



LILY GRAISON

A Touch of
Heaven



A Touch of Heaven
by
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Book Description



Paige Foster planned the perfect get-together for her best friends from high school in honor of their ten-year class reunion, but her plans go up in smoke when an impromptu trip to The Pleasure Dome, an elite club that features the hottest male dancers in the country, ends up on their to-do list. Forced into going, she complains until she meets Simon—the main attraction.

When Simon looks into the audience before his act and sees familiar faces from his past, he has second thoughts about his performance—until he sees Paige and old memories come flooding back. Knowing she won't recognize him as the shy, awkward boy he used to be, he breaks club rules and pulls her to the stage during his act.

The heat they generate doesn't dim when the lights go down and what should have been a one-night stand turns out to be something more. Will Paige accept Simon when she finds out who he really is or will his secret be the end of their affair?

Chapter One



Paige Foster juggled the shopping bags she held, stopping briefly when one slipped down her hip, before continuing the climb to her apartment. The last of her shopping done, she now possessed more wine than any six people needed and enough food for a small army.

She reached her door and fumbled with her keys, hissing a curse when she heard the phone ringing inside the apartment and shoved the key in, unlocking the door, before rushing through the doorway. Placing the bags down on the couch, she headed for the phone and snatched up the receiver. "Hello."

"Ready for a weekend of debauchery?"

"Megan!" Paige squealed, into the phone's receiver. "Oh my God it's so good to hear your voice." Megan's laughter sounded like music to her ears. She smiled before lowering herself into a nearby chair.

"I know. I hate we hardly get to talk anymore."

"Me too," Paige said, sadly. "You are still planning on coming this weekend, aren't you?"

"Oh, I wouldn't miss it! Who else have you heard from?"

"Well, Heather called. She won't be in until Friday evening."

"Why so late?"

"Something about a last minute re-shoot. She called yesterday bitching about her co-star stepping into her

light and making her look pale or some such crap.” Paige laughed, leaning back into her chair and thought of her now very famous friend.

Heather Mathis, one of Riverdale High’s elite, currently lived her dream in New York. She left everything behind and moved to the City of Lights right after graduation.

The Queen Bee, or so they called her, graced billboards and appeared in countless movies. Of all the girls in their clique, Heather was by far the most successful.

“Anyway, you know how Heather is,” Paige grinned.

“She apparently hasn’t changed much.”

“Did you really expect her to?”

“No, but I hoped. If the others are still self-centered like they use to be, we’re going to be in trouble.”

“We’ll just ignore them like we always did.”

Paige laughed. “Sounds like a plan to me.”

“Have you heard from the others?”

“Yes. Amy, Courtney and Kim are all coming in on Thursday, so I guess it will just be the two of us until then.”

“Well, you aren’t going to hear me complain. I miss the one-on-one chats we use to have.”

“Me too,” Paige said, remembering her closest friend and their talks fondly. She and Meg were inseparable in high school and their friendship stayed strong throughout the years. “So, when does your plane land?”

“I should get in around seven Wednesday evening. Are you still picking me up at the airport?”

“I’ll be there.”

“Great! Well I still have a few class assignments to go over with the substitute and I need to talk with the Dean, so I’ll see you tomorrow.”

“Okay Meg. I can’t wait to see you.” Paige practically bounced in her seat by the time both girls said their good-byes. Four years had passed since she’d seen her oldest friends and the Riverdale High ten-year class Reunion drew closer by the day.

Of the friends, Meg and Paige were the closest. The once-shy brunette now held the title of ‘*professor*’ at a very prestigious college in up state New York and Paige couldn’t wait to see her again. Getting a chance to reminisce with her oldest friends is exactly what she needed. Living in L.A. was lonely, but she hoped to ease some of the pain she felt with the weekend’s planned activities.

They all decided to crash at Paige’s apartment for a little *girl’s weekend out*. She lived the closest to Riverdale and it made more sense than everyone renting a hotel room.

After graduation, every one moved on with their lives, moving to the far corners of the country, herself included. Her mother moved them to L.A. and together, they established the large art gallery Paige now owned since her mother’s passing two years ago.

Being away from her friends left a hole in her life, but she felt liberated. She did whatever she wanted, and dated whomever she saw fit, without having to have her friends’ constant approval.

The girls would soon be all together again and Paige couldn’t wait. No matter how inferior her friends made

her feel, seeing them again left her feeling giddy with excitement. She'd looked forward to this all year long.

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Paige paced nervously in front of the large windows at LAX, awaiting the arrival of Megan's plane. She hadn't seen her since her mother's funeral. They tried to talk at least once a week since Paige felt so isolated living in L.A. alone. She felt completely out of touch with the real world.

Running the gallery took up most of her free time. Although her employees were around her same age, she learned the hard way not to mix business with pleasure.

Watching her days turn to nights from behind the glass windows of her gallery wasn't the life she imagined for herself, but like it or not, it's all she had.

L.A. was a large city and although Paige loved her life there, her limited amount of friends just didn't seem like enough. She missed the *gang* and the reunion seemed like the perfect excuse for them all to get together again.

Paige walked over to the small crowd gathering, awaiting other passengers. Straining her neck, she waved when she saw the bright smile she knew belonged to Megan. She let out a squeal when her friend looked up and saw her.

She quickly pushed her way through the crowd, making her way toward Megan. Tears and laughter erupted when the two girls finally made it to each other

and the other occupants of the airport couldn't help but smile at their squeals of excitement.

"Oh God Paige, I'm so happy to see you! Let me get a good look at you," Megan said, pulling back from her.

Paige stood up straight, preening for her friend and grinning like an idiot. Hours spent at the salon getting her long blonde locks highlighted and her tan a warm golden brown apparently paid off. Megan seemed to approve.

"My, my," Megan grinned. "Who is this woman you've become?"

"I'm not that different."

"Sure you are. Just look at those curves!"

Paige agreed with her there. No longer the wafer thin, petite girl from high school. Her five-foot-three frame filled out, womanly curves now graced her petite figure and she smiled knowing all her hard work in the gym finally paid off.

"Well, I can't say you've changed much," Paige laughed.

Megan's brunette hair was still cut short--the ends just barely touching her shoulders. She'd added a few streaks of highlights since the last time they were together. Her clothing style had taken a turn for the better it seemed. No longer did she see the wild colors or prints. A very stylish gray pants suit made her look every bit the professional she was.

"You know me," Megan said. "I'm scared of change."

"Liar."

Both girls laughed before Paige sighed happily. "I've missed you so much."

"Don't you dare cry, missy!"

Paige grinned. "I can't help it. You know I get emotional over nothing. It feels like I haven't seen you in forever."

"I know," Megan said, the two finally turning and making their way over to the baggage carousel to gather Megan's luggage. It only took a few minutes before they spotted her bags. They made the slow progression through the hoard of people trying to escape the airport and they both laughed once making it outside.

"Let's get out of here. We have tons of catching up to do before the others get here tomorrow."

"I'm right behind you."

Chapter Two



Paige held her sides with both hands. The constant laughter had her in stitches. The four friends who'd managed to make it into L.A. early sat around her living room telling stories of the last ten years of their lives.

She constantly wiped her eyes, tears streaming down her face from the best laughing fit in ages. She couldn't remember the last time she'd laughed so hard.

After more wine than any of them needed, they were all in gossip mode and the girls were spilling every little dirty secret they knew.

"And then Kim tells him, 'Multiple orgasms are a must, so if you can't deliver, then let me know up front. I would hate to waste the next forty-eight hours of my life if you aren't going to please me.'" Amy's face was red by the time she finished trying to imitate her fast-talking, very blunt friend.

The room burst into another round of giggles before

Paige said, "Oh, Kim, you didn't?" She stared at the most flamboyant of her friends. Kim was by far the most outrageous person she'd ever met. She was blunt and spoke her mind no matter what the circumstances.

The loudest of the group, she hadn't changed much from what Paige could tell. Always the comedic relief, nothing that came out of her mouth surprised anyone.

Kim looked much like she did in high school. Her short brown hair looked flirty, just like her. Her five-foot-

five frame still thin but there wasn't anything skinny about her. The most voluptuous of them all, Kim used sex like a weapon. Anywhere and anyway is what Kim liked and the men she picked to fill her nights weren't your average Joes.

"What?" Kim said, smiling. "He was cute but come on; I don't have time for casual sex. I'm not getting any younger. If I plan on meeting mister right, I have to weed out the mistakes before I wake up one day and realize the man next to me has very few sexual skills and his dick isn't even that large in the light."

"You know Kim, maybe you need to look into hooking up in a threesome situation until you find your stud. It will cut back on the time you spend hunting Mr. Right," Courtney said without looking up. She scanned their old high school yearbook, idly flipping through the pages. Her voice barely made it over the roar of laughter from the others.

"Oh, now there's a plan," Amy chimed in.

"Or--you can just wait until Saturday and see if Travis is still available," Courtney grinned.

Courtney Logan, the vainest girl Paige had ever met, still preened like a princess. Even in pajamas, Courtney looked ready for a night on the town.

Paige watched her when she turned her head and looked at everyone, grinning before turning the book so the others could see. Her perfectly manicured fingertips tapped loudly on the picture of Travis and she tossed her over-bleached hair back across her shoulder before going back to the book.

“Oh please,” Kim sneered. “He stands me up for the Prom for some stupid family gathering and you expect me to just invite him back into my bed? No, thank you.”

“Good lord, Kim!” Megan squealed. “His grandmother died. I can't see faulting him on something he had no control over.”

“Well, I spent good money for that dress only to have that icky nerd, Randall, fawn all over me like I was Aphrodite herself all evening! Travis Hardy can bite my ass.”

“Speaking of icky... guess who I just found?” Courtney said in a sing-song voice, smiling wide before turning to look up at the girls.

“Who?” Amy asked, swallowing the last bit of her wine before motioning to Megan to refill her glass.

“Why, it's Paige's very own, one-man cheering section.”

Paige felt her heart lurch in her chest. Her friends all jumped up from their seats and ran to Courtney's side to see the guy no one had seen in ten years. She smiled, looking away briefly, before watching them practically fall in the floor laughing.

“Come on guys,” Paige said, shaking her head. “He wasn't that bad.”

“Are you crazy?” Courtney said. “He was a total spaz.”

“Holy shit, I wonder if he'll be at the reunion,” Amy asked, “I so want to see him again!”

“I wonder what he did after high school?” Kim asked staring down at the picture. The scrawny, curly brown haired boy staring back at her from the page sent her into another fit of giggles.

“He's probably a janitor somewhere, still writing that ridiculous poetry and stealing glances at the ladies over those wide-framed dorky glasses,” Courtney laughed.

Paige continued to smile before standing and walking to the kitchen to grab another bottle of wine, listening to the others talk about Colin.

It was true he hadn't been the most popular in school. He was the one guy everyone targeted as their punching bag. Not literally, but the punches they threw at him were just as bad.

On any given day, someone would humiliate him. His tall, gangly frame stood out amongst the Californians. His complexion, almost a pasty white color, made him look sickly and his mop of curly brown hair always hung around his ears and over his forehead. He stayed to himself and rarely spoke to anyone...besides her.

In the two years he'd attended Riverdale, he never missed the opportunity to speak to her. She found it cruel how people treated him but at the time, felt powerless to stop it. She stood by and watched so many of her friends taunt him and call him names and even though their actions were childish and immature, she did nothing to stop them.

She hadn't thought of him in years, the last time being when she was feeling rather lonely and in her “poor me” mood. She'd pulled down her memento box and looked through the poems he'd written her. After all these years she didn't have the heart to toss them out. Nerd or not, Colin Gregory held a special place in her heart. He was without a doubt, the sweetest guy Paige had ever met.

Everyone attending Riverdale High knew Colin had a major crush on her. Anytime anyone saw him, he was either staring at her or scribbling in his journal. And everyone knew what he wrote about. Almost daily someone would snatch the journal away from him and read it aloud. Poetry and stories filled the pages. Most of them were about true love and beauty so rare Paige couldn't help but smile.

She knew most of what he wrote was about her and at the time she'd laughed along with the others because it was the cool thing to do. It wasn't until the day she found out her jock boyfriend, Lance, cheated on her that she found a small note tucked into her locker. The words, "*He will never be good enough for you,*" struck her like a bolt of lightning. She took the time to really examine Colin then and what he wrote for only her.

From that moment on, every time she found a new poem, she secretly read the verses until she'd practically memorized them. Reading between the lines, she could see the heartfelt words he wrote just for her and she finally looked at him.

She didn't see the boy everyone thought him to be. She saw the boy he wanted her to see. She saw a kind soul who, even though countless people taunted him daily for his affections toward her, never stopped trying.

The laughs and jokes at his expense didn't stop and even though she'd laughed and gone along with her friends' teasing of him to keep up appearances, a part of her liked the thought of him caring so much for her. And he did. She could see it in his written words and the way he looked at her.

Colin Gregory had been in love with her.

“Hey Paige,” Amy yelled from the living room, “Remember when he asked you to the Prom?”

Paige turned her head, smiling back into the other room when their laughter continued and the memory came back to her. She didn't know how many times she wished she could go back and change the events of that day. She could still see the tears in Colin's eyes. The pained expression on his face when the entire room burst into laughter after someone overheard their conversation, still haunted her.

He was the butt of jokes for weeks after that...all because of her. They laughed and called him names and Paige did nothing to stop them. She never defended him or offered to help and a piece of her died every time someone made his life hell because of her.

She liked Colin. Not as much as he liked her, but she liked him. He wasn't the quintessential jock with good looks and a body to go along with it. He was quiet and shy and, even if she admitted only to herself, had the most amazing blue eyes of anyone she'd ever met. He wasn't terrible to look at either, but at the time, anyone not wearing the latest fashions was considered less than desirable. His *geek* status alone put him in the no-touch zone. He never should have registered on her radar...but he did.

She never told anyone what she thought of him. Not even Meg. Her friends would have had her committed for thinking it. Colin was a social leper at the time and even though her personal life was in shambles, she would have given anything to have someone actually hear what she had to say. Having someone around who actually cared about her would have been a Godsend.

