Seven

After my conversation with Kate and receiving the super-secret text with the location and information on the club, I become so anxious about next weekend that I want avoid Ethan at all costs. The last thing I need is for him to catch me in a lie or something of that nature. The worse the lie, the more obvious I become. I don't talk to Ethan the rest of the weekend and to occupy myself, I jump into typing and writing. Apparently with the rise of drama in my life, my writer's block has faded away. Short scenes and story ideas come flooding to mind. One particular s*x scene keep bringing Ethan to mind. It's the short scene that he read over my shoulder in the office. I had no intentions of Ethan being the male character, but his face and body have been the lead.

Sexual tension is normal among people who work together. Ethan is my boss and he is extremely handsome and funny so it's okay for me to find him alluring and sexy as long as the fantasies stay on paper and in my laptop. I will never use his name just in case some freak accident occurs and he finds my work.

On that Monday as we are riding to work, Ethan makes small talk while doing his usual morning email replies. I play in my own phone, though it only consists of playing a few games and messaging my Aunt back home. I don't know how she would react to me lying and sneaking around just to get into a club, but I don't plan on her finding out. What she doesn't know won't hurt her. After stopping for coffee, we get to the office and upon entering the lobby on Ethan's floor, I nearly lose my breath at the person standing there, looking at us. "Ethan, Thea, good morning"

Ethan smiles "Kate, what brings you here to the office? We are supposed to have lunch later this week"

Kate continues to smile and her eyes flicker to mine for a brief second as I stand there close to freaking out.

"I just stopped by to chat. I was in the area on business and thought I'd come by. How are you doing, Thea?"

Ethan turns to look at me and I swallow the panic, plastering a smile on my face. "I'm fine." Keep it short and simple.

"That's good. You look nice today. I like that dress"

What the f**k is she trying to do? Taunt me into a confession. Kate is playing games with me and I don't like it at all. She knows that I've gone behind Ethan back to get into that club and now she is trying to get under my skin.

"Thank you. Just something out of the closet" I smile, feeling a little more relaxed now that I know what she is doing.

I will not let her have the advantage over the situation. Stay strong, Thea.

"Hmm, seems like the kind of dress one would wear to a club." Kate smirks at me, her eyes digging into mine, looking for any sign of weakness.

I snort a bit and shrug "Well, I don't get out much so I have to put it to good use. I think I should get to work now. There are calls that need to be answered. Have a good day, Kate"

"You too, Thea. Maybe I'll see you around again. We can hang out sometime" She says as I walk away.

I shoot her a kind look over my shoulder before getting the hell out of that situation. When I get to my little office, I flop down in the chair and brush my hair back.

"That b***h" I huff as I turn on my computer, sliding my bag into the desk drawer.

I should have known that it was too good to be true. Kate was too quick to extend an invite and caught me in a blind spot. Never again. I need to get my wit up.

A few moments later, Ethan enters the office and shoots me a look "Everything okay?"

Yes, why wouldn't it be? What did she tell you? Oh, God stop overreacting, it's just a question.

"Everything is fine. I left two messages on your desk. I didn't want to disturb you while you were talking to...Kate?" I pretend as if I don't remember her name even though her number is programed into my phone.

"Yeah, Kate. She seems to like you. Maybe you two will be friends." He shoots me a smile before heading into his office. Okay, so i'm not caught. Phew. On cue, my phone vibrates on my desk. Picking it up, I frown as I read it.

K: Good job in there. I thought you were going to freak seeing me.

Is this nutcase serious?

Me: I was! Why were you toying with me?

K: Toying? I thought I was flirting. I really did only come to see Ethan, but it's nice to see you react well under pressure. I picked out your dress for Friday. It will be delivered when you get off of work that evening. Wouldn't want Ethan finding out too soon. See you then, Sweets.

