I shrug and surprisingly, Ethan starts laughing. I frown up at him and he crosses his arms "I'm not letting you quit and I'm not letting you live here. So you can either gather up what you want to take or I can drag you out of here with the clothes on your back. Your choice" We stare at each other for a moment, challenging one another on who is going to break and when I finally blink, I know I've lost. "Well, where the heck and I supposed to live?"

A smile grew on Ethan's lips "You'll see. Just gather up what you want and I'll take you there before Anna takes you shopping."

"Okay, Daddy Warbucks" I whisper to myself as I turn away from him, but the moment I hear his snort, I know he heard me.

I spend a few moments, gathering what I want before I decide that the rest could be done whatever with. I don't care about it. As I finish, I stand in the middle of the room and look around, remembering all the long days and nights I spent hungry. Turning to Ethan, he is standing at the door, looking at me intently.

"The first night I ever spent in here, I cried. I sat in the middle of that bed and cried my eyes out because I was afraid. It was dark and lonely and I didn't know what I was going to do."

Ethan walks up to my side and sigh "Well you've come a long way from crying. Clearly, there are other things you do in the middle of the bed" Just then, he gestures to the floor by the bed. I follow his finger and my eyes widen when I catch sight of the condom wrapper on the floor, just barely under the bed. My cheeks heat and embarrassment sets in. I inhale sharply "Can we go now?"

"Don't you want to let your boyfriend know that you're leaving?" I don't know if Ethan is being serious or not.

"He isn't my boyfriend" I say as I turn to head to the door. I'm out in the hall before Ethan even turns around. I don't know what he is thinking, but whatever it is doesn't show in his face as we head down the flights of stairs. Before leaving, I stop my the landlord's office. Knocking on the door, he opens in within five seconds. "Thea, what can I do you for?"

I hold up my key "I'm moving. Here is my key"

His face drops immediately. "Oh, no. That's unfortunate. I thought you were happy here." He chuckles and his beer belly shakes a little.

"Well, my boss here doesn't think my apartment is suitable for living" I smirk and the old man glares at Ethan. "Is that so?"

"Yes sir. Thea works for me now and I want her to live somewhere that doesn't require duct tape to hold together." I look up at Ethan as he talks.

My landlord eyes me for a moment before taking the keys "I'm not giving back your deposit. You're breaking your lease"

I open my mouth to speak, but Ethan beats me to it "She doesn't need it. Let's go, Thea. Your business here is done"

I follow Ethan out of the building and out front is a black car with a man in a suit standing next to it. Ethan gives him a nod and the man walks around to the drivers side as Ethan opens the door for me. Sliding in, looking more like a homeless person than ever, I feel like my whole day is going to be filled with new unexpected things. As Ethan slides in and closes the door, the driver starts driving. I sit in silence for a moment before turning to Ethan "So where am I going to live?"

"A building not too far from work. I know the owner. You'll like it. I'll have furniture in it by the end of the day."

"Oh. Thank you"

"You're welcome." Ethan reaches into his pocket and pulls out an elastic "Hair up, please." I take the rubber band and quickly place a neat bun on top of my head. When I look at him, he nods. What is with him and pony tails? I didn't see anyone in his office with a pony tail, but then again no one else's hair looked like a beaver's nest. On the ride to the apartment, the lack of sleep wears on me and my eyes get extremely heavy. I try to stay awake, but I end up leaning against the car door to take a little nap as we ride across the city.

I've never really been able to just take a nap during the day. And if I tried to lay down for one, the thoughts of what I need to do and have to to always consumed my thoughts, keeping me awake. So to let myself doze off in a car is something special.

"Thea"

My eyes flutter a bit before closing again for more sleep. I hear my name again this time accompanied by a large hand on my shoulder. I open my eyes this time and turn my head to see Ethan looking at me "Hmm?"

"I said wake up. We're here" He gives me a small smile before opening the door. After he gets out, he holds his hand out for me. Taking it, I get out and the sun shines in my eyes, warming my skin and neck. Crossing my arms, I follow Ethan into the building and all eyes fall in me. I always try to avoid being gawked and stared at. I don't like it. It doesn't take much to know what they were thinking of me. That I am trash or something. The stares alone make me want to curl up and disappear. I cross my arms tighter and take a deep breath, wishing I were invisible.