And she knew Colin would have listened. He would have clung to every word and offered her the world to make it better.

She tried talking to him after school the day he asked her to the prom, but the minute she approached him, he gave her a weak smile and said, "Don't worry, Paige. I know where I stand with you, now. I always thought you were different from them. I guess I was wrong."

He turned and walked away from her then. She stood there alone and watched him leave while she held the poem and rose he'd given her. His words stung and reminded her of the person she didn't want to be. She watched him walk away and knew she had finally broken him.

It was the last time he ever spoke to her.

No longer did she find him staring at her, or find the unsigned poems slipped into her locker. No matter how many attempts she made to talk to him, he walked past her like she didn't exist. Much like she had done to him.

It hurt to be treated that way. She knew then the hell they made his life.

She never told a single person she called his house two days before prom, only to have his brother tell her to never call back. Their treatment of Colin was unfair-- even hers. No one knew him. They never wanted to. And now... ten years later, they still laughed at the boy who'd worn his heart on his sleeve.

She sighed heavily thinking about it all. She hated treating people like inferior beings but when she heard the laughter coming from the other room she knew some things would never change, especially with her friends.

She turned and walked slowly back into the living room before making her way to the sofa and sitting down. She stared at her friends, their snickers over Colin having died down to an eerie silence. "Okay, what gives?" she asked, sipping her wine.

"Oh, nothing," Courtney said, flashing a completely fake smile.

Paige noticed the sly looks her friends gave her before she lifted one eyebrow and sat up in her seat. "Really? Because it looks like the four of you just found out your boyfriend cheated on you."

Megan smiled, turning her head towards Paige. "It's the King and Queen Prom photo," she said, quietly.

"Oh," Paige said, needing no more explanation. The memory of her and Lance posing for the picture and dancing to their song flashed back in her mind. She hadn't thought of him in years and she liked it that way. It took her a long time to get over him, but she did. Apparently her friends didn't think she had--or thought she *shouldn't* have.

Leaning back in her seat, she took a big sip of her wine, hoping to clear her mind of memories she'd just soon forget. She would have fun this weekend if it killed her. She needed this more than anything she could think of. So what if her friends were still the materialistic, backbiting bitches they always were. As long as she played it cool, she could have her fun and not personally have to hurt anyone in the process.

Chapter Three



“Oh God, why didn’t someone make me stop drinking last night?” Amy asked covering her eyes to try and block out the light in the room.

“I told you to slow down on the wine,” Courtney laughed. She pulled the curtains back, filling the once dark living room with light and Amy practically screamed before ducking her head under a pillow on the couch.

“Geez Court, don’t you get tired of being so damn happy all the time?” Kim asked, stumbling into the room. “All that smiling has to be bad on the complexion.”

“Oh, actually I read smiling was very good for the facial muscles,” Courtney said, smiling.

“Yeah, so did I,” Megan said, raising her hand and covering her mouth before she yawned.

“Is Paige up yet?”

“I haven’t seen her.”

The front door opened and Paige smiled before saying, “That’s because I heard of a stray being at the airport ahead of schedule.”

She entered the apartment with Heather right behind her. She dropped Heather’s numerous bags just inside the door, grunting in relief. She watched the prima-Donna stroll across the room like she didn’t have a care in the world.

“Heather!” The room sang in unison.

“You’re early! We weren’t expecting you until later tonight,” Megan said walking over and giving her friend a hug.

“Yeah well, I told Brad if he didn't get his shit together and stop screwing up my light, I'd kill him slowly by telling the world how dickless he really is.”

“No way!” Amy yelled. “Tell me you *did not* sleep with him.”

“No, I didn't sleep with him,” Heather said rolling her eyes before she flopped down on the sofa and stretched her arms out across the back of it. Her long brunette hair was pulled into a complicated twist at the back of her head and her make-up flawless. The short black dress she wore exposed her long shapely legs and her spiked heels complimented the outfit. She looked every bit the star she was and she made sure everyone around her knew it at all times.

She looked at the faces around the room, making sure all eyes were on her before she smiled and said, “I just fucked him and left him lying there basking in the Heather-haze of love.”

Laughter once again erupted and the girls sat down to hear how life in the Big Apple was treating their now very famous friend. Everyone listened intently, riveted to tales of the actors Heather had been romantically involved with, and the biggest point of interest, of course, was how well they *performed*.

“So, what have I missed?” Heather asked, slipping off her shoes and pulling her feet up on the couch.

“Not a whole lot,” Amy informed her.

“So you haven't left me out of anything?”

“Nope, just multiple bottles of wine and scary stories,” Courtney said.

Heather raised one eyebrow. “Scary stories?”

"Yes, as in Travis Hardy," Kim spat out, rolling her eyes.

"And Randall," Courtney reminded her.

"Ewww," Heather said, her face twisted in disgust at hearing the two names.

"Oh, and let's not forget, Colin," Amy chimed in with a giggle before everyone in the room laughed.

Paige smiled when every girl in the room turned to her and she found herself laughing along with her friends at the mention of his name. She couldn't understand why, after ten years, she still felt like a sixteen year old girl being pressured into being a royal bitch toward someone who was probably a really nice guy, no matter how dorky he seemed.

"Oh my God, I wonder if he'll be at the reunion?" Heather asked, smiling.

"We wondered the same thing."

"Hey Paige, you going to make nice with the dork if he's there?" Heather grinned.

Paige rolled her eyes. "You guys are impossible, you know that?"

"No we're not," Kim grinned. "He was a dork."

"Says who?"

"Says everyone!"

Paige forced a laugh, shaking her head and averting her eyes. They would never change, that much was obvious.

"Hey, not to change the subject or anything, well, actually yes, but anyway... guess what I have for you ladies?" Heather asked before standing up and crossing the room to her luggage. She reached into one of her bags before turning with a huge smile on her face.

“Oh please say its Keanu's home phone number,” Courtney belted out.

“No, you dork,” Heather said, shaking her head. “I have these.” She grinned before waving the tickets in her hand back and forth.

“Tickets?”

“Not just *any* tickets,” Heather said walking back over to the couch. She tossed the tickets down on the coffee table, crossed her arms over her chest and smirked at them all.

Kim leaned over the table, looking at the tiny pieces of paper before letting out a squeal. “Holy shit, Heather! Who the hell did you have to blow to get your hands on these?”

Heather laughed and wiggled her eyebrows. “Wouldn't you like to know?”

“Hell yes I would!” Kim yelled, smiling.

“What are they?” Paige asked, straining her neck to get a peek at the tickets.

“Only the most delicious night's entertainment you've ever had.” Kim said, smiling.

“Oh really?” Megan asked, curious.

Paige craned her neck, looking to see what the tickets were and her eyes went wide when she saw. “The Pleasure Dome! I am *so* not going in there!”

“Oh, yes you are!” Kim and Heather yelled in unison.

“What's the Pleasure Dome?” Megan asked, looking at her friends.

Paige sat back and rolled her eyes. “It's that new sin factory downtown they try to pass off as a club.”

“Sin factory?” Courtney asked just as confused as Megan.

“Oh God, Paige, lighten up. How long has it been since you got laid anyway?”

“Excuse me?” Paige asked, shocked, before turning to look at Kim. “What the hell does that have to do with anything?”

“Because you're a prude, that's why,” Kim yelled.

“I am not!”

“Yes, you are. You always have been. Look at precious Paige, with her virtue in tact. Are you still a blushing virgin?”

“Ladies!” Heather yelled before the situation got out of hand. “Chill the fuck out and sit down.”

Paige crossed her arms over her chest and glared at Kim. She never wanted to rip her hair out like she did in that moment. They all sat back down and got quiet, all eyes on Heather.

“All right, for you less than worldly people,” Heather said, smiling. “The Pleasure Dome is the most exclusive club on the west coast. It's invitation only and home to the most delicious, lick-able hard bodies you've ever laid eyes on!”

“Oh my,” Megan said, grinning. “So, are we talking naked goodness?”

“Oh baby, we're talking about the best hunks of salty goodness this side of heaven!”

Chapter Four



"Come on ladies, let's go already!"

Paige heard Amy's voice boom through her apartment. The biggest part of the afternoon consisted of getting dressed and primped to perfection and they were all ready for The Pleasure Dome.

Well, everyone but Paige.

She stood in front of her mirror, debating on her choice of dress. One look into Paige's closet almost gave Heather a heart attack. She'd insisted on giving Paige something *risqué* to wear. She'd spent over an hour looking through Heather's vast collection of designer clothes and finally decided on a light blue halter dress.

The dress wasn't something she would normally wear but Kim's earlier comment touched a nerve. She knew most of her clothes were simple and looked more sophisticated than anything someone her age should own, but she was far from virginal. And she would prove it if it killed her.

She turned to the left, trying to see the back of her dress before turning a complete circle. The dress was backless; the front cut low and emphasized her breasts. She tried for the tenth time to get the material to cover more with no luck. Her breasts looked ready to pop out at any second. She sighed before shaking her head.

Running her hands down the front of her, she watched the material glitter in the lights from her room. The dress had an almost metallic look to it and every time

the light caught it, it shimmered like small diamonds littered the surface. It hung to mid-thigh and the skirt flared just enough to soften the whole look. Ultra-high strappy high-heels finished the look and made her legs look twice their length.

Giving her hair another toss to shake out some of the curls, she gave herself one last look before making her way to the living room. She spun on her heels before posing for the group. "Well, what do you think?" she asked.

"Oh, look who's getting her naughty on now!" Heather said smiling big.

Paige blushed when the girls all whistled and shouted for her.

"You look fantastic, Paige."

"You don't think it's too... 'I'm a ho, take me home'?"

"Of course it is," Meg said, grinning. "That's why it's perfect."

Paige giggled along with the others. "Well, what are we waiting on?"

Amy made a small *whoop* sound before saying, "Salty goodness, here we come!"

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The atmosphere inside the Pleasure Dome was unlike anything the girls had ever experienced. They walked into the building and were met with silence...until they took the stairs.

The music started in a low steady beat, getting louder the further into the club they walked. By the time they reached the top of the stairs where the main stage sat, the techno beats blasted so loud they could barely hear each other talking. It thumped in their chests, the sound coming from every corner of the room.

They took in all the sights around them. The low lighting made it hard to see anything except the stage.

Bright lights blazed on the dancer currently performing and gasps were heard from the girls when they got their first look at the half-naked men The Pleasure Dome offered. The only other men in the entire building were those who worked there, all wearing nothing more than what looked like a painted on pair of black spandex pants.

They were all beautiful. Hard sculpted muscles and warm smiles were thrown their way and the girls giggled in response. A very large, bare-chested man named Jett led them to a table right up front next to the stage. He smiled and flirted with them all before taking their drink orders and telling them to enjoy the show.

Paige looked around the room, amazed at what she saw. Women were everywhere. They were standing along the front of the stage, holding their hands high with a "tip" to offer to the current dancer. More women were sitting at the small tables scattered around the room while others hung around the bar. Almost all of them were screaming as the man of the moment strutted his stuff on stage.

"I can not believe this place!" Megan yelled, trying to be heard over the roar of the crowd.

"I know, isn't it great?" Heather yelled back, eyeing the dark-haired piece of eye candy named Damien, who currently danced on stage, in nothing more than a scrap of cloth covering his bare essentials.

He danced and flexed his muscles for the ladies lining up to see him and his smile was intoxicating. He worked the crowd into a frenzy. Every woman standing at the stage got a chance to touch him, her tip accepted with a small kiss on the cheek before he'd move to the next lady.

The girls all laughed and stared at Damien dance and they all knew the excitement of the night had only begun. Paige watched her friends get as animated as the other females in the room. They were standing, clapping and yelling Damien's name while he performed and even though watching half naked men dance had never been on her list of things to do, she had to admit the sight was one to behold.

Drinks flowed and laughter ensued as the evening wore on. The whole group sat shocked when Kim paid for a very seductive lap dance from a man wearing nothing but a g-string and a cowboy hat. Paige thought she would die laughing when Kim grabbed his ass and pulled him down on top of her and started grinding her hips into him.

They had all whistled and cattle-called. The dancer seemed to enjoy her practically dry humping him in front of one hundred and fifty screaming women. One look at his face proved that. He enjoyed the dance every bit as much as she did.

When the last dancer exited the stage, the girls all sat patiently, watching a man in a tuxedo walk onto the stage with a microphone.

"Ladies, if I can have your attention please," he said. "The moment you have all been waiting for is almost here, so please, take this opportunity to refresh your drinks and grab the smelling salts as our next performer prepares to entertain you!"

The roar of the crowd was deafening. The girls looked at each other when the entire club seemed to take the noise level up ten notches. They had no idea why, but as the crowd became more animated, their enthusiasm also rose.

Jett returned just in time to refill their drinks and Paige happily drank hers down before ordering another. The more she drank, the less embarrassed she felt. A good stiff drink was all it took to let her inhibitions go and despite her earlier reservations, she was having the time of her life.

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Simon looked out from behind the curtain and scanned the crowd. The roar of applause for him floated to the back stage area and caused his smile to widen. He loved this part. The anticipation of his arrival.

"Rowdy crowd tonight," the announcer said stepping back stage and stopping beside him.

"Looks like."

"Better watch the brunette at table five. She's a little on the grabby side," the announcer said laughing. "But that's never been a problem for you, now has it?"

"No, can't say it has." Simon stretched his neck to look over at table five. He smiled when he saw the table of six women. All beauties from what he could see. They all seemed to turn towards the stage at once and he stared at each one, taking in the way they were dressed. They weren't your average crowd. These ladies knew how to dress-to-impress.

His eyes landed on one of the blondes and when she smiled, his heart nearly stopped. He'd memorized that smile. Seen it in his dreams a thousand times. He searched her face, his eyes widening before looking back at the others. He knew them. Knew them all. "Oh fuck!"

"Problem?"

"Depends."

"On what?"

"On if they recognize me or not." Images he tried to forget flooded his mind. Images of their faces alight with laughter at his expense. The hateful words spat at him daily and the constant taunts and ridicule for the boy he once was paralyzed him. He stared at them, knowing his worst fear had just been realized.