I put down my phone and roll my eyes. This woman is f*****g nuts, but she is right. If I can't even react to something as simple as seeing her in public then I have no business stepping into that club. I just have to keep it cool and act normal. Peeking over my shoulder, I see Ethan typing something up. As if feeling my eyes on him, he looks up and catches me. I tell myself to look away, but I hold his gaze for a few seconds before turning back around. Sighing, I start typing up some things that need to be printed out for Ethan's meeting at noon to take my mind off of my off morning.

As I'm working, I play a few scenes in my head of how I think the club will be. None of them sound remotely possible. All of the ideas make the place out to be some brothel. I've been watching too much HBO. Maybe it's just some club where you meet people to take home. That sounds more logical. However, with a name like Sinful Desires, it can't be that simple. I guess I'll just have to wait until Friday to see what it's like. The way Kate acts about it, it must be something worth wild. Shaking the thought from my head, my desk phone rings and I answer before transferring the call to Ethan. A few seconds later, Ethan calls me into his office.

"Yes" I says as I step in front of his desk. He doesn't look up immediately, but when he does, he smiles. "Want to do something fun?" Okay, I've had s*x scenes start off with this question. Are they coming true now? If so then, hell yes I want to do something fun. On your desk, on the floor, wherever.

"Uh, it depends on what your definition of fun" I squint at him and he chuckles. "I promise, you'll find it quite entertaining. I need you to go to this address" He types it into his phone and seconds later I get his text of the address "Then I want you to pick up some photo samples for next months magazine issue"

"And this is what you consider fun? I'm confused" I thought you were going to strip me bare and take me on this very expensive carpet. Damn, I was completely wrong.

Ethan smirks at me "Trust me, Thea. Be back in an hour. I can handle things here. If you're not back in an hour, i'm sending reinforcements"

"Okay. Well, I'll be back later" I smile and turn on my heels, walking out of his office, still confused and disappointed that his definition of fun didn't quite match mine. Grabbing my bag and shutting off my computer, I shoot Ethan a quick look, but he doesn't look this time.

Walking through the lobby, I see Ethan's car pull up and his driver gets out and waits for me by the back door. When I get outside, he smile "Ms. Washington"

"Hi, again." I climb in and he closes the door. I open my phone and see another text from Ethan reminding me that I only have one hour. Why does he feel the need to keep pushing that. What is he getting me into?

Leaning forward, I clear my throat "Where is the place, Ethan has be going?"

"The modelling building. It's where all the pictures for the magazine are taken"

Oh! Models. I am suddenly very intrigued.

A few blocks away, the car pulls up to the building and I hop out. Inside, I ride the elevator to the second floor and when the doors open, I think i've died and gone to the upper east side of heaven. Walking around are half naked male models, everywhere. My lips part as I step out of the elevator, my hand clenching my phone for dear life. I've never seen so many sexy men in my life. When I feel my mouth water, I close my lips before slob dribbles on my dress. A tall toned man in nothing but dress pants walks by and winks at me. My eyes scan over his slightly oiled chest and arms. "Hi" I manage to get out.

"Excuse me. Who are you, young lady?" A short woman walks up with a camera in her hand. Clearing my throat, I smile. "I'm Mr. Sawyer's assistant, Thea. He sent me over to pick up some photos" Her frown quickly turns into a smile "Oh, come on in, dear. You're just in time to watch to shoot"

I get all giddy inside as I follow her in. She points to a chair and I sit in it while she starts spewing order and models begin scurrying about, my eyes trying to catch every one of them. Someone get me a fan and a drink. I may never leave. The first two models step up, shirtless, in nothing but some famous brand of boxer briefs. I watch as they pose a few times, their chiseled chests, gleaming as the lights shine on them. I think I just got pregnant.

Looking away, I giggle to myself and suddenly, I feel someone next to me. "Hey, I'm Lance"

"Thea" I smile as I reach out and shake his hand. "You're a model?"

"Yep, and you're Mr. Sawyer's assistant. Pretty important job"

"Yes, but it clearly has it's perks" I smile, gesturing around to the other models, getting their hair done and bodies oiled. I notice a few of them in full on suits, looking just as alluring as the half naked ones. I'm so f*****g lucky to have this job. I remind myself to thank Ethan when I get back.