When we step to the desk, Ethan starts speaking to the receptionist and I stand behind him about to have a panic attack. My skin crawls with the thought of people staring at me. As people pass by, my chest tightens and I can almost hear their whispers, calling me poor and filthy and asking themselves why someone like me is in this building. The tipping point is when I turn my head to the side and see two women staring at me and when I catch them, they quickly look away and laugh.

I search and find a restroom sign and almost run to it. I hear Ethan calling my name, but I ignore it. Thankfully, the bathroom is empty. Locking myself in the stall, I hug myself tightly, hyperventilating, and rocking myself. I hear the bathroom door open and footsteps. "Thea?"

When Ethan hears me breathing, he comes up to the stall door. "Thea, open the door, now" His voice isn't loud, but calm yet serious. Reaching forward, I unlock it and it swings open. Ethan looks down at me and I just want to hide from him. "I'm sorry" I huff out and Ethan kneels down in front of me.

"Calm down." Ethan says as he tears a piece of tissue off the roll. Thinking it's to dry my eyes from the tears threatening to spill over, it surprises me when he tears off one square and hands it to me. "Tear it into straight strips"

I give him a questioning look and he repeats himself with more authority. Taking the piece of tissue from his hand, I begin tearing neat strips off, focusing on making them perfect. The restroom falls silent and by the time I'm done, my heart beat and breathing is back to normal.

"Better?" Ethan speaks.

I nod and he holds his hand out. Placing the tissue strips in his hand, he smiles. "When you're about to have a panic attack, give yourself a task to focus on."

"How did you know that?"

"My mother has them. My father started her on scrap booking to help." Ethan shrugs as he stands. "What happened?"

Smoothing my hair back, I sigh "I don't like people staring at me. It makes me uncomfortable, like I'm being judged from every angle. I can almost hear them whispering and laughing at me"

"Understandable. I personally think in due time, it'll get better"

"Money won't help with my issues, Ethan."

"I'm not saying it will, but the stability will give you time to asses and rectify said issues. Now come. Your new apartment is ready" He holds up the keys, jingling them. The sight of them makes me smile.

Ethan and I ride the elevator up to the sixth floor and when we get off, I take in how far apart the doors are. There are only like 5 doors on the whole hall. "There aren't many people on this floor"

"Yes, because not many people can afford them"

"But I can't afford them so why are we here?" I stop and look at him. I knew it. I knew he would do this, put me up into some uber expensive place that I don't need.

"Just come. It doesn't cost anything. I own it"

"Excuse me? You what? Back up, Daddy Warbucks and start explaining. You can't just fly that past me and expect me to shrug and go along with it." I wave him back and he sighs "I used to stay in this condo when the one I stay in now was being renovated. I still own it" He goes to start walking again, but I'm not letting him off that easy.

"Whoa whoa whoa, come back here. You live in this building?"

"Yes. 14th floor"

"Ethan, I can't live here"

"You can and you will. Now, come"

I huff and plant my feet "Stop telling me to come like I'm your little uffy lap dog." Ethan eyes me for a moment as if realizing something humorous. "Please, just look at the condo and then say you don't want it"

Ethan gives me a pleading look and I walk to him "Thank you. God, you're so stubborn"

"And you're bossy"

"Because I'm the boss." He mumbles as he unlocks the door and opens it. I step inside and it's like a fairly God mother poofed me from my shitty pumpkin apartment to a castle. "Holy s**t, I mean, wow. Like really, wow"

"I'll take that as a yes, Ethan I would love to live here and I will stop being so resistant to change" Ethan mocks me as he walks past and goes to a large window. He pushes a button allowing the shades to open revealing the view. My eyes widen and I don't know what to think. When I look at Ethan, he is smirking and it makes my cheeks warm.

"Thank you, Ethan. Really, I don't deserve any of this."

"I'll be the judge of that. But yes, it's all yours and I'll arrange for furniture to be delivered while your with Anna" He gestures towards the door and when I turn, Anna is standing there "Ready to go shopping?!" She squeals and my happy mood goes right down the drain.