"You know them?"

He never answered. His gaze sought her out again and his breath caught in his throat when he looked at her. His angel. The one thing in the world he would have given anything to have. To spend one second in her presence was like taking a breath of air after being denied.

He smiled as he stared at her, the smile on her face bringing back all the memories of her he'd tried unsuccessfully to bury for years. No one compared to her. She'd bewitched him from the second he laid eyes on her

his very first day of school. She was a vision. A goddess in his eyes and he felt sixteen again looking at her.

She was even more beautiful now than the last time he'd seen her. Her hair was longer and blonder. Her sun-kissed skin glowed in the low lighting and her smile lit up the entire room. Her being here was like a gift from above. It delighted him more than anything he could remember. He never thought he would see her again, but here she was.

"Hey, did you hear me?"

"Huh, what did you say?" he asked, turning his head to look over his shoulder.

"I said are you ready?"

Taking one last look at her, he let the curtain drop and stepped back against the wall. He took several deep breaths and closed his eyes, trying to clear his thoughts. Tonight's performance would be extra nerve racking. Dancing in front of Riverdale High's elite caused the insecurities he struggled to overcome to scratch the surface again. "Come on Simon, that's not you anymore," he told himself quietly. "You can do this. They'll never know it's you."

Opening his eyes again, he looked in the mirror one last time. He took in his appearance. He looked nothing like he did ten years ago. He told himself again that they would never know.

"*Well at least not yet,*" he thought to himself before a wide smile crossed his face. Turning to the announcer, he grinned before saying, "Let's do it."

The announcer smiled back at him before grabbing the microphone and stepping back onto the stage. "Ladies, are we ready?"

"Yes!"

Paige and the girls watched every female in the club rise to their feet and rush the stage.

They looked to each other when the chants started and the six girls all smiled when the name "Simon" rang out to deafening decibels. They all laughed before exiting their seats and pushing their way through the throng of women to be center stage.

"And now, for your viewing enjoyment, The Pleasure Dome is proud to present the man who instills more wet dreams with a single glance than any other man alive...the one, the only...*Simon!*"

His name echoed throughout the room when the music started to play. The loud thumping beats Paige felt in her chest from the music and the crowd tripped to a stop when she caught her first glimpse of him. Her breath caught and every thing around her dimmed as she stared at the man who came through the curtain.

Tight black jeans encased his lower body and a black t-shirt hugged every muscle of his chest. His bleached blonde hair stood in tiny spikes on his head. His skin a creamy alabaster with hard toned muscles that stretched the material of his shirt. He swayed slowly to the beat of the music, strutting his way across the stage and looking out through the crowd at everyone screaming his name. He looked like the ultimate bad-boy. The one your mother warned you about.

Paige's pulse quickened when he suddenly turned toward her. Shockingly blue eyes locked on hers and it felt as if a lighting bolt struck her. The tingles started low in her stomach before firing off every nerve ending in her body.

He tilted his head to the side, his eyes roaming over her body before he licked his lips and smiled. She felt her knees go weak before her lips curved into a smile.

He was simply beautiful.

He turned when the beat of the music got faster and there wasn't a single person who wasn't completely mesmerized by him. He moved across the stage and worked the crowd, the screams of his name becoming louder by the second.

The smile on Paige's face matched her friends. She glanced away from him to see them screaming along with everyone else in the club. She turned back to the stage and watched Simon stop in the middle of the floor.

He ran his fingers slowly down his chest before grabbing the bottom of his t-shirt and raising it to show the slightest bit of skin hidden under the fabric.

The women in the club screamed out their approval. His joy at their reaction showed on his face. He leered at everyone, his tongue sliding between his lips and being caught with his teeth. The small action earned him more screams and hands shot up, fists clutched with money.

Paige understood now what the announcer meant when he said, "more wet dreams with a single glance," because the minute Simon turned and looked at her again, her heart nearly stopped. Just one simple glance and her mind conjured images of naked flesh and how he would feel wrapped around her body.

The music picked up its tempo and the gorgeous blonde on stage grabbed the front of his shirt and ripped it down the center. Paige nearly went deaf when the noise

level rose and he pulled the shredded material from his body.

Hard, toned muscles flexed and rippled with every move he made and she watched him greedily.

He turned suddenly and faced her. Paige felt her face flame when he looked directly at her. His tongue slid across his bottom lip, his eyes drinking her in and for a split second, she wondered what she'd done to garner this gorgeous man's attention.

She turned her head then, looking to see if he was in fact looking at someone else, but the minute she locked eyes with him again, he smiled at her. The action almost did her in. He *was* looking at her.

He walked across the stage, his movements slow and almost predatory and Paige's gaze never left his face until he stopped right in front of her. He bent to one knee, reaching out and running his fingertips over her collarbone before lightly tracing her arm down to her fingers.

When he grabbed her hand, Paige's smile widened before he reached for the other. She stood there, holding his hands and staring up into his smiling face before she felt someone grab her around the waist. Before she could turn to see who it was, Simon and the anonymous person behind her lifted her to the stage in one quick movement.

Her excited shriek sent her friends into a screaming fit. They laughed and cheered her on. She gasped when her feet landed on the floor and Simon pulled her against his body. He wrapped his arms around her waist and immediately guided her hips into a dance.

Paige's eyes fluttered. He rocked their bodies to the beat of the music and she found it hard to control her

breathing. She stared up at him, the look on his face her undoing. This gorgeous man was in her arms and she knew she'd never have another chance to explore all this man had to offer.

She tentatively laid her hands on his arms, feeling the corded muscles under her fingertips before letting them travel up the length of them to his shoulders. She blushed before looking up at him through her lashes.

The look he gave her made things low in her belly tighten and sent her pulse racing before she smiled and ran her palms over his smooth skin. The look on his face turned seductive and Paige watched the bright blue of his eyes darken the longer she stared at him. He was even more beautiful up close. His lips were full, the bottom much thicker than the top. Long lashes swept his cheeks when he blinked and his cheekbones were impossibly high.

She felt his hand skim her exposed back before he leaned forward, burying his face in her neck. She tilted her head to the side and held her breath. A whisper soft kiss was felt, followed by two more, before he licked a trail to her ear.

A shiver raced up her spine at the move and his arms tightened around her. His warm breath tickled the small hairs at the back of her neck and she swallowed hard before closing her eyes.

She could only imagine what this man could do. The way she felt with nothing more than a few kisses to her exposed skin made her want to beg for more. She heard nothing but the beat of the music and she swayed with him to the rhythm. The sensations running throughout her body blocking out everything but him.

She felt him smile against her neck and opened her eyes when he stood up straight. Once again her attention was drawn to the blue of his eyes. He stared at her like she was the only woman on the planet. Her pulse quickened at the thought.

With heavily lidded eyes, she licked her lips, feeling his hands slide down her back to cup the rounded globes of her ass before massaging her flesh and stare directly at her.

Paige leaned in closer to him, running her hands up and down his arms, feeling the muscles under his skin before she slid them over his bare chest. He felt like silk under her fingertips and her eyes followed her hand's path. Her breathing increased with every second that passed.

She smiled at the feel of the hard corded muscles of his stomach twitching under her fingertips and felt empowered by his reaction, each muscle traced with the tip of her finger before dipping to the waistband of his pants. She could see her friends out of the corner of her eye and the sight of their thrilled faces encouraged her. Her hands came to rest on the waistband of his pants. She looked up to see a wickedly sexy smirk cross his face.

The crowd chanted "off" and Paige tore her eyes away from him to look at the women surrounding the stage.

She smiled before she looking up at him.

When he whispered, "They're Velcro," and nodded his head at her, she grabbed the material in both hands and stepped back, yanking the pants from him. She felt exhilarated when he sucked in a breath of air between his teeth and the crowd went wild.

Simon stood in nothing but a black scrap of material and Paige closed the distance between them. The women surrounding the stage all screamed when Paige wrap herself around him again.

She loved the way his hands felt on her body as they danced. Her skin tingled where his fingers ran softly up her back before tracing down the length of her spine.

The smirk he gave her earlier once again made her knees weak before he grabbed her ass and lifted her up his body. Paige gasped and wrapped her arms around his neck. He smiled at her before grabbing her legs and wrapping them around his waist. Paige's eyes clouded over when he ran his hands over her bare thighs and up under her skirt. Small circles ran over the smooth flesh of her naked ass before he hooked a finger on the back of her g-string panties and pulled slightly.

Paige's breath hitched in her throat. The material rubbed against her clit and she felt him grind himself against her. Nothing separated their bodies but two tiny pieces of thin material and Paige could feel the weight of him between her legs.

He stared at her and rounded his hips, grinding their bodies together. She could feel the heat scorching her and she ran her hand up into his short spiky hair. Simon lowered his head, once again kissing her neck and Paige responded with the same, placing a small kiss on the side of his neck before licking a path up the length of it. She smiled at the slight hint of salt, remembering what Amy had said earlier about salty goodness and memorized the way he felt in her arms.

He thrust his hips into her and she'd never been so aroused. This total stranger continued to grind his cock

against her and she found herself pulling him closer to her with her legs. Her pussy clenched and the ache in her lower belly had her riding him with reckless abandon.

The heat between them grew, making her dizzy with excitement. She panted for breath, his lips and tongue licking and sucking at her flesh.

She felt him smile against her skin before kissing a fiery trail across her jaw. Paige turned her head to him, her eyes glazed over with lust and smiled before lowering her head. She almost melted when he extended his tongue and ran it over her bottom lip. She trembled at the small action and opened her mouth, begging for just a taste.

Their eyes locked and their hips repeatedly grinded into each other, pantomiming sex as the crowd cheered them on. His mouth lingered over hers, his breath hot and welcoming and Paige almost screamed when the song ended.

Their moment was over.

He stilled his movements and she stared at him before reluctantly lowering her legs to the floor. Their gazes were locked and the smile he gave her caused goose bumps to prickle her skin.

With a heady look, Simon lowered his head and leaned in, kissing a trail up her neck before sucking her earlobe into his mouth and giving it a small bite. "Thanks for the dance, gorgeous," he whispered, his warm breath in her ear causing a chill to run up her spine. "I'm sorry it's over."

Paige smiled wide when he let her go and grabbed her hand, stepping away from her and turning to the crowd.

He gave a little bow before holding their joined hands and motioned for her to do the same.

He waved to the crowd and turned to her, lowering their hands before laying a soft kiss on her palm and walking her back to the edge of the stage. With one last glance, he let her go.

One of the waiters helped her to the floor. She saw him throw a grin toward Simon and turned her head, watching him walk the half circle of the stage. He leaned down, taking his time while peppering soft kisses on the cheeks of the other ladies all waiting for their turn.

"Paige!"

Paige turned to her friends. She walked back to the table where everyone stood and glanced back up at Simon. He looked at her briefly before he gave her a wink and turned, exiting the stage. She felt her cheeks redden at the small gesture before she grinned and took her seat.

"You little slut!" Kim yelled, all six of them bursting into hysterical laughter.

"Oh my God Paige, do you have any idea how sexy that looked? You practically fucked him in front of the entire room!"

Paige sat speechless, listening to her friends scream out their praises over the dance through the noise in the club. Her skin still tingled where his hands massaged her flesh and she could feel a cool breeze sweep across her neck where the air hit her still-moist skin.

* * * *

Simon grabbed his robe the minute he walked behind the curtain and slipped it on, walking straight back to his dressing room. He tried to tune out the comments of the other dancers about his show. He still struggled to grasp the concept that the woman of his dreams had just been in his arms.

Walking into his dressing room, Simon shut the door behind him, walked to his dressing table and grabbed his cigarettes. With a shaky hand he pulled one from the pack and placed it between his lips before he sat down and lit it. Inhaling deeply, he let his head fall back, letting the nicotine fill his lungs, and closed his eyes.

He could still see her face. The way her eyes clouded over in lust for him, her eager mouth hovering above his asking for more. He licked his lips and could still taste her slightly salty skin...her warm flesh forever imprinted in his mind. He could smell her perfume lingering on his skin and knew he'd take his last breath wanting her.

His cock twitched at the visual and he laughed before looking down and shaking his head. "It's over now. No need to get excited."

Lifting his head, Simon stared at his reflection in the mirror, studying it before a slow smile played across his lips.

He'd finally touched heaven.

He stared at himself in the mirror, going over the last ten minutes in his mind before he grinned big and yelled, "yes" and laughed. He inhaled deeply, taking in her lingering scent and sighed at the thought of her.

"An angel," he said to no one. "That's what you are, Paige. An angel."

Chapter Five



"I can't believe you did that!" Amy laughed, staring at Paige. "I mean you didn't even want to come."

"I bet she does now!" Kim blurted out. They all burst into another round of giggles.

Paige tried to hold back her smile, but she couldn't stop thinking about the feel of Simon's hands on her. The look in his eyes during their dance sent a thrill of excitement right through her. No one had ever looked at her like that before.

Raising her glass to her lips, Paige drained it quickly, the wet liquid doing nothing to quench her thirst. Kim and Amy continued to discuss the finer details of the dance with the others and Paige sat her empty glass down before she leaned forward and said, "I'll be back, guys."

"Where you going?" Megan asked her.

"Restroom."

"Yeah, splash some cold water on it, that'll cool it down," Kim said, grinning.

"Huh?" Paige raised her eyebrows in question until they all burst out laughing again and she finally caught on to what Kim had meant. Rolling her eyes, Paige walked away from the table and through a crowd of women. Many of them smiled at her when she passed by them.

The announcer stepped back on stage and she grinned when she heard him mention "the dance." A loud whooping roar arose from the crowd when the next dancer was introduced.

Paige walked the darkened halls to the bathroom. She still couldn't believe what had happened. Never in her wildest dreams did she think she'd ever get lost in someone's touch the way she did with Simon. She still couldn't believe it.

Her friends' reaction left her at a loss. She'd never been the bold one. She always did what everyone else said to do. She felt liberated. She floated on a cloud of lust and laughed to herself.

She fought the idea of coming to the club tooth and nail. Now, she was glad they out-voted her. Five minutes in Simon's arms and the night couldn't get any better. That little dance would provide her many nights of happy dreams.