Lance chuckles "Well, I feel rather objectified right about now" He crosses his arms, letting them flex a bit. I can't help but smirk a bit "It doesn't look like you mind one bit"

"Oh, I don't. I love this job. It's like walking around my apartment, but with cameras. You look like you could get into a few shots. You're beautiful"

Blush runs up my neck and cheeks at his compliment. Had he seen me and my tragedy of a hair color in the beginning, he would be singing a different tune. "Thank you. I don't think so though"

"Bet" He says without missing a beat"

"Excuse me" I turn in the chair to really look at him. His short blond hair, tousled neatly as if it is specifically supposed to look like that.

"I bet that I can get you in a few pictures" Oh, God, he can't be serious. The last time I had my picture taken was my high school graduation and even then I was awkward.

"Uh, I don't think so" I scrunch my nose and watch his smile as he walks off. "Wait, where are you going?" I ask, but he doesn't answer. f**k.

I watch as Lance walks over to the photographer and she turns and looks at me. I think she is about to shoo him away, but instead she smiles. "Come here, dear"

Fuck. f**k. f**k. I slide out of the chair and slowly walk over to her. "I want you in the next shots."

"Oh, no. I can't, I couldn't. I'm not a model at all." I shake my head, frantically. God, what have I gotten myself into? No, what the hell has Ethan gotten me into? The woman, makes a circle with her finger, ordering me to spin around. I awkward turn and when I face her again, she smiles "Nice body. Short, but nice legs. Are you wearing makeup?"

"Does lip balm count?"

The woman smiles again "Lance, take her over to miranda. I want her in the nude shoot"

"Nude!?" I gasp.

"Not naked, dear. Just stripped down. No makeup or anything, but you'll be in nothing but a guy's button down for the shots."

Lance takes my hand before I can agree or disagree "Why are you doing this to me? You don't even know me"

"Most of us have gotten discovered right off the street or in malls so pulling you into this is normal every day business. Just think of it as good experience. You're gorgeous so embrace it" He looks back and gives me a model grin. God, why does he have to be so sinfully handsome. Lance takes me to a woman, who I assume is Miranda. "Hi, dear. Take a seat for me"

"What are you going to do to me?"

Miranda looks at Lance "What shoot is she in?"

"The nude" He smiles "With me"

My eyes fly to his and I smack his arm "You sneaky bastard" Lance shrugs and walks off.

I turn back to the mirror in front of me and Miranda steps behind me "I'm just doing your hair. I'll do some loose wild curls. You have to look like you're just waking up in a $400 shirt"

"Hmm, and just this morning I woke up in and $8 shirt. I've come up" I laugh and Miranda smiles as she starts playing around in my hair. Pulling out my phone, I see a text from Ethan.

Ethan: 30 minutes.

"Um is this going to done in 30 minutes. I have to get back to work" I frown and Miranda shakes her head "More like an hour, maybe more. Mr. Sawyer will understand when he sees your shots. He may put you in the magazine."

"Well, if he fires me, at least I have modeling to fall back on" I shrug. Ethan would never put my face in his magazine let alone my whole body. I'm not a model.

"That's the spirit." Miranda laughs as she pins some of my hair up and begins curling the rest. After about 20 minutes, my hair is full of bed head curls. When Miranda is done making them look perfecting imperfect, she sends me over to a guy name, Alexander. He dabs my lips with a light tinted lip balm and adds one layer of mascara before sending me over to wardrobe. My heart begins wildly beating when I reach another woman who snaps her fingers at me "Undress"

"In front of everyone?"

She rolls her eyes and pops her gum "This isn't the place to be modest dear, but there is a closed off area over there if you must. Lose the bra too, please" She hands me a light blue long sleeve button down on a hanger and points me in the direction of the changing area. Back there, I kick my heels off and unzip my dress, letting it fall to my feet. Sitting it in a chair with my bra, I pull on the shirt and button it up. Looking in the mirror, I notice how short it is, stopping at my upper thighs, barely covering my butt. Oh, God. I am starting to not like this at all. "Thea?" I hear my name.

