Three

"Okay, I think we're done here" Anna chimed as she snapped for the woman working in the boutique. Rushing over, the woman smiled "Will that be all?"

All meaning the multiple stacks of shirts, skirts, dresses, jackets, jeans, and shoes either casual or professional that Anna picked out without even needing me to try anything on. When we walked in, Anna took my measurements herself to ensure that they were correct which slightly offended the woman working here, but of course they didn't complain. They knew commission was going to be made today. I sat on a large black couch as Anna zoomed past me with clothes in hand, placing them in neat organized stacks. Every few minutes she would ask me to stand so that she can hold an item up to my body to assess, only to scrunch her nose and walk off again. I literally did nothing.

I'm more than sure that Anna is in the wrong profession. Stylist to the rich and famous is what she should be doing.

As the woman totals up everything, I can't help but wonder what Ethan is doing. I know he is working on my apartment and I wish I knew how it was going. I'm trying desperately not to over think all of this or I'd end up in fetal position crying for his generosity. It's beyond what anyone should do for an employee. Hell, even Anna said he never spent company money on her. No matter how pristine she is, she felt jealous in that moment. Of me? Nope, of the attention I was getting? Correct. Which is why I can't quite figure out why he being so nice to me.

"$8,358.56 is your total" The woman chimes and I nearly projectile vomit in shock "Are you serious?!" I hiss and Anna looks at me "You needed a whole new wardrobe, Thea. What did you expect?" Anna smirks as she pulls out a shiny black card, causing all the eyes of the store workers to widen and gleam. I pretty sure one of them came in their panties judging by the moan I hear from behind the counter. Before leaving, Anna writes down my new address and requests all my new clothes be delivered within the hour. Rich people perks.

After spending almost 4 hours buying clothes, Anna takes me to yet another boutique, but this one was very different. "Oh my God, Anna, no" I stop at the door as she opens it for me.

"Get your ass in here" She snaps her fingers at me and I bite my lip. "Anna-"

"Now, little missy."

Sighing, I walk in and my eyes widen at how big this place is. From one wall to the other, is lingerie of every size, color, and fabric type. The sight of everything makes my cheeks warm and my eyes flicker from one thing to the other. It's like the holy land of panties and bras. Jesus designed this place himself. His fingers designed each crotch-less thong and push up bra to perfection. In front of me Anna's heels click over the floors as she grabs three store bags, handing two to me. "Go for it. Grab whatever catches your eye. And if you need help, just come find me. Mama needs to update her own lingerie drawer." I can't help but giggle as Anna walks off with determination.

I however stand there like a lost cause. Taking a few deep breaths of determination, I push myself forward. I grab a ton of matching panty and bra sets in every color and style that catches my eye. It is time to put my sexy girl panties on and accept the fact that I'm an adult and I should feel sexy. Hell, I'm sexually active. None of this should even phase me. Although, the crotchless panties do make me blush. They are clearly made for convenience. Quickie s*x? Getting felt up under a table? Office s*x maybe? The last thought crossed my mind before I can tame it. Office s*x with Ethan? Shaking me head, I push the thought far far away. Never would I ever do such a thing. He has done all of this and I don't need anyone thinking that I handed out blow jobs and desk s*x for it.

When my bags begin to overflow with panties, a woman approaches me "Looks like you're all full there."

"Yeah. I feel like I'm missing something though. I've never bought lingerie or anything" I shrug and the woman whose name tag says Lola smiles and holds up another bag "Why don't I help you? You have an amazing body and there are a lot of things you may like"

Walking next to her, she grabs two silk robes in pink and black, placing them in the bag for me after I nod in approval. When we stop at a night wear section, my eyes lit up a bit at all the choices. "Even when you're sleeping, you should feel sexy" She smiles and I return the gesture. "I suppose you're right"

Lola helps me pick out nighties and teddies in a few different styles as well as some bath products they have. When we get to the back of the store, I notice a red curtain in a door way. "What's back there?"

Lola smirks "More of our raunchy items. Costumes, toys, things like that. Want to see?"