She reached the bathroom door, a frown covering her face at the large "Out of Order" sign on it. She sighed before whispering, "Great," and looking back down the hall. A waiter walked her way and she smiled when he got closer to her.

"Can I get you anything?" he asked, giving her a long look from head to toe.

Paige almost blushed under his gaze, but after what she'd just done on stage in front of lord-knew how many people, she really didn't see the point. She smiled to herself before she said, "Yes actually. Is there another restroom? This one seems to be out of order."

"Sure. Down the hall, through the double-doors, and it's the first door on the left."

Paige looked to where he pointed. "Thanks." She turned, walked down the hall, and quickly found the bathroom.

Once inside, she looked in the mirror, surprised to see how flushed her skin looked. She smiled at her reflection, shaking her head before freshening up.

She gave her hair a toss, and got her over-zealous smile to return to normal before walking back to the door. She swung it open and came face to face with *him*.

* * * *

Simon froze when he saw her. A look of complete shock covered her face before she smiled and looked away briefly. He watched her, grinning at her attempt to avoid his stare before letting his eyes travel slowly over her body.

"God, she's so beautiful," he thought staring at her. He thought his lust-clouded mind had swayed his judgment earlier. It hadn't of course. Paige would always be beautiful to him: the embodiment of perfection. She felt like a tiny slice of heaven in his arms.

He grinned at the memory of their *dance*. Her body so hot and tight around him, her limbs quivering, her mouth begging for a taste...he'd die happy now.

Just as well. His boss would probably kill him for the dance. Personal contact with the customers was a big no-no. You just don't get that close to someone in this line of business. It was dangerous. And he agreed. Especially now. Looking at the small slip of a girl in front of him, Simon knew he was doomed. She'd killed him once, heart and soul, and she'd probably do it again.

He didn't care though. Not at the moment. His mind flashed back to the dance. Her arms around his neck, her

sweet breath on his neck and her legs wrapped around him while she rocked her hips with him.

He still couldn't believe she was here. Of all the people to walk through the front door, Paige Foster was the last person he expected.

She fidgeted and he tried to quickly think of something to say before she ran. He could tell by the look on her face she was contemplating it. All the ladies he came into contact with looked scared at one point or another. He laughed to himself thinking it. Paige, scared of him? It was ridiculous. If she only knew who he was she'd run as far and as fast as she could. Back to her group of friends waiting out front.

Of course, she probably hadn't figured it out. Dying his hair blonde helped and he'd traded his glasses for contacts years ago. The added muscle probably helped to...the scrawny, gangly boy he used to see in the mirror, gone forever. He knew for certain she didn't recognize him.

At least not yet.

She looked up at him then and he froze, wondering if she'd guessed. When she only smiled before saying, "Hey," he sighed in relief.

"Hey yourself," he said before taking a step closer to her. "I didn't expect to see you back here."

She giggled, the response obviously a nervous reaction. "The other bathroom wasn't working."

He saw her eyes roll slightly before she sighed and looked down the hall. He stared at her, seeing a bright pink blush staining her cheeks. He almost laughed at the sight. He didn't remember her ever blushing around him in high school; it was always him doing the blushing.

She looked nervous. He could tell by the way she wouldn't look at him. The way she chewed on her bottom lip. She looked away from him like a shy schoolgirl and he wanted to dance for joy.

* * * *

Paige felt completely stupid in that moment. Could she have said anything more profoundly stupid? Who gives a shit if the bathroom isn't working? She wanted a hole to crawl in to. A very deep hole.

She stole another quick look at him and felt her cheeks burn hotter. Why did he affect her like this? She'd never been scared to talk to a man. Of course, most men she found herself talking to didn't look like a walking poster for sex addicts. He was without a doubt, the hottest thing she'd ever seen.

Her face flamed then. He caused her to act like a giddy teenager with her first crush. A big sign of trouble. She would screw this up. No doubt about it.

"So, enjoying your evening?" he asked.

"Can't complain," Paige said, softly. Her mind flashed back to their dance and the way his body felt pressed up against her. Her smile widened before she got it under control and looked up at him.

Paige felt all the air leave her body at the look on his face. She wondered if he could hear her heart beating when it started pounding against her rib cage. He smiled that wonderfully seductive smile and his eyes traveled slowly over her body.

He stood there unmoving, staring at her for long minutes. He tilted his head to the side before saying, "That's a nice color on you."

Oh God, I'm probably three shades of red! Paige felt her face burn hotter at the thought. She lifted a hand to her cheeks, feeling to see if they were as hot as they felt before giggling lightly. "Well, it is kind of hot in here," she said, looking away from him for a second.

Simon grinned then, sucking his bottom lip in between his teeth before looking at her from head to toe. "I was talking about the dress, gorgeous," he said quietly.

His heavy gaze drank her in, roaming over her flesh to the point she could have sworn she felt something brush against her skin. A small tingle started in the pit of her stomach, working its way through her limbs until it landed between her legs. She clamped her thighs together hoping to stop the sensation.

"Oh! Of course you were," Paige laughed, embarrassed. She closed her eyes briefly and hoped for the mother of all earthquakes to shake the building down around her. *"Oh...My...God, kill me now."*

"So, tell me gorgeous, did you come back here in hopes of finding me, or is that just wishful thinking on my part?"

Paige looked back up and instantly noticed he'd stepped closer to her. She swallowed the lump in her throat, watching him lean his head to one side. He couldn't seem to stop looking at her. Not that she minded any.

She smiled, watching his eyes drink her in. She didn't know why but, the word, "maybe," was out of her

mouth in an instant. Sure it was a lie, but what he didn't know wouldn't hurt, right?

The smile he gave her almost did her in. "You do realize, that I'll be obligated to repeat tonight's performance every night now, don't you?"

"That wasn't your normal routine?" She looked up with heavy lidded eyes, hoping it wasn't. His gaze burned into her flesh and she'd never wanted anything so badly in her life.

She stared at his lips, wondering if they were as soft as they looked before biting down lightly on her own. She wanted just a taste. A small sip from his lips and she could die a happy woman.

Simon stepped closer to her, his eyes roaming over her face before traveling the length of her body. It was the same look he'd given her on stage and just one tiny glance from him had her restless.

"No. Rules state no touching," he whispered.

Paige nodded her head at him, watching as his attention turned to her neck. She swallowed hard when he lifted his hand and ran his finger down the side of it.

"That's too bad," she said in a breathy whisper. His finger trailed down the column of her neck before skimming her collarbone. Lazy patterns were drawn on her skin, leading to her chest. He stopped when he reached the top of her left breast and she almost cried out, "*Don't Stop!*"

"That it is," he replied, his eyes roaming over the flesh his finger circled.

The soft skin of her breast burnt from his touch. Paige fought the urge to close her eyes as his fingers ghosted across her skin. Her breasts ached with need. She

felt her nipples harden in response before she took a deep breath and glanced down the hall.

They were alone in the dimly lit corridor and the music coming from out front caused her mind to race with thoughts of how he'd felt pressed against her body earlier. She glanced back up at him and could tell by the look on his face what he wanted. Lord help her, she wanted it too. Right here on the floor, if that were as far as he'd go. She didn't care as long as those perfect lips were searing her skin and those hands held her close.

Of course, reality reared its ugly head. He was a total stranger and good girls like her didn't fuck total strangers, but...

Would it be so bad to see where this could lead? Surely he wasn't all about sex, right? He was, after all, a human. He had feelings and stuff. His entire life didn't revolve around getting naked for a hoard of screaming woman.

But what would her friends think? Would they encourage her or tell her how stupid she was like they use to do? He was an exotic dancer, after all. He could have any girl he wanted. He was proving the point now.

Looking up into Simon's blue eyes, she knew one thing. She wanted him. She wanted him more than anything she'd wanted in a long time. Her body practically screamed with the need for him. Sure, it was probably the alcohol talking, but she'd hate herself in the morning if she didn't at least get a small taste of him. What would it hurt?

She smiled before looking down at his hand where his fingers grazed the tops of her breast. She clung to

every ounce of courage she had before saying, “That’s a little unfair, don’t you think?”

“What’s that?”

Paige took a step closer to him, closing the distance between them and leaned into his hand, smiling when it flattened out over her chest. “That you get to touch and I don’t?”

Simon raised his eyes, looking up at her and a smile tugged at the corner of his mouth. “No one’s stopping you, beautiful.”

Paige grinned in triumph and threw all her reservations out the window. She raised her arm, hesitating for only a few seconds, before running a hand over his robe-covered chest and slipping inside the material.

She knew it had to be the alcohol making her act so brazenly but didn’t care. She ran her hand over his chest, once again feeling the muscles under her fingertips. His small nipples were pulled tight and she heard him suck in a quick breath when she flicked one with her fingernail.

She glanced up at his face and felt her heart skip a beat. The heat in his gaze caused her entire body to clench. She wasn’t sure what it was about him that drew her to him, but she wanted more. She wanted his arms around her, his breath tickling her skin and his hands caressing her flesh.

She could feel his breathing increase as his chest expanded quickly under her hand. She almost moaned in response when her hand rounded over the muscles under his flesh. They were hard and lean and she brought her hand lower, tracing the dips around the defined abdominal muscles and explored the smooth skin she

found. A thin line of hair started just below his navel and she ran her fingers through it before she looked back up at him.

Paige had never seen an expression of pure want directed at her like the one she saw now. She felt truly beautiful in that moment and raised her other hand, pushing it under the soft material of his robe.

She ran her hand up his chest and around to the back of his neck to twirl her fingers in the short hair she found there. She looked into his eyes, noting the darkening irises before glancing at his lips. They were full and almost too feminine for his face. She stared at his lips before she unconsciously licked her own.

* * * *

Simon saw the small pink tip of her tongue dart out to wet her lips before tucking the bottom between her teeth and almost cried in victory. He wanted nothing more in that moment than to taste it for himself.

He kept silently repeating the word "*breathe*" to himself as Paige's hand burned a trail across his skin. She stared up at him and in all the high school fantasies he'd ever had about her, nothing ever came close to this. The feel of her warm hands on his flesh sent chills up his spine and he wanted nothing more than to throw her to the ground and fuck her to within an inch of her life.

He could feel his erection growing and willed it away. He watched her, took in the look on her face and the feel of her hands on him. Her eyes clouded over with

lust and he could tell she wanted him just as badly as he wanted her. He took it as a signal to do what he had wanted to do since the first time he ever laid eyes on her.

The hand resting on her chest slid down slowly over her breast, pausing for only a second to feel the weight of it.

She sighed softly at the action before he moved it down to her waist. He lifted his other arm, wrapping it tightly around her and looking into her eyes before he lowered his head.

His eyes were torn between the soft pink expanse of her lips to her large hazel eyes that were clouded with desire for him. He hesitated for only a second before he kissed her.

She gasped softly into his mouth before her eyes fluttered shut, her body slacking against his. He raised a hand, tangling his fingers in her hair and pulling her tighter to him. The heat he'd felt on the dance floor returned instantly when her tongue slid across his bottom lip before darting inside.

He felt her shudder in his arms and he fought to keep a level head about him. Her moist, warm mouth sucked him in, devouring him, until nothing else existed but the feel of her in his arms. Her kisses were soft and seeking and he let her explore willingly.

She moaned deliciously, her hand still inside his robe burning his flesh. The sounds she made deep in her throat, the smell of her perfume and the feel of her hands pulling at him caused his reserve to crack. He backed her up against the wall, crushing her body to his and hungrily took everything he ever wanted. He kissed her like the earth was ending and she was his only way to survive.

She gasped for air, breaking the contact, before once again covering his mouth with hers. If possible the kiss demanded more from him. Her tongue swept through his mouth, her lips sucking him in and he couldn't get enough of her.

She felt glorious; better than he ever imagined she would. Her hand ran up and down his back, their tongues lazily sweeping across the other. He pulled her tighter against him, her scent and the warmth of her body pulling him into a place he never thought he'd be.

The years of wanting her, the endless nights of wondering who she finally allowed into her world came crashing down around him in that moment. All the memories, the nights of yearning for her touch and for the chance to show her how they could be together overwhelmed him. He'd show her he could be a man she could love. She'd never forget him after tonight. He'd make sure of it.

* * * *

Paige moaned into his mouth, getting swept away by the feel of him under her hands and the way she seemed to fit perfectly in his arms. His leg slipped between hers and she fought the urge to grind herself against him. His kiss was ravaging, her mind blank to everything but him.

Her body screamed for more and she wasn't sure how much longer she could keep her wits about her.

She vaguely heard someone clear their throat before she opened her eyes. Seeing one of the dancers walk down the hall behind them, she gasped and tried to push Simon away from her. Her face flamed from being caught and she took large gulps of air and tried to calm her racing heart.

Simon looked at her startled, turning his head in the direction she was looking. He smiled when he turned back to her. "Guess the hall isn't the most appropriate place for this, now is it?"

Paige looked at him. "No, I guess not," she said, embarrassed and disappointed they were interrupted.

He stared at her for long minutes before once again closing the distance between them "So, do you want to finish this now...or later?" he asked, lowering his head to kiss her neck.

Paige felt the tingle start low in her stomach, his voice singing through her body. The heavy breathing she finally won control over became ragged again when she felt his tongue slide up her neck.

Did she really want this?

The tingles were once again running laps up and down her spine when his lips ran circles over the tender flesh just below her ear. Simon pressed himself against her, his tongue tracing the shell of her ear. Lowering his hand, he ran it over her thigh before brining it up her leg and under the hem of her dress.

"So, what's it going to be beautiful...now or later?"

Paige's eyes closed and the sound of his voice in her ear, along with the feel of his hand inching its way up over her bare hip, had her ready to throw him to the floor right

there. He tugged on the side of her panties, the material slipping down her hip and the answer was obvious.

Opening her mouth, she was surprised to find her voice suddenly gone. Her words came out in a puff of air rather than an audible sound.

She felt Simon smile against her neck when she finally got the word, “now,” out before he lifted his head to look at her. Neither one said a word when he backed up and grabbed her hand.