Peeking from behind the thin curtain, I see Lance walking towards me "Ready?"

"No. I'm terrified. I don't think I can do this, taking pictures in front of all those people. I can't" My hands start to shake as Lance pulls the curtain back, getting a good look at me "You look amazing" He takes me hand and pulls me out. "Just forget about these people. Most of them will barely be paying attention. It's overly normal to them."

"Are you sure?"

"Positive. It'll just be me, you, and the professional crew"

I take Lance's word and follow him out to the set. Instead of the one the other guys were taking pictures with, I see a casual bedroom set up with a couch and unmade bed. My palms begin to sweat. This better be worth losing my job over. My nerves go on overdrive as Lance pulls me onto the set before tossing his robe to the guy standing on the side. I briefly glance over Lance who is wearing black boxer briefs. Good Lord, give me strength. The photographer sets up her camera and I feel like i'm about to vomit everywhere. I manage to push it down and suddenly, someone turns on some music.

"To set the mood" Lance says to be as he pulls me over to the brown leather love seat. Over the sound system, I hear "Ride" by SoMo. God knows I love this damn song. Why is he trying to tempt me? I smirk softly and Lance catches it "Favorite song?"

"I love this song" I giggle.

"Good. It'll help."

Suddenly, the photographer yells "Let's get started. Lance sit down in the chair and have Thea sit in your lap for me." I inhale sharply at her order. When I take a good look around, the set looks sort of like a real bedroom. It even has a window looking out side. I assume they will photoshop something pleasant outside the window instead of the side of the building next door. Breaking my thoughts, Lance sits down and pulls me down into his lap. My body stiffens a bit, but relaxes when I notice that literally no one else other than the crew is watching. The other models are either in wardrobe or just sitting around. I can do this.

"Okay, Thea, throw your legs over the arm of the chair, one over the other." I do as she says and naturally, I throw my arm around Lance's neck, letting it hang over his shoulder loosely.

"Good, just like that. Now look down at Lance for me" She orders and I follow, look down into his blue eyes as his hand rest on my upper thigh. This is so weird. The woman snaps a few shots and gives a few more orders for me to change positions or tilt my head some sort of way. I wonder what Ethan is thinking right now?

After taking a few couch shots, the woman tells us to climb on to the unmade bed. She asks me to undo a few buttons on the shirt. My fingers shake as I undo them and she tells me to stop at the mid part of my cleavage. On the bed, I lay in the middle, hair sprawled out on the pillow. When I look over, Lance is standing off to the side, out of camera view. "Get a few shots alone" He smiles.

A guy pushes a ladder to the end of the bed and the photographer climbs up. "Okay, sweetie, now stretch out for me. One arm above your head, one hand by your ear" I stare up into the camera and the shutter goes off a few times. I lose focus until I feel the bed dip. Looking out the corner of my eye, Lance is climbing in. He lays on his side next to me and cups the side of my neck. I go to turn my face, but the woman tells me to keep looking at her. After 30 minutes of moving all over the bed with Lance, we're finally done. I can finally breathe.

I blush hard when the photographer starts clapping, causing others to join. "Beautiful, darling."

I bite my lip hard "Thanks. Can I get dressed now?"

"Yeah, you're done. I'll get these printed while you're putting your clothes on." She turns and walks off as I hurry to the back. I'm so red. I know Ethan is probably shooting flames from his ears. When I get to the back and grab my phone, I see that I have 8 missed called. Ethan told me an hour and I've been here for almost three. s**t. I'm screwed.

Once i'm dressed, I rush out and Lance is there with a large brown envelope. "These are for you. The shots that Mr. Sawyer wants are in there along with the best shots of you and me. I think you'll like them a lot. I know I did."

"Thanks. I really have to go. Depending on whether I still have a job or not, I may have to put together a portfolio." Lance chuckles as I head to the elevator, holding the envelope to my chest.