I nod before she can even get the question out. Lola leads me behind the curtain and the area is lighted more dimly than the rest of the store. The atmosphere is different too. You can almost feel s*x, crawling over her skin. Sitting on tables are furry handcuffs and whips as well as blind folds. My eyes scan over the different types of paddles and spanking devices "Jesus, Christian Grey could pop out of his pants in here"

Behind me, I hear Lola snort "Yeah, it’s a bit intense. Are you into it?"

"What? Kinky fuckery?" Lola giggles again at my endless 50 Shades references. “A spank here and there is fine. Being cuffed is fun, but the intense stuff like being beaten just makes me cringe. I've never really seen it firsthand though."

"I agree. I've tried it a few times with my boyfriend and it's draining, but a little exciting as long as it doesn't get too extreme."

Lola and I pace through the private section and when I look down in the bag she is carrying, I notice she has placed some hand cuffs and a small paddle in the bag. When I look at her, she smiles, shrugging "I thought you might have been too shy to pick them up so I did for you."

When we get further in, I begin to see a table of vibrators and dildos. Eh, what's the harm in having one? It's about time that I do, because I'm not having a lot of s*x and living in this new apartment puts me a further from Greg. Reaching out, I run my fingers over a pick box. Picking it up, I eye it for a moment "Your opinion?" I look to Lola.

"The bullet? Not a great choice. The batteries die too quickly and it tends to get hot after a while. I suggest this little baby here as a starter." She picks up another box with a picture of a pink realistic p***s vibrator. Clearly my throat, I look at it for a moment "It's so...cute?"

Lola laughs as she places the box in the bag. "You'll love it. Not as good as the real thing, but still gets the job done"

After walking around a bit more, we leave the provocative section of the store and head to the check out. As I'm walking behind Lola, Anna catches me. "Hey, I've been looking for you" I look down at the three bags of lingerie on her arm and smirk "Apparently you weren't looking that hard. I was in the back with Lola. She was showing me some things"

Anna looks back at the red curtains and smiles "Mhm. I've definitely been back there. Get anything?"

"A few things." I shrug as Anna looks at the bag Lola is holding. "Oh, a few things, I see" Anna nods in approval as Lola walks behind the register to ring me up.

20 minutes and $3000 later, I walk out with two extremely large and noticeable black bags with the store name on the side. Anna has her own bags that she paid for herself even through she could have just had everything rung up together. When I offered, she said she didn't want to take advantage of Ethan. After putting everything in the trunk of the car, Anna tells me that we are finally heading to a salon to get my hair done. I don't know why, but I instantly get nervous about it. I've never been in a high end salon and the thought of one makes me feel weird. What if the women that work there judge me for how horrible I look? I'd die.

"Anna, after my hair gets repaired, can we go to a more normal store. Like GAP or Old Navy. I need casual clothes and pajamas. I can't go around looking like Barbie all the time."

"Sure. I need a new pair of jeans anyways. You seem like an Old Navy kind of girl. Simple, plain, no offense."

"None taken. So how long have you been working for Ethan?" I shift to look at her as she drives. Her red hair flowing down her back and shoulder in loose curls. Her natural red hair out my box red to shame. Now that it's later in the day, her makeup as faded a bit and I can see the freckles on her nose peeking through. She is the poster child for Gingers.

"I've been working for him for 4 years after I graduated college with the business degree I never wanted, I was promised a trust fund under the condition that I find a job. My dad got me the interview and Ethan hired me. We are sort of friends now. I can get away with more than his other employees. I started off as his receptionist then he interviewed and moved me up to a small business position which I actually like, but it doesn't stop him from treating me like I'm his assistant hence him appointing me to take you shopping. I don't mind though. Gives me a break from all those stuffy old men I have to meet with. It'll be nice to have you in the office though. You'll be his on call girl now"

"Nice. I bet there are a few people jealous of you"

"Oh, of course but I don't care. They can talk about me all they want, but they don't pay my bills"

"Very true" I smile and nod. Anna's confidence is commendable. I only wish that after time I can possess half of her positive traits. Growing up, I always kept to myself. Never had a lot of friends, always had a lot of bullies. My freshmen year in high school, the anxiety kicked in after a group of girls invited me to a slumber party only to have me sit in the middle of their circle while they picked me apart bit by bit for an hour before I left sobbing. After that they would stare at me in school and whisper about me. I ended up eating lunch in empty locker rooms instead of risking panic attacks. The only reason I know the phobia for the fear of being looked at is because my aunt took me to a psychologist when stormed out of my first class of sophomore year when the teacher tried to make me stand up and introduce myself. It was horrible. Now I'm basically and introvert with a side of reclusiveness, though they are one in the same.