“Follow me.”

Chapter Six



Simon walked her down the hall a short distance in silence before he stopped at the last door. Paige's heart raced when he opened it and led her through the doorway.

She knew this was it. The moment she had wanted since first laying eyes on him yet now that the moment was here, she felt terrified.

She took a deep breath when he let go of her hand. She heard the locks on the door click into place behind her and asked herself what she was doing.

She'd never had casual sex with anyone. Not once. Yet this man, this total stranger, had her ready to jump him at a moment's notice. It brought back Kim's words that every woman had an "inner slut" just begging to come out and play. Paige admitted to herself that her eccentric friend might have been right. She felt the old reserved Paige slip away and the new *take me now* Paige step up in her place.

She felt his arms slide around her waist and her eyes closed when his lips once again found her neck. She could feel his growing erection pressing against her backside and she unconsciously arched her back, pressing herself against him.

Her eyes opened slightly when she heard him whisper, "you are so beautiful," against her skin. She saw her reflection staring back at her in the mirror that ran along the wall in front of her.

She watched his hand once again travel to her thigh before running up the length of it and disappearing under the blue fabric of her dress. Her lips parted and she fought to keep her eyes open. His hand slid around her body and ran up her inner thigh before his fingers grazed the silk of her panties.

That one small touch caused her breath to catch in her throat. She shifted her hips, seeking out his touch and heard him chuckle softly under his breath.

* * * *

This wasn't exactly how Simon pictured this little fantasy playing out. Never in his wildest dreams did he think she would be here, in his arms, willingly. But she was. She wanted him and...he wasn't a fool. He'd take every crumb she offered him and beg for the next.

She'd yet to say a word or look at him, for that matter, but he didn't think much of it. He could still see the hint of fear in her eyes. The same his own held if she looked hard enough.

His fingers danced over her silky smooth thigh, climbing higher to linger over her panties. Her hips shifted at the move and he smiled against her skin.

He ran his other hand up her waist to her breast, cupping her through the fabric of her dress before sliding it across her chest and darting inside the cloth that covered her. She gasped when he made contact with her bare skin.

He felt her nipple harden under his palm and he twisted his fingers around the puckered bud, rolling it between his thumb and middle finger. Her gasps turned to moans, her head falling back to his shoulder.

The fingers of his other hand still played with the edge of her panties. His hand darting inside the fabric to tease the soft skin he found there. Her breathing increased, her body trembling beneath his hands.

* * * *

Paige brought both of her hands back, resting them on his legs. She watched them in the mirror mesmerized.

His hands were everywhere and she felt light headed.

Her body felt like a live wire.

Her eyelids slid shut, the sensations running through her body causing her knees to go weak, and he was barely even touching her. Her mouth opened slightly and as he kissed his way up her neck, she turned her head to look over her shoulder at him.

He kissed her then and it was most definitely the kind of kiss she had always dreamed of. It demanded and forced her to his will, fire and passion unlike anything she'd ever felt.

His tongue pushed past her lips and her moan of pleasure broke through the silence of the room. Her arm rose from his side, wrapping around the back of his head and she fought against the onslaught of emotions tumbling out of control.

The smallest of touches, the soft sweep of his fingers against her skin, the taste of him--Paige felt lost in the sensations. No one had ever made her feel so wanted, so desired before. The fact this man did nearly blew her mind.

She broke the kiss with the need to breathe and her eyes fluttered open in time to see Simon step around her. She looked up into his face and before she could even catch her breath, he was kissing her again.

She moaned into his mouth when he forced his tongue past her lips and her arms wound around his neck, pulling him closer to her. Her mind went blank, nothing registering except this man, the way he felt pressed against her and the way her body tingled at the feel of his hands roaming over her skin.

Simon wrapped one arm around her waist, pulling her tightly against him while the other tangled in her hair.

He held her to him, taking a step forward and forcing her back against the door.

In one quick motion, he unfastened the clasp holding the top of her dress together. The fabric slipped from her neck, sliding along her skin to rest at her waist and exposing her to him.

Paige's head fell back against the door when Simon broke the kiss. She watched him take in the sight of her naked breasts. His eyes growing hungry before he leaned his head down to her neck.

Her eyes closed and she leaned her head to the side. His lips left feather soft kisses on her skin. His hands traveled up her sides, skimming lightly over her flesh before coming to rest on both of her now exposed breasts.

His lips and hands explored her, the velvet warm kisses floating over her collarbone and she forced her eyes open. She watched him in the mirror, his mouth covering the waiting breast in his hand. Her eyes fluttered when his tongue swept across her nipple and a wave of pleasure trickled from the spot his mouth now lavished straight to her core.

Simon's other hand lightly pinched the nipple of her other breast and the soft moans coming from Paige encouraged him. She arched her back and he doubled his efforts, his hands and mouth worshipping her flesh.

Her muscles clenched and her hand rested on the back of his head, holding him to her.

She gasped softly when his teeth scraped across her hardened nipple before his tongue flicked across the small bud and sent jolts of pleasure throughout her entire body.

Simon pulled his mouth away from her, kissing across her chest while pushing the material of her dress down her legs and latching onto her other breast.

She watched him suck at her until he looked up at her.

She could feel her pulse quicken when his tongue ran slow circles around her nipple before he sucked it back into his mouth. His eyes were holding hers and she panted out shallow gasps of air. Her eyes widened when he reached between her thighs, palming her through the silk of her thong.

The already throbbing sensations coursing through her intensified when Simon reached up and grabbed the side of her panties and pushed them down her legs.

His hand once again came to rest between her legs. One long finger lightly traced her skin before he slid it between her folds. All coherent thoughts left her. He lightly pinched her clit and she held her breath as she bit her lip.

Simon raised his head, watching her face as he continued to manipulate her with his fingers. Her lip was tucked between her teeth and he licked his own lips when she opened her eyes and looked up at him.

The look on her face, he'd dreamed of many a night. Had wanted to see it from the moment he laid eyes on her ten years ago, the minute he sought her out on stage.

Paige wanted him...all of him.

He lowered his head and once again kissed her. He slipped his tongue past her lips, pleased when Paige sucked it in and bit down softly on it. He smiled against her mouth and her moans increased. She shifted her hips, pushing herself against his hand. Reaching down further, Simon found her opening and slid his middle finger inside, hearing her sharp intake of breath. Pulling the digit away, he added another, pumping his fingers into her slowly as she sucked and bit at his lips.

Simon watched her, giving her right breast one last squeeze before he brought his hand up and pushed her hair away from her face. Her skin looked flushed and her eyes were glassy in appearance. Her lips were parted slightly and the look on her face was something he would never forget. He added another finger into her depths and her eyes fluttered shut.

"Open your eyes," he told her, his words a breathy whisper across her lips. "I want you to see me."

Paige opened her eyes and knew this had to be some form of torture as Simon slowly fucked her with his fingers. Her entire body burned by the time he began to quicken his pace. The palm of his hand cupped her and he ground the heel of his hand into her clit each time his fingers re-entered her.

She stared up into his face, his eyes never leaving hers, and for a brief second she thought she saw something other than want and desire flash behind his eyes. The way he looked at her made her body tighten. Her nerve endings screaming for him to never stop.

His other hand left her hair and pulled and twisted at her nipples. The combined sensations were mind blowing.

She grabbed onto his shoulders, holding herself upright.

Her body trembled uncontrollably. Her eyes widened when his thumb grazed her clit, a jolt of electricity shooting throughout her body and she fought to keep her eyes open.

She was being tortured through his intimate touch. She never wanted it to end. Her entire body was clenched tight, her muscles screaming for release and she silently begged him to give her everything she wanted.

One minute she was seconds away from ecstasy, the next, holding her breath to keep from screaming. Simon pulled his fingers from her, running them up the length of her until she shrieked and her body jerked in response. He smiled, pleased with her reaction before he leaned in, his tongue sweeping across her parted lips.

His warm breath exhaled across the moisture he had placed on them.

His hand skimmed across her breast. The warm lips that set her skin ablaze following his hand's path and she fought to control her breathing as his hand lowered to her stomach.

She heard the rustle of fabric from his robe when he moved, his lips and tongue running a trail down the valley between her breasts and when he reached her stomach, she forced her eyes open to watch him in the mirror.

He knelt before her, lowering his head and kissing the soft skin of her stomach before making his way down her hip to her inner thigh. He lavished her skin with soft kisses before he grabbed her left leg and picked it up, laying it across his shoulder.

Paige only had seconds to prepare for what she knew was coming. Her eyes were wide as she stared at the mirror, a loud moan spilling from her lips when Simon lowered his head to her. She felt the warmth of his tongue invade her folds, seeking and exploring every inch before forcing its way inside her.

Her head fell against the door, her hand reaching out and grabbing his head. Warm air from his soft exhales passed over the heat between her legs and she swallowed heavily to moisten her suddenly dry mouth.

Her eyes were riveted to the mirror, unable to look away. Her skin looked flushed and her chest rose and fell rapidly with every accelerated breath. The feelings coursing through her body only heightened as she watched them in fascination.

His hands roamed over her heated flesh. She fought to regain a hold of her body's reactions but one sweep of his tongue against her clit sent her spiraling closer to release. The wet warmth of his tongue on her as he

sucked and licked her flesh caused the whispered babbles of his name to filter throughout the room.

Simon felt her tremble against him, felt her fingers tangle in his hair and heard her gasp for air. He smiled against her sweet flesh when his name was repeatedly whispered from her lips.

He attacked her flesh with more fervor. Long licks and gentle nips, the sweet ambrosia of nectar from her filled his mouth and had his own body on the verge of release.

He feasted from her, pulling her body closer to his eager mouth. He could tell she was close to climax. He could hear her breath hitch in her throat and feel her tremble against him. He watched her face, her mouth open, panting for air, her eyes wide and unseeing and he couldn't get enough. His name fell from her lips, a soft chant that filled him with warmth. Her hand tangled in his short hair, holding him to her sweet spot and ground herself against his mouth.

Paige's eyes were wide, her breath panted out unevenly as she watched them in the mirror. She gripped his hair in her hand and pushed her hips forward grinding herself against his mouth. Rotating her hips in a small circle and forced him closer, a wave trickling through her body before it was followed by a burst of heat. Her eyes slammed shut, the climax rocking her body as her screams echoed off the walls. Her body trembled and shook from the force of it.

She felt herself falling, Simon's hands holding her in place as her body spasmed. He continued to suck at her clit and she rode her climax out as wave after wave of pleasure coursed through her body.

Time seemed to stand still. Paige took deep breaths to try and control the surges still pulsing through her body.

The sound of her heartbeat deafened her as it pounded in her chest and when she felt her leg being lifted she opened her eyes. She saw herself in the mirror. Her skin flushed and covered in a light sheen of sweat. She swallowed loudly before Simon stood.

She looked up at him when he stared down at her before the heat threatened to burn her alive. She threw herself into his arm and pulled him to her, her mouth attacking his. She savored the taste of him, her tongue running the length of his. He made a noise low in his throat, his arms tightening around her and crushing her body to his.

She could taste herself in his mouth; the tangy mix of her own juices and a slight hint of alcohol made her eager for more. She wasn't sure when he'd done it, but when her hands ran across his back, she felt sweat slicked skin and hardened muscles that were no longer hidden under the material of his robe. His erection pressed against her stomach and she thrust her hips forward searching for more contact.

Simon broke the kiss before he reached down, grabbed her legs, and lifted her up his body. He lowered one hand and positioned himself at her entrance, sliding his length back and forth over her, coating himself with her juices before slowly sliding himself inside her heat one inch at a time.

He let out a loud moan, the sound mingling with her own, as her still fluttering muscles encased him, pulling him into her hot channel. His head fell forward onto her

shoulder, her legs wrapping around his waist. He remained still, her demanding muscles squeezing him to the point of rapture and he consciously tried to slow his breathing. He'd waited too long for this to let it end in a gushing spectacle before he even had a chance to enjoy the feel of her.

Taking a deep breath, he swallowed heavily, trying to regain his composure. She licked the side of his neck before he grabbed her hips and pulled himself out of her slightly. His erratic breathing, which he now knew he wouldn't be able to gain control of, caused his head to spin as he drove back into her depths.

Paige's eyes traveled over his form as it reflected in the mirror. The pale skin covering his hard-defined muscles seemed to glisten in the light and seemed more vibrant as her sun kissed limbs wrapped tightly around him.

She ran her hands up and down his back and felt him shudder in her arms before she lowered her head to his neck and placed a series of soft, wet kisses on his skin.

The delighted moan that escaped his throat caused her to increase her efforts and her tongue darted out, licking at his flesh and a wide smile formed on her face. "*Salty goodness,*" she thought to herself as her taste buds seemed to burst at the flavor of his skin.

She wrapped her legs tighter around his waist, feeling every inch of him slide in to her before a slow steady rhythm had her rocking her hips with his thrust. His head was buried in her shoulder, hot bursts of air showering her neck with every breath he took.

The feelings coursing through her body made it hard to focus on anything as his slow deliberate thrusts seemed to penetrate her core deeper and deeper.

Paige's eyes fluttered when Simon picked up the pace of his thrusts. His hips rotated with every push, the short coarse hair surrounding him hitting her clit with each pass and causing the sensitive bud to tingle with every movement.

He tightened his hold on her hips and his thrusts became harder. The small moans and grunts coming from them both as Simon forced himself into her were drowned out as the sound of sweat slicked skin slapping against each other seemed to echo in the small room. The musky scent of sex lingered in the air, coating their skin with small beads of perspiration and the heat between them only built.

Simon bit his bottom lip and gripped Paige's hips, clutching her to him. He moaned when she kissed his neck, sucking and licking at his flesh while her fingers ran through his hair. She whispered his name against his skin, telling him how good he felt inside her, and he knew if he died this very minute, the only regret he would have would be her not knowing who he really was.

She tightened her legs around him, her hips moving in time with his and the friction between them built to a staggering pace. Their sweat-slicked skin sliding across the other only heightening his desire.

She grabbed his head, turning her face to him and recaptured his lips. She claimed him, possessed him, body and soul with that kiss, and he surrendered to her without a single regret.