I get back to the office, and damn near sprint to the elevators to get back to my floor. Unfortunately, the elevator makes three stops on the way up. This is what I get for talking to sexy God models. Finally at my floor, I rush in, squealing as I try not to run into anyone. When I get to my office, I see that Ethan isn't in his. I almost breath a sigh of relief until a voice booms from behind "Thea, where the hell have you been?!"

Scarring me half to death, I yelp and turn around "Ethan! I'm so sorry. I swear I can explain"

"In my office, now!" He barks as he walks in, me right behind me. I sit down in front of his desk as he takes his seat. "I called you, a hundred times and you didn't answer" Actually, he only called me eight times, but that's just me being unnecessarily correct.

"I...I was busy"

"Busy doing what? What was so important that you were held up for three hours when I specifically told you to come back after an hour? This was supposed to be something light and fun for you to visit a magazine shoot. You took advantage of my kindness, Thea" He frowns, not know that I was part of the magazine shoot. He is going to s**t a gold brick.

"I didn't. I swear. Here" I hand him the envelope and he takes it from my trembling hand. I was expecting him to snatch it, but he didn't. Ethan opens it and pulls the photos out. He starts to go through them, quickly and huffs "Okay, this doesn't explain why you were la...." He pauses and I assume he finally got his answer. I look away, too afraid of his expression. "One of the models asked me to do a shoot with him and the photographer agreed, well insisted. That's why I was late. I'm sorry. I shouldn't have. It was completely unprofessional. I'm so sorry"

Ethan doesn't speak as I slowly turn my head to look at him. "Please say something." I mumble, twirling my thumbs in my lap.

"Have you seen these?" He finally asks and I shake my head. "When we finished, I hurried and left without looking at them." Were they bad? Did I look ugly in them? Oh, God, I got my hopes up for nothing. He hates them.

"Come here" Ethan orders and I stand, walking around his desk. When I'm next to him, he holds up a picture of me in the middle of the bed. My breath hitches when I see myself. Is that really me? I take the picture and hold it up. "Oh my..."

"Thea, these are amazing" Ethan states as he shakes his head in disbelief, looking through the others of me and Lance.

"Really? I was terrified and nauseous the whole time. I didn't understand why they wanted me to do it" I huff, feeling a weight off my shoulders. Suddenly, Ethan turns his chair and looks up at me. "You really don't know how gorgeous you are, do you?"

I snort and roll my eyes, unable to reply to his questions. All my life, I've felt that I looked okay. Plain, but pretty, I guess. When I don't answer, Ethan holds up the photo of Lance and me sitting on the sofa with me looking at him. Then he takes the photo of me on the bed from my fingers and holds it up. "These two are going in next month's issue"

My eyes widen and Ethan smiles "Ethan, you can't. I only did it just to try it. I don't really want to be in a magazine. People will start to think that you're giving me special treatment"

"I am giving you special treatment. That's the perks of being the boss, Thea, but all that aside, I want these pictures in the next issue, because they are stunning. Please say yes."

I think about it for a moment and figure that no real harm can come from two pictures. It's just one month's issue. Just one. Simple. Okay. "Can you keep my name out of it?"

"If that's what you want"

"It is. I'm not trying to make a profession out of it. It was just a good experience for me. I enjoyed it." I shrug and Ethan stands up, closing the space between us. I look up at him and his eyes gaze into mine. "You're beautiful, Thea and as much as you hate people staring at you, just know that that's the reason they are staring." Reaching up, he takes cups the side of my neck, rubbing his thumb along my jaw. The touch sends a shiver down my spine and I part my lips, exhaling. I know this is inappropriate, but I can't bring myself to pull away. I want his hands on me. Suddenly, the next thing that happens has to be something straight out of a book. Ethan, slips his hand behind my neck and leans in, his eyes flickering from my eyes to my lips. I close my eyes and when the warmth of his lips hit mine, another chill runs through me.

This is wrong, but f**k, it feels so right.