"We're here" Anna chimes as she parallel parks on the curb in front of the salon. Getting out, I cross my arms and convince myself that this is a good thing. My horrible hair is going to have a pair of angelic hands repair the damage I've done to it. Afterwards I will look like a new person.

When we walk in, Anna gives over my name and the woman walks us to the actual salon section where there is an empty chair waiting for me. A blonde is standing there smiling "Hi, Thea, I'm Trisha. I'll be doing your hair today. You can have a seat" Her proper tone sounds nice and genuine as I take a seat in the chair. Anna walks off and takes a seat in a salon chair and starts spewing orders about a simple wash and condition with a blowout.

"Well, let's get your hair out of this bun and see what we are working with" She undoes my hair and I swear I hear her gasp "Oh dear I should pop you with this comb. What have you done to your hair, sweetie?"

"I tried to dye it read with a $2 box of dye. Trust me, I'm ashamed enough for the both of us"

"Thank God I'm certified. This is going to take some work. Let's start with this color." Suddenly, she hikes the chair up and throws a salon cape thing around me. I sit in silence as she goes to work on my locks. Later by layer, Trisha works her magic to restore my natural brunette hair. It actually becomes comforting to have someone have their hands in my hair. I've never had any of this done. My aunt offered to do my hair for prom, but that was before I told her that I wasn't going. A room full of people seeing me in a dress for the first time? Never.

Trisha washes my hair and when I'm back in her chair, I start to feel like a new woman. I catch Anna staring at me and I frown. Please, let my hair look okay. When her eyes flicker to mine, she smiles "You are starting to look like you."

"Good. I thought something was wrong" I breathe a sigh of relief

"Heck no. It looks great. Trisha she needs two inches off."

"I was going to cut some anyways. That dye gave you some horrible split ends. Two inches will be perfect. You have long hair so I doubt you'll miss it." I sit still as her scissors go to work. Taking deep breaths, I can only wonder what my hair will look like when she is done. I hope Ethan approves of it and slacks on the pony tails.

After an hour, Trisha cuts the blow dryer off and sighs "I am a miracle worker."

"Um, can I be the judge of that?" I mumble as she runs her fingers through my hair. When she turns the chair around the face the mirror, I hold my breath only to let it out when I see my reflection "Holy....wow...Trisha, you're amazing!"

"I know I know."

My hair looks like my hair again. My brunette stands flow down over my shoulders, no remembrance of that tacky red anywhere. I run my fingers through it and the softness flows through my finger tips. Anna walks up behind me with her own amazing blow out "You look amazing, Thea."

"Thanks. I'm so happy."

"You should be. Good things are happening to you. Soak it up, bask in it. Enjoy it as we leave if you want to go to Old Navy before they close." Anna laughs and I hop out of the chair, hugging Trisha "Thanks you so much."

"No problem. Come back anytime and no more box dyes" She wiggles her comb at me as Anna yet again swipes the black card to pay and puts her total on her account.

By early night, I'm puttered out, but Old Navy is calling my name. Once inside, I feel in my element. No fancy brand names or crotch-less thongs. Just normal clothes. I rack up on the essentials, jeans, t-shirts, shorts, normal pajamas, socks, camies, simple dresses, sandals. When I meet Anna at the register with her own small stack of clothes, she smiles. "You're really getting the hang of this shopping thing. I love it. You'll totally be my partner in crime." I shake my head as the guy behind the register frowns at how much he has to ring up.

After a full day of shopping and getting my hair done, I and exhausted and my feet are screaming. I just want to take a hot bath and go to sleep....in my new apartment. This is all so surreal. In one day, my whole life has changed. I can't possibly thank Ethan enough, but I will surely try. Anna makes the lengthy drive back to my apartment and by the time we get there, I'm half sleep. We grab our bags and head into the building. While on the elevator, I turn to Anna. "I really want to thank you for today. Most people would have treated me like their charity case, but you just treated me like a friend. I needed that."