He felt her tightening around him, felt her muscles clenching and pulling him as her kiss became more desperate. Grabbing her hips, he pulled her closer, grinding himself against her as her arms tightened around his neck.

Paige felt it spiraling; the small twist of pleasure starting low in her stomach as Simon's thrust became more forceful. She pulled back from him, sucking in a gasp of air. Her head fell back against the door before the tingles started to spread throughout her body.

Her hold on his shoulders tightened. Simon drove himself harder into her, her pants for air becoming ragged and her muscles squeezed him, pulling him along with her.

"Oh God," Paige whispered, the second her entire body burst with heat. Simon pumped his hips into her while her body clenched around him. Her climax almost paralyzing as her body convulsed and she screamed out.

She vaguely heard him whisper against her skin before his movements became jerky, his own climax crippling his body. He pressed her against the door before his body slowly stilled.

Paige slowly released the tight pressure she had around him as his head fell forward to her shoulder. She smiled lazily, wrapping her arms around him and sighing in satisfaction.

Her entire body felt like it floated on a cloud. Her limbs trembling as she tried to keep hold of him. She leaned forward and kissed his neck, waiting for her body to come down from its high. She had never felt so completely sated in her life. Her body hummed with energy and she tried to calm her breathing.

She felt his arms slide around her waist, small kisses being placed on her shoulder and neck, and they both remained silent, heaving in large amounts of air as their bodies slowly calmed.

Paige inhaled deeply, letting it out slowly, her head resting on his shoulder. "Wow," she said, only to hear a small chuckle come from Simon when she did.

"A very big wow," Simon whispered against her neck.

His arms tightened around her waist.

Paige slowly raised her head, lifting her hand and pushing her hair away from her face. Simon straightened and looked up at her. The minute she saw his face, the reality of what she'd just done hit her.

She just had sex with a complete stranger.

An incredibly hot and very talented stranger, but that's what he was. She didn't even know his name. Was it really Simon? Or was that just a stage name?

And worse yet, he didn't even know hers.

She felt her embarrassment of the situation win over her and she looked away from him. Simon's hand turned her face to him. He stared at her, his eyes searching her face and she knew he saw how she felt. He gave her a tiny, reassuring smile before leaning forward and kissing her.

Her eyes closed at the feel of his lips on her. She wasn't sure what it was about him, but she felt soothed and calm, where only a second ago she had been ready to freak out.

His kiss was gentle and coaxing, a series of slow soft touches and it all felt so...right. Being here like this, held

in his arms with his mouth doing the most delicious things to her, she couldn't help but sigh.

Whoever this man was, he knew how to make her burn.

Resigning herself to enjoy it while she could, Paige slid her arms back around his neck, relishing the feel of his arms around her, holding her tightly to him as his tongue slid sensually against her own. Her body once again relaxed against him.

Simon inhaled her scent, memorizing the way she felt and tasted. He knew once she realized who he was, she'd never speak to him again--that is if she didn't have him killed for not telling her to begin with.

He never wanted the night to end. Never wanted to let her go and a small part of him wished she didn't have to find out. He knew, the minute she realized he was Colin Gregory, the one person she loathed most in the world, what they had just shared wouldn't be the glorious, life-altering event he thought it was, but a dark, ugly memory she would probably spend the rest of her life trying to forget.

He knew he couldn't let it end like this. He was too big of a bleeding heart for that to happen. He had always loved her. He still did.

Breaking the kiss, Simon pulled back from her, smiling as her eyes slowly opened. "So, are you..."

"Hey Simon, you in there?" Someone yelled from the other side of the door, knocking loudly.

"Yeah," Simon yelled back, his eyes never leaving Paige's.

"You got a phone call."

Fuck. Not now. "Take a message. I'm busy."

“Tried. They said it was important.”

Simon sighed heavily, closing his eyes briefly and clenched his jaw before he looked back up. Paige gave him a tiny smile and her arms loosened from around his neck.

“You hear me Simon?”

“Yeah, I’ll be right there,” he said, looking away from Paige for a second before glancing back up at her. “Well, seems like the small talk will have to wait,” he told her smiling, before grabbing her hips and lifting her up slightly. A small moan escaped them both when he slipped from her warmth.

Paige smiled at him when he took a step away from her and reached down and grabbed his robe. She watched him slip it back on and tie the belt closed.

She still hadn’t said a word to him, her voice completely gone as the *old reserved* Paige came crashing back through to push *slut Paige* away. She looked away from him, her face flaming from embarrassment as she tried unsuccessfully to cover her nudity.

He took a step toward her before saying, “I’ll be right back.” He leaned down, kissing her on the cheek before he reached for the doorknob, turned it and left the room.

Paige let out the breath she didn’t even realize she’d been holding in when she heard the door click shut behind her. She hurriedly reached out and turned the lock.

Laying her forehead against the door, she shut her eyes, taking a few deep breaths before she turned slowly and leaned back against the door. Her gazrs fell to her naked form in the mirror and she almost laughed at the ridiculousness of the situation.

Here she stood, bare ass naked in some strange man's dressing room, a stripper no less, alone, and feeling like a two-dollar whore. "What in the world have you done?" she asked herself quietly as she watched her reflection.

"You just had mind-blowing sex, that's what you've done," her inner voice sang out.

Raising her hands, Paige covered her face before pushing her hair back and looking around the room. It was slightly bare, only a table and small chair sitting in front of the large mirrors and a bigger armchair off in the corner.

There were a few pictures hanging on the mirror although she couldn't tell who they were from where she stood. A coat rack holding a black leather jacket and a motorcycle helmet sat off to the side.

Glancing back at the mirror, Paige once again saw herself and panic started to set in. She once again started going over in her mind what had just happened. She still couldn't believe it and neither would her friends.

Her eyes widened at the thought of them. What would they say? She wouldn't tell them. How could she? That was the last thing she needed. Hearing them go on and on about her having sex with a stripper wasn't on her list of fun things to do, especially seeing how said stripper didn't even know her name.

She sighed as she thought about it. "Great, I'm just another notch in his belt now," she said softly to no one and rolled her eyes. "You really are a slut."

For the first time in her life, she'd acted on impulse. Sex with a total stranger, in a dingy back room, wasn't anything she thought would ever happen to her. Let alone

have unprotected sex. “Oh my god! You’re an idiot, Paige. One pretty man and you completely loose your mind.”

The possible consequences of what she’d done made her slightly ill. She sighed heavily before closing her eyes and groaning at her stupidity.

Hearing a voice in the hall, her eyes opened before she hastily reached down and grabbed her dress. She quickly slipped it back on and fumbled with the clasp, trying to get it hooked before Simon came back.

She had to get out of there. Fast.

As the voices seemed to disappear in the hall she decided to save herself another embarrassing moment with him and reached for the door. She unlocked it and poked her head out, looking both ways.

When she saw the coast was clear, she darted out of the room, shutting the door behind her before practically running back down the hall towards the main room.

Chapter Seven



“There she is!” Megan nearly screamed.

“It’s about damned time!” Kim yelled when Paige reached their table. “We were about to send someone after you. Where the hell have you been?”

Paige glanced at them, averting her eyes quickly before saying, “Let’s go.” She grabbed her purse, hooking the strap on her arm without looking at any of them. She wasn’t about to spend another second in this place and give Simon time to come looking for her. Of course, nothing really told her that he would, but she wasn’t taking any chances. She decided on the quick walk back to her friends that the best course of action was to leave the scene of the crime.

She gave one last look at the stage before walking away. She didn’t wait to see if her friend’s were following her.

“Go? Are you insane?” Amy yelled.

“No, I’m ready to go,” Paige yelled over her shoulder before she headed for the exit.

“Okay, what the hell is up with her?” Heather asked as they exited the club.

“Not sure,” Megan said.

Paige heard their mumbled questions. When they exited the club and made their way across the parking lot she could hear the confusion in their voices over what was going on, but didn’t care. She fumbled with her keys,

dropping them twice before she finally found the right one and started to unlock the car door.

Her hands were trembling and she was sure someone would notice soon enough. She bit her tongue to keep from blabbing to everyone what she had done. Her alcohol buzz was completely gone and even though Courtney was designated driver, she knew giving the keys to one of the others would result in a little trip back inside the club.

“Not so fast!” Kim yelled, jerking the keys away from Paige. “What the hell is wrong with you?”

“Nothing,” Paige said, “Now give me the keys.”

“Nuh uh... not until you tell us why we had to leave the most gorgeous and bare-ass naked men I’ve seen in ages behind and it better be good.”

“I just... I don’t feel good,” Paige lied, trying to grab the keys.

Kim looked at Paige, her eyes traveling over her from head to toe before she smiled slightly. “Where have you been?”

“What do you mean? I went to the bathroom.”

“You were in the bathroom for the last thirty minutes?” Kim asked, grinning.

“Yes!” Paige said, loudly. “I told you...”

“Yeah, yeah...you didn’t feel good,” Kim said, smiling.

Paige sighed heavily, watching Kim smile back at her before she finally handed over the keys. She didn’t trust the look on her face or the fact she gave the keys back willingly. She ignored her thoughts before shaking her head and reaching for the lock, putting the key in. She

got into the car quickly; ignoring the looks everyone gave her.

Once everyone was seated, Paige glanced over at Megan who sat beside her. Her friend never said a word and she gave her a small smile. Starting the car, she pulled out of the parking space and headed home.

“Hey Paige,” Kim said leaning forward in the seat. Paige saw her look over her shoulder, grinning at the others before she turned her head back to her. “Did anything...happen while you were in the bathroom?”

“Happen? What do you mean?” Paige asked quickly, glancing over at Kim. The girl was practically hanging over the seat.

“I mean, did you see Simon while you were back there?”

“No!” Paige said loudly, wondering for a brief second if they could smell the scent of sex she knew still lingered on her skin.

Kim glanced over her shoulder again before turning back to her. “Oh, well that’s to bad cause man I would have loved to have had a taste of him. All that sweet, hot flesh just begging to be fucked.”

Paige glared at Kim in the rear-view mirror. She was surprised that the small comment caused a second’s worth of jealousy to flare in her. The thoughts of Kim having the wild ride she herself had just taken caused her temper to flare. She shrugged it off before looking back at the road. “Yeah well, I’m sure he gets plenty of offers,” Paige said a little more hatefully than she had intended. The thought of being one of those offers left a bad taste in her mouth all of a sudden.

“Oh, I bet he does,” Kim told her. “I bet a guy as hot as he is gets fucked every night of the week by one of the bimbos hanging out in there.”

“You don’t know that,” Paige said defensively, hoping she were right, but doubting it. She knew there was no way anyone as hot as Simon didn’t get propositioned several times a night, no matter how much she wanted to deny it. She was just another nameless girl that probably made his nights a little less lonely.

Hell, someone was probably taking her place this very minute.

“Oh I know,” Kim said, smiling, “But man, can you imagine? I bet he’s a great lay. What do you think?”

Paige sighed lightly, shrugging her shoulder. She kept her eyes straight ahead. “I wouldn’t know,” she lied.

“Sure you wouldn’t,” Kim said, her smile widening.

Paige glanced in the rear-view mirror, seeing Kim sit back in her seat before she relaxed and turned the corner, heading back to her apartment. Her mind replayed the events of the evening and she had to forcefully restrain the smile trying to creep up on her face.

She felt a little bad for having sex with a stranger, something she had never done before, but another part of her wanted to shout to the world that she’d just had the most mind-blowing sex of her life.

“Hey Paige,” Kim said, once again leaning over the seat.

Paige almost growled, her thoughts of the ultra-sexy Simon disrupted before glancing over at Kim. She waited for her to speak before saying, “What?”

“I was just wondering.”

“About...” Paige said when Kim stopped talking.

“Well, I was just wondering...is this a new fashion statement, or do you always wear your dresses inside out.”

Paige glanced down, looking at herself when Kim tugged at the strap around her neck and everyone in the car burst out laughing. Stopping at the corner Paige took a good, long look at herself. Sure enough, her dress was inside out, the seams shining up at her like a big flashing sign. She bit her lip, holding back the smile tugging at her lips and felt her face flame red-hot.

“You are so going to spill, you little slut!” Kim yelled, laughing hard as Paige turned to face her.

Paige fought the smile, looking into the faces of her friends before their laughter died down to nothing.

“Well, come on girl, don’t leave us hanging,” Kim said, grinning. “You so totally fucked him didn’t you?”

Paige stared at her, remembering what being with Simon felt like and her body automatically responded, sending a tingling wave through her limbs as her mind flashed back the visions of them in the mirror. She looked back over at Kim and couldn’t hold the smile at bay any longer. “Best fucking ride of my life.”

All six girls burst into laughter.

* * * *

Simon opened the door to his dressing room, stepping in quickly before shutting the door behind him.

His once happy mood vanished instantly, pulled away when he realized Paige was gone.

He sighed before leaning against the door, looking around the nearly bare room and shaking his head. He knew it was too good to be true. He would almost believe he imagined it all but his eyes caught on the one slip of evidence she left behind.

A tiny, self-satisfied smile curved his lips as he looked down at his feet.

Bending over, Simon reached out, grabbing the small scrap of her silk panties off of the floor before he slowly walked to his dressing table and sat down. He stared at them, running the silk through his fingers and smiled.

Looking up into the mirror, he stared at his reflection. His smile widened as his mind slowly replayed the events of the last hour. He could still taste her in his mouth, smell her perfume lingering on his skin and hear the soft cries of his name whispered from her lips.

He closed his eyes, remembering the way she felt in his arms before he whispered, "Definitely heaven."

Chapter Eight



Paige smiled despite her aggravated mood. They were on their way to Riverdale, and to the Reunion. They decided to leave early so they could explore the town a bit before the Reunion started, so after much grumbling for the early morning wake-up call, all six girls were crammed into Paige's car and headed back to where it all began.

They had been on the road for almost an hour and the topic of conversation, as it had been all morning, was the only thing Paige had heard since the night before-- Simon and her *wild ride*.

She knew telling her friend's was a mistake of major proportions, but for once in her life, she felt like bragging. They all had wonderfully sinful stories to tell and being the spinster she felt like she was, had nothing to tell other than how her last boyfriend liked to dress up and play *games* during sex.

She still couldn't help but smile every time she thought about Simon or their night together, but having the others go on about it all day was beginning to wear thin on her nerves. What should have been a private moment had turned into a spectacle. If she had to recount the entire thing one more time, she was sure she'd have to kill Kim for not letting the subject drop.

She felt relieved they had taken the news so well and not belittled her for being stupid enough to sleep with a stripper. Sure, women talk about it all the time, but

to actually act on it? Now that was a different story altogether.

"So Paige, are you going back to The Pleasure Dome next week?" Kim asked, grinning.

"No, Kim. We've been over this a thousand times already," Paige said with an exasperating sigh. "It was just a thing, that's it."

"Yeah, but you said it was mind blowing. Remember? Best sex you've ever had kind of mind blowing."

"Kim, I remember what I said. I was there. You do know the whole point in having a one night stand is... that's its *one night*."

"Yeah, but if the one night was exceptionally good, then seconds are just as tasty."

"Well if she doesn't want him, then I may just hang around and give him a go myself," Heather said primping as she looked into her small hand-held mirror. "I mean, a guy that hot just begs to be fucked."

"Heather!" Paige yelled, looking in her rear view mirror.

"What? You said you weren't going back."

"I know but..."

"Oh I get it," Amy said, smiling. "Paige doesn't want him, but she doesn't want any of us having him either."

"I never said that," Paige protested.

"So you wouldn't mind if one of us fucked him six ways from Sunday?"

"And what makes you think he'd want you?" Paige asked, defensively.

"Ohhhh, now you've gone and done it, Amy," Courtney chimed in laughing. "Don't be messing with Paige's beef cake."

"Shut up, Courtney," Paige spat out irritated. "And he's not mine." Paige gritted her teeth, trying to remain calm. How dare they purposely provoke her into a fight? Of course she still wanted Simon. What woman in her right mind wouldn't? But that didn't mean she would ever get to explore the option. And for them to act like they could waltz into that club and have the same ride she did, burnt to her very soul.

Of course, they were probably right. She sighed at the thought. They probably could walk in there, give the man a little taste and get thrown up against the wall and fucked senseless, just like she had been.

"Only because you're too chicken to go after what you want."

"And who says I want him," she lied.

Every girl in the car grinned as they looked at Paige before they all burst out laughing.

"Paige, you are either the dumbest fake-blonde I've ever known or you're the biggest prude the world has ever seen," Kim said, laughing. "You would have to be fucking insane *not* to want him! Hell I want him and I haven't even had a chance to taste him...yet."

Paige glared at Kim in the rear-view mirror as the word *yet* reached her ears. She knew they were playing her. It was a game they knew all too well. Her being so defensive over a guy she didn't even know just proved they still knew how to play. But just hearing them go on and on about him was pissing her off in a major way.

So what if she wanted him? They all did. It didn't mean she was going to whore herself out to him for a good hard fuck up against a wall every Friday night.

"Oh, bathroom, bathroom, bathroom!" Courtney yelled as she pointed to the convenient store up ahead. Paige rolled her eyes before she slowed the car down and got into the turn lane.

Pulling up to the store, Paige parked the car and reached for her purse, the other girls talking and giggling amongst themselves. She was trying really hard to stay in a good mood for the reunion. Having to see her old high school boyfriend, Lance, again caused her stress levels to rise to an all-time high and she was on the verge of hysterics. All the talk of Simon was only causing her more distress as the gang continued to grill her and not let the subject drop.

"I'll be back in a minute guys," Paige told them, palming her small purse and opening her door. She got out of the car with Courtney following close behind. If she didn't get away from them for five minutes, she was going to dump them on the side of the road and leave them there. She loved them dearly, but lord they got on her nerves.

The remaining girls all sat back, waiting for the duo to return before they looked across the parking lot as the sound of a motorcycle caught their attention.

"Well hello there, daddy," Kim said grinning as she watched the motorcycle come to a stop next to the store. Everyone's eyes were fixated on the driver.

He swung his leg over the seat and stood before Heather said, "God what is it about a man on a motorcycle?"

"It's all that black leather," Amy said, her smile matching that of her friends.

He reached up to grab his helmet, removing it and laying it on the seat of his bike and the car exploded with excited screams.

"Holy fucking shit!" Kim yelled, slapping at the seat in front of her. She looked out the window and pointed to the driver. "Look, look, look!"

Standing right there, fully clothed from head to toe in black was Simon. His short peroxide blonde locks were wild and curling slightly as he placed his helmet on the seat before he walked around the front of his bike and headed in the store. Every head turned, following his movements as they watched him saunter across the sidewalk.

His black leather jacket swung loosely around his body. Again he wore black jeans but instead of bare feet, large black boots made him look every bit the badass he probably was.

He turned his head to the right, scanning the parking lot. Kim grinned before shaking her head. The way he walked screamed sexual grace. The man knew he was hot. If he didn't something was seriously wrong with him.

There wasn't a sound coming from anyone. They all watched him in rapt silence. The minute he stepped into the store, screams broke out in the car, laughter and yelling almost deafening them all as they bounced in their seats excitedly.

"Oh my God!" Kim yelled, laughing hard. "Paige is going to shit a brick when she sees him!"

Chapter Nine



Paige rolled her eyes when Courtney *finally* exited the bathroom. She pushed the door closed behind her and locked it before she leaned against it and inhaled deeply, letting it out slowly. Turning to the mirror, she gave herself a long look before freshening up her make-up.

She tried getting her irritation to wane. She hated the thoughts of everyone making jokes about what had happened between her and Simon. She knew she'd only been asking for it. She shouldn't have told them anything, but truth be known, she'd been excited.

Excited to finally have something to tell. And boy did she tell.

She recounted the details of what Simon had done to her--the way his mouth and body had felt along her skin and how good he felt under her hands. She blushed thinking about it. Simon had made her flesh burn and his kisses alone were breath taking.

She looked at her reflection and reached up to adjust the straps of her top. The tiny smile she'd fought all day crept back up on her face as the *mirror* that held her interest the night before started flashing images in her mind. It sent tingles through her body.

She watched a slight pink hue cover her face and her smile widened. She gathered up her things and turned towards the door and pulled it open. When her eyes landed on the person waiting by the wall, she gasped softly before she slammed the door back shut.

"Oh my God, Oh my God, Oh my God!" Paige screamed to herself as she leaned her head against the door and tried to get her breathing under control. She felt ready to hyperventilate. Her heart nearly burst from her chest and a dizzying wave forced her eyes closed.

"Please tell me I didn't just see Simon leaning against the wall?" she whispered, her chest expanding quickly as her breathing quickened.

"No, it wasn't him. He's in L.A. You're an hour away from L.A...it's just your imagination."

She finally convinced herself she imagined him standing there. All the talk of him was probably the reason. She straightened her back and looked at the mirror again.

The slight pink hue that previously covered her cheeks now blazed bright red. Taking a deep breath, Paige turned back to the door, turning the handle and pulling it open just enough to see out into the hall with one eye.

Her eyes widened in shock. Sure enough, there he stood, leaning against the wall, hands shoved down into the pockets of his coat and looking every bit as yummy as he had the night before.

Swallowing hard, Paige once again shut the door, locking it, before turning and leaning back against it.

"Shit, what do I do now?" she asked herself, looking around the tiny room.

"This is so not good," she said to herself. She started pacing the small-enclosed area. *"What am I going to say to him? Uh, hey Simon. Remember me, the slut you fucked against a wall last night?"*

"Damn. Why does shit like this always happen to me?"

She stopped and looked back into the mirror. "Why can't my life be boring and uneventful like it usually is?"

What was she going to do? He would undoubtedly want to know why she took off the night before. She still wasn't one hundred percent sure herself. Well, other than making a complete fool out of herself.

She chewed her bottom lip, contemplating her options and staring at her reflection. "*Just open the door and run,*" she thought. Her plan seemed halfway feasible in her head until she realized how ridiculous it was. "*That'll never work. He'll see you no matter what!*"

Her smile fell away before she sighed and turned her body and leaned her butt against the sink.

"Okay, Paige, get a grip. You had amazing sex with an exotic dancer, an incredible gorgeous exotic dancer, who just so happens to have given you the best orgasm of your life. No wait, make that two orgasms and who is now standing outside the door, looking oh so delicious and completely fuckable."

"Okay," she whispered, shaking her last thoughts away. She turned and looked back into the mirror. "Just open the door, turn to the right and walk quickly and maybe he won't see you." She took a deep breath, trying to calm herself.

Turning back to the door, she took the couple of steps toward it and grabbed the door handle before she steadied herself. She looked back at the mirror and fluffed her hair, *just in case*, before she took another deep breath.

"On three," she whispered, counting to herself before turning the handle and opening the door. Her eyes widened when she saw Simon standing at the door, hand raised as if he were about to knock, and she froze.

* * * *

Startled would be an understatement when the door opened and Simon saw Paige. He stared down at her, seeing her wide eyes before a smile crossed his face. This had to be his lucky day.

"Well, hello there, beautiful," he said, trying hard not to let his excitement in seeing her again show. He moved, leaning his shoulder against the doorframe and trapping Paige inside the bathroom.

"Uh, hey," she quietly said, her words a breathy whisper.

Simon smiled as he stared at her before his thoughts turned to what he knew was coming. The smile vanished as quickly as it came.

The reunion would be a train wreck. He knew it. Knew it the minute he saw her sitting in front of that stage and set his sights on her.

He originally hadn't planned on going but curiosity won out. He'd purchased his ticket, telling himself she wouldn't know who he was, that any of them would know. He could go in, see if she were there and...

Well, he didn't have a plan beyond that. Sure the romantic notion of her taking one look at him and falling head over heels in love popped into his mind but he wasn't that deluded. Things like that didn't happen in real-life. The most he could hope for was her thinking he was someone else. Simon. A man far removed from the quiet, shy, Colin. But that was before. That was before he'd pulled her into a dance. Before he tasted her.

Before she came around him screaming his name.

He knew he only had one more shot to make her *see him* before all hell broke loose. Once they made it to the reunion, she'd know and his world would be over.

Unless he could make her see.

Turning his head, he glanced down the small hallway to his left and right before looking back at Paige. He grinned as he pushed his shoulder off the doorframe and straightened.

"Mind if I join you?" he asked, walking in and forcing Paige to take a step back.

* * * *

Paige was too shocked by his move to say a word when he walked into the bathroom with her and shut the door behind him. The small space was barely big enough for one person, let alone two, and she inhaled deeply when her back came into contact with the wall.

She stared up at him, nervously looking around the bathroom, already knowing there wasn't an escape, before she looked back at Simon.

"So," Simon said, leaning against the door. "Looks like my otherwise disastrous day just took a detour."

Small talk. She could do small talk. It was the hands and the lips part she couldn't help but be nervous about. She smiled slightly before saying, "Oh?" Her hands nervously toyed with the hem of her blouse. "Bad day?" *Completely lame.*

"Not yet, but it will be in a couple more hours."

God he has the bluest eyes. "Oh, well maybe it won't. Stranger things have happened."

"Suppose you're right," Simon said, pushing off the door and taking a step toward her. "Like running into you again."

Paige grinned as he smiled down at her, his eyes roaming over her body. The tingles that had been running up her spine every time she thought of him exploded as her thoughts traveled back to the night before.

She hated to admit it, but looking at him now, she still wanted him. She told herself it was the alcohol that made her so wanton the night before but looking at him now, she knew. It had nothing to do with lowered inhibitions. It was just him.

Her heart was beginning to pound in her chest and she briefly wondered what he would do if she just grabbed him and had her wicked way with him like she wanted to.

She didn't have time to find out, unfortunately. He spoke and broke her train of thought.

"So, tell me gorgeous, why'd you run off last night?" He closed the distance between them and placed one hand flat against the wall beside of her head. The other came to rest on her waist and the small contact caught her breath in her throat.

"Well I um..."

Paige started to explain but when Simon raised his hand from her waist and ran his finger down her neck, her throat seemed to tighten, stealing her words. Her eyes closed an instant later and nothing registered but his fingers trailing over her skin and the way he smelled. A

heady mix of cologne, cigarette smoke and something she knew was just him, surrounded her.

It was intoxicating.

He lightly brushed his fingers over the exposed skin of her neck before running them up over her shoulder, his fingers a barely there whisper against her skin. He brushed the small spaghetti strap of her top off her shoulder and Paige gasped softly when he leaned down and she felt his lips sweep across her shoulder.

The small tingling sensations she'd been having every time she thought of him spread like wild fire as hot, wet kisses ran over her shoulder and up her neck.

"Simon," she whispered, unconsciously leaning her head to the side. Her eyes remained shut and she tried to breathe without gasping for air.

"Hummm?"

"What...what are you doing?" she asked him softly, a small moan escaping her throat when his tongue ran up the side of her neck to her ear. She was at a loss as to what to do. Her friends were waiting for her but here he was, the man she had spent a restless night thinking about.

"I'm kissing you," he whispered in her ear before sucking her earlobe into his mouth.

"Oh," was all Paige managed to say. The throbbing sensations between her legs pounded with each bruising beat of her heart as it slammed against her rib cage. All she wanted in that moment was to feel his hands on her body, to feel his arms around her and to drown in his kisses.

He licked around the shell of her ear before he brought the hand he had braced on the wall down and

laying it on her arm. His fingers slid over her skin, his touch feather soft. He grazed her hip, not stopping until he reached the edge of her skirt.

"Do you have any idea how I felt last night when I came back and found you gone? I wasn't any where near finished with you."

Paige made a small whining noise at his words and heard him chuckle. The feel of his hand tracing the skin just below her skirt was almost unbearable. Of course, the minute he slipped under the fabric, his fingers crawling slowly up her inner thigh, she nearly cried out.

How did he turn her into a whimpering mess with just a few touches?

His voice broke with huskiness, the wonderful sound sending shivers up her spine. "Just thinking about you drives me crazy. I've wanted nothing since the first moment I *ever* laid eyes on you, than to worship you. To taste every inch of your body one delicious lick at a time."