"Thea, we became friends the moment Ethan brought up shopping. None of the other woman at work are really our age so it's nice to have you around. Now everyone can be jealous of you too" She smiles and just barely bounces in excitement as the elevator doors open to my floor. When Anna opens the door for me, my mouth drops.

"Oh my god"

"Yeah, I'm totally jealous right now." Anna mumbles "Ethan is definitely going to have to redecorate my place, pronto"

Stepping in, I look around my new fully furnished apartment. In the living room, there is an all-black leather sofa set with red and black pillows on it as well as red curtains going across the long window. The tables are black with red decor on it with a red rug under it. I notice that the red and black play off each other throughout the kitchen against the stainless steel appliances. Anna and I walk further in and I gasp seeing a flat screen tv mounted over an electric fire place. Anna squeals "I'm going to be spending so much time over here."

I force a laugh, but still in disbelief.

Suddenly, Ethan appears from the bedroom and smiles "I thought I heard you two" when he walks up, he eyes our bags first "I hope Anna didn't burn a hole in my black card" He chuckles before finally looking up at me. "Wow"

I inhale sharply, feeling heat creep up my neck. Catching me off guard, Ethan reaches forward and runs his fingers through my hair "Nice. I'm glad you got it taken care of. It looks healthy"

I shrug "Yeah. I like it."

Ethan stares at me for a moment before clearing his throat and slipping his hands into his pockets "So what do you think of your place. I hope you like the colors. I do know you like red" He winks at me and I snort at the hair dye reference.

"It's amazing. I feel like you've done too much for me. Thank you so much, Ethan" I sigh pacing around the living room, taking it all in. Ethan and Anna talk for a bit as I wonder around and when I get to my bedroom, I am in awe. My bedroom is gorgeous. The bed is queen size with a luxurious blue silk comforter set the bedside tables are silver as well as the carpet and the two dressers. I walk in and sit my bags by the bed and when I open the closet, I see that it's a walk in and all the clothes Anna picked out this morning are already there. Closing it, I walk to the other door that I assume is the bathroom. I push it open and flick the light on to see marble everything with a separate shower and tub.

"Do you like it?"

I turn and see Ethan standing at the bedroom door, leaning against it. "I love it so much. I can't even wrap my head around all this. I don't know if I want to cry or laugh or pass out"

Ethan chuckles and steps forward by the bed where his foot hits one of my lingerie bags. He looks down before looking back at me, continuing "Only the best for someone who deserves it. What kind of boss would i be if I let you stay in that dump? And I'm using the term dump, lightly. I want to make sure my personal assistant is well taken care of."

"Thank you. I should thank Anna again for the hundredth time."

"She's gone already. It'll have to wait till you get to work, Thursday." He smiles. "So I guess I should let you get settled in. If you need me, I'm a few floors up. Call or come by for anything. My number is in the office you passed down the hall."

"I thought it was a hall closet. Silly me for not noticing an office in my apartment" I reply sarcastically, rolling my eyes and laughing.

"I know. I'm going to definitely have to get you adjusted to this lifestyle, Thea." He shakes his head in disbelief before smirking. "Well, good night."

"Good night, Ethan."

When he leaves, I empty out all my clothes and sexy things and put them either on hangers or in drawers. The pink dildo, handcuffs, and paddle go in the bedside table. When everything is in its place, I run myself a hot bubble bath. Reaching in my pocket, I pull out the elastic Ethan gave me, pulling my new hair in a high bun. Just can't escape them.

Slipping down in the water, the smell of vanilla consumes the bathroom. Breathing deeply, relaxation inches over every part of me. I can definitely get used to this in due time. With a place like this, I will definitely be the happiest person at work. I understand Ethan now. I wouldn't have been happy working while living in that hell hole. I would still feel lousy and sad every day I had to come home to it. While soaking in the water, I low rumble erupts in my tummy. I literally haven't eaten a full meal all day. While at the salon I had a few cookies and water, but that was it.

I cut my bath short and dry off, pulling on a pair of too long cotton pajama pants and a v neck shirt from Old Navy. I slide my feet into my new slippers and shuffle to the kitchen. When I go to open the fridge, I frown. Uh, what the hell? I could have stayed in my old place for this. In my fridge was nothing, but air. Ethan forgot to stock the place with food. Laughing to myself, I go to find his number to call him. I open the office door and turn the light in only to see, on the desk, a Apple computer, laptop, and iPhone sitting there. Jesus, must have me on his good list.

I walk over to the desk and pick up the iPhone, reading the sticky note on it.

Your old phone is crap. Don't deny it, I saw it. Put all your numbers in this phone and throw your old one in the trash. ASAP! -E

Rolling my eyes, I laugh loudly, rubbing my forehead. Turning on the phone, I sit down in the office chair and set it up, putting in the few contacts in my phone and notice that all of Ethan's contacts are in it. When I'm done, I find his number, but don't press it. I'd rather thank him for all this stuff in person and tell him that he must plan on starving me out. Leaving my apartment, I ride the elevator, still in pajamas, to his floor. While riding, the bun in my head becomes too tight so I free my locks, sighing in relief. At his door, I hesitate before knocking lightly.

A few seconds later it opens "Thea, what's wrong?"

"Oh, nothing much. First, id like to thank your all the new electronics as well as insulting my old phone."

Smirking, Ethan licks his lips and I almost forget the whole speech I planned on the way here. I clear my throat "And, I'd like to ask for one thing that you forgot"

"Getting greedy, huh?"

"I tilt my head, something like that. You forgot to give me food."

The smirk falls of Ethan's lips and he groans "s**t. I'm so sorry, Thea. I was so wrapped up in setting everything up, I forgot to call for groceries. Please come in"

He steps aside and I walk past him. I take in his place and it similar to mine only bigger and better. However, his apartment looks like a person with OCD lives here. Everything single thing is placed neatly. Not one thing is out of place. Closing the door, Ethan walks to the kitchen and pulls a bowl out of his cabinet "I made some stir fry. Is that okay?"

"Yeah, perfect."

"Wine?"

"Sure."

I sit down on the barstool at his counter and watch his prepare my small meal. "I'm really sorry again, Thea. I'm truly ashamed for forgetting something as simple as food" Turning around, he sits a bowl and wine glass in front of me with a fork. I watch as he pours my wine before I start eating. Silence fall over the room as Ethan leans against the counter across from me and stares at me eat. I try to ignore it, but it makes me fidget in discomfort. I chew my food slowly as I avoid his gaze. When I pick up the wine glass, I catch his gaze and a drip of wine drips down my chin. Crap.

Wiping it with my thumb, I suck the top of my thumb and across the kitchen, I hear Ethan inhale sharply. Looking up at him, his arms are cross and his stare is critical. "You really don't like when people stare at you?"

I shake my head "No. It makes me anxious and it feels like fire under my skin. I'm sorry, but you really have to stop"

"Anxiety from being stared at?" He asks and I nod.

"Interesting. Never heard of anything like that"

"Neither had I until a shrink explained it me when was a teenager. She said its kind of like social anxiety. I just deal with it. The medication made me a zombie" Pick at my food, eating bits of it.

"What brought it on?" He steps to the counter where I'm sitting and leans forward, resting on his arms.

"When I was 14 I went to a sleep over and the girls sat around and told me everything that was wrong and ugly about me. They talked about my ears, lips, nose, hair, neck, stomach, everybody part you could think of. It affected my self esteem for a while, but more so it made me a mess when people stared at me. I hate introducing myself to a group of people or talking in public. I avoid it all. And if I am out in public, I stare at my feet or play in my phone to distract myself from the thought of people around me looking and analyzing me"

Ethan doesn't say anything for a while, he just looks at me for a moment "I'm really sorry that you have to go through that, Thea."

"Yeah, me too" I look down in the bowl and finish up the last few bites before taking a few more sips of wine. When I'm done, Ethan takes the dishes and places them in the sink. "Tomorrow, there will be food delivered in the morning, I promise."

"Thanks. Uh, I should be getting back to my new place. It's getting late. Thanks for dinner." I smile as I walk to his door. Ethan follows as I open it and turn to him "Good night, again."

"Good night." He smiles and I go to leave.

"Wait, Thea"

"Yeah?" I turn in my heels and look up at him.

"If people are staring and judging you, it because they have their own insecurities. And if you ever catch me staring, just know I'm always thinking good things. Always."

A smile creeps on my lips and I look down to hide it "Thank you, Ethan. Good night"

"Good night, Thea".