Paige licked her lips, finding them suddenly dry as she listened to him. She tried to breathe without gasping for air at his words. His fingers slowly climbed up the length of her thigh, his fingertips brushing the silk of her panties and traced light circles over the front of them.

She felt her knees go weak in the same instant her pussy convulsed, the small spasm causing her muscles to clamp tight and her belly to ache.

His whispered words in her ear and the smell of his cologne had her panting for air. She tried to tell herself that the others were waiting for her through the fog of lust clouding her mind, but the longer he continued to kiss and nip at her neck and his fingers played along the edge of her panties, the more she didn't care.

"I can't stop thinking about you," Simon continued, whispering softly against her neck, peppering small kisses along her skin while his fingers slipped inside her panties.

She gasped when one long digit rubbed against her clit.

"I want you."

Something inside her snapped. She felt it like a bolt of lightening through her system. In the boldest move she ever made, her eyes opened and she reached up, grabbing Simon's head and pulling him to her before she crushed her lips to his.

With her reluctance shattered, she forced her tongue past his lips. Took from him what he so willingly wanted her to have and ravished his mouth. She wasted no time, pushing herself off the wall and leaning into him.

She pushed him against the bathroom door, the force of impact momentarily causing the contact with his mouth to vanish.

* * * *

Simon was stunned when his back hit the door. He stared down at Paige and the look in her eyes said it all. Her wild, lust filled gaze stole the air from his chest and he sucked in a harsh breath before she once again attacked his mouth.

His arms wrapped around her waist and he moaned when her hips grinded against his hardening cock. He pulled her tightly against him, angled his head and drank her in.

The small bathroom echoed with their moans. Their heavy breathing the only sound in the room. Paige ran her hands through the short blonde curls on his head and held him to her before pulling back and gasping for air.

She stared up at him; the hungry look in her eyes causing his body to burn before her tongue was once again probing his mouth. She continued to grind herself against him before Simon reached down, grabbed her ass with both hands and held her to him.

Paige raised one leg, sliding it up his thigh before he caught it in his hand. He held her to him, helping her slid up his body as she wrapped her legs around his waist.

The ravenous attack on his mouth never ceased and all rational thought replaced with one thing.

Paige wanted him.

She proved it the next second when she reached down with one hand to the waistband of his pants, grabbing his belt buckle before breaking the kiss. She quickly unfastened it, pushing the leather away. The sound of his zipper being pulled down echoed off the walls of the small bathroom.

Simon's mind went into overload when Paige's warm hand reached inside his jeans and pulled his cock free.

She ran her hand up the length of it, watching what she was doing as he reached up under her skirt and pushed the silk of her underwear away.

When she looked at him, she smiled before she rose slightly and positioned herself over him and she slid down his length.

They both gasped as warmth rode their bodies.

She took a deep breath, letting it out slowly before she used her legs to pull herself up and slowly slide back down onto his hardened flesh. Her eyes closed briefly as her mouth opened and a moan escaped her when she lowered her hips, her tight passage engulfing him again.

She rode him slowly, every inch of him filling her before she closed her eyes and let the sensations take her over.

Simon watched her head fall back and her mouth opened in a silent scream. She was completely exquisite in that moment...more beautiful than he ever remembered. This woman, the only woman he'd ever met that held him spellbound with a simple glance, left him awestruck as he watched her. He clenched his jaw when she tightened her muscles around him before his head fell forward. Her hot passage squeezed him to the point of ecstasy.

The feel of being inside her again was nothing compared to the fact that she had taken him, forcing the union in a bold move that he didn't think she had in her.

He lifted his head, staring up at her, unable to speak as he watched her. The quiet girl he'd been with the night before was replaced with a woman who knew what she wanted and wasted no time in taking it.

Her lips were parted slightly and her eyes glistened as she looked at him, her hair in golden waves over her shoulders, and he grinned at her before he grabbed her hips and turned quickly, bracing her back against the door.

Paige gasped when he changed their positions and drove into her, her eyes falling shut briefly when he filled her completely. She forced them back open, looking up into his eyes and felt like she was drowning as he stared down at her. There wasn't anything else in the world in that moment but him.

Simon leaned in, brushing his lips across hers before pulling back and smiling at her. Running his hands down her legs, he reached up under her thighs and hooked her legs over his arms. She grabbed onto his shoulders to try and steady herself.

She bunched the leather of his coat up in her hands and the small position-change sent him deeper into her. She was spread wide open for him and her head fell back against the door. Simon leaned in slightly, grinding his hips against her as he spread her legs wider. A loud moan spilled from her lips at the action.

"You like that?" Simon whispered, leaning his head down close to her ear.

Paige nodded her head. Her eyes clamped shut as Simon thrust into her harder, his rhythm slowing. She tried to move her hips but was unable to because of the position he had her in.

"I can't hear you," Simon whispered, leaning into her as he pushed himself deeper inside.

Paige swallowed hard, trying to find her voice. Simon licked her ear before his thrust slowed to an agonizingly slow pace. She could feel every inch of him slide into her depths and she was ready to scream as his hips slowed their movements.

"Tell me what you want," Simon said, slowly pulling himself from her and stopping before he slid completely out.

Paige opened her eyes when he stilled, looking up at him and panted for breath before Simon slowly slid back inside.

"Tell me," he said, staring down at her. "I want to hear you say it."

Paige tried again to move her hips, needing the friction her body craved. She felt ready to explode. The burning ache she felt as Simon slowly pulled himself from her again, almost unbearable. She was unable to move.

Trapped between his body and the door. "Please," she whispered, her eyes falling shut as her need for him consumed her.

"Please what?" Simon whispered, a ghost of a smile crossing his face. He leaned down, kissing her neck and she tried to force him into her.

Paige whimpered when Simon pulled completely out of her, the feeling of loss being replaced with unconcealed need. She felt the head of his cock slid up the length of her and brush against her clit. "Oh God," she whispered, her head falling to the side. "Please, Simon," she moaned. He continued to rub himself up and down the length of her. Every time he hit her clit, stars exploded behind her eyelids.

"Please what?"

The slow measured movements were driving him crazy.

His cock twitched with every beat of his heart. He couldn't remember being so hard. It bordered on this side

of pain. The need to plunge into her depths overwhelmed him.

But he waited. Waited for her to say the words. He knew he'd never get another chance to hear them whispered from her lips and he wasn't about to leave without them.

He had waited too long.

He leaned down, brushing a kiss across her mouth, biting softly at her lips before making his way across her jaw to her neck. She trembled in his arm, her breaths a harsh pant in his ear and he bit down lightly on her tender skin.

Her hold around his neck tightened at the small bite. Her hand coming to rest on the back of his head and holding him to her before she said, "Fuck me, Simon. Please."

A wide, pleased smirk crossed his face before he straightened and looked down at her. He pulled his hips back and positioned himself back at her opening before sliding in. He moaned as her heat engulfed him before he pulled back.

Paige gasped when Simon's thrusts became harder. Her hold on him tightened as his pace increased, sending shocks to every nerve ending in her body.

"Harder," she whispered, her head falling to his neck. She licked the salt from his skin as his grunts and thrust increased.

She gasped with every thrust, the almost bruising force he was using causing the small tingle in the pit of her stomach to flutter, signaling her approaching release.

Her arms wrapped tighter around him, her tongue running up his neck to his ear as he nuzzled his face

against her. "You feel so good inside me," she whispered in his ear, a tiny smile curving her lips as she heard him whisper her name against her neck.

Paige latched onto his neck, sucking his flesh into her mouth. Her hand ran up to the back of his head, holding him to her as the fluttering in her stomach grew, spider webs of pleasure coursing throughout her body and Simon's hot breath moistening her neck.

"Simon...oh God," she whimpered. The explosion she felt caused a shriek to escape her throat as she climaxed.

"Harder, harder!" She yelled out, tears stinging her eyes as Simon forced himself into her, the jolts of electricity coursing through her before she felt his body tense and his own gasping grunts mingled with hers as he released himself into her. His hips jerked against her several times before slowing their pace and he leaned in heavily to her and kept them locked together.

Paige nuzzled her face against his neck, kissing the salty skin slowly as he did the same to her. They stayed there, marking the other with their scent before she finally lifted her head.

She didn't know how long they had stayed in their current position after they both reached their peak, but it felt nice to just be held.

Simon lifted her legs, guiding them around his waist before wrapping his arms around her. His head was pillowed on her shoulder and as much as she wished she could stay wrapped in his arms all day, she knew her friends were standing out in the parking lot waiting for her.

"Hey, you still awake?" Paige asked.

"Yes," Simon said, never moving.

Paige giggled softly, her arms tightening around his neck before she once again lowered her head and placed a small kiss on his neck.

"As much as I'd like to stay here like this, I have five friends in the parking lot who are probably going to kill me for taking so long."

Simon smiled against her neck, relishing in the fact that she wanted to stay there, with him, before he kissed her neck in return. He inhaled deeply, taking in her scent one last time before tightening his arms around her.

For that one brief moment, he imagined they were somewhere else. Somewhere beautiful, like she deserved, and he didn't have to let her go. That she was his, forever, and nothing would be able to take her away from him. He imagined her knowing who he was, saying his *real* name and not feeling disgusted by it.

He sighed as the vision faded, hugging her to his body and knowing, if only in his imagination, what it felt like to be wanted by her. All of him. If things went belly-up at the reunion, he would live the rest of his life with the memory of how she felt in his arms.

He smiled as he raised his head and said, "They're big girls, I'm sure they'll get over it."

"Yeah, but not before nailing my ass to the wall first."

"I thought that was my job?" Simon said with a cheeky grin.

Paige smiled back at him before she slowly rose up and untangled their bodies. She lowered her legs to the floor before saying, "I wasn't aware you wanted it?"

Simon stared at her as she nervously glanced away from him. He wanted to scream to the top of his lungs how bad he wanted it. To tell her how he felt about her, how he'd always felt about her. But he couldn't. Once she found out the truth about him, she'd hate him.

"Now you do," he said quietly. He raised his hand and hooked a finger under Paige's chin, raising her head so he could look at her. She smiled up at him before he lowered his head to kiss her.

Simon knew this was it, the last time he would see her without her knowing who he was and he poured every ounce of emotion he felt for her into the kiss. Years spent wondering where she was, who was getting to spend every night loving her, came crashing through as he held her tightly to him. If he could just get her to see how much he cared, how much he had always cared, then maybe it wouldn't matter once she found out.

Maybe the shy, quiet Colin would finally be able to rise above all the taunts and ridicule he had suffered for loving her and come out on top and gain her love in return.

Paige was breathless by the time Simon finally broke the kiss. She had never been kissed so thoroughly before.

Her eyes slowly opened and she looked up into what she now knew had to be the most beautiful, soulful eyes she'd ever seen.

He stared at her for long minutes and she smiled at him before he blinked and turned away. He took a step back, the small action making her wonder what he had been thinking as he now seemed to be looking at anything but her.

Grabbing her skirt, Paige pulled it down over her hips while Simon tucked himself back into his jeans and straightened his clothes. She spared a glance at him and felt almost like something was wrong. He'd become eerily quiet all of a sudden. Her mind worked overtime trying to process what was happening and she frowned when a thought popped into her head.

Was this it? Was this the part where he marked another notch in his belt and sent her on her way? She felt almost sick as she thought back to the way he had held her and kissed her as if he would never get enough. Insecurities flooded her brain and she quietly asked him, "Is everything okay?"

Simon finally looked up at her before calmly saying, "Everything's fine."

She could tell by the look on his face that everything wasn't fine. His voice sounded neutral. His body language a little stiff but it was the look in his eyes that said it all. He looked almost, regretful. "Then why..."

"Would you like to go out with me? I mean... later... sometime... I can show you a good time other than just sex," he finished quietly, looking at her briefly before glancing down at the floor.

Paige stood shocked watching him, her lips curving into a slow smile as his question rattled through her brain.

He was asking her out? On a date? Is that why he looked like that?

Confusion caused her brows to lift as to why the confident, badass Simon seemed to stutter like a shy schoolboy asking his secret crush out on a date. Paige knew from the get-go that Simon wasn't her *type*. He was,

at first glance, what she assumed a ladies man. He was an exotic dancer after all, and probably propositioned by more women in a single night than the average man gets in months.

But here he stood, looking shy and completely vulnerable. Was there more to Simon than just good looks and exceptional bedding skills? If simply asking a girl out on a date reduced him to this, then there had to be more than what he showed the world.

"What if I like the sex part?" she asked, her smile widening. He looked up at her, his smile back before he seemed to relax a little, his shoulders easing from their stiff position.

"Well, the sex part we can still do. No problem there," he said, taking a step toward her.

"Well I'm glad to hear it," Paige said, grinning. "I've been wondering how it would be horizontally instead of vertically."

Simon chuckled lightly before taking a deep breath.

"Well, I can do either with no problems." He took a step closer to her, wanting nothing more than to touch her again but was afraid whatever spell had been cast would be broken if he did.

"I'm sure you can." Paige reached out hesitantly before running her hand up his chest when he leaned into her.

She was smiling at him. A look of pure delight crossed her face and inside, he was jumping for joy. "So, maybe sometime, if you'd like something more than just sex..."

"I'd love to," Paige said softly, cutting him off.

"You'd love to." Simon repeated her words in almost a whisper. His smile started small but grew when hers did before he leaned down and brushed a soft kiss on her lips.

Simon kissed her and felt that no matter what happened at the Reunion, he'd always have the memory of her saying yes. She wanted him, he knew that, but sex was just that--sex. Her wanting more was what he really wanted. He wanted her to see who he really was. He needed her to see the man he'd always been... the one who loved her no matter what.

When someone pounded on the door, they both jumped, turning to look at the door when the handle began to turn.

"If you're about through in there, we do have places to be!" Kim yelled, her fist contacting with the door again.

Paige laughed, hearing the irritation in Kim's voice before she reached out, unlocked the door and opened it.

"It's about damn time!" Kim yelled, "Do you have *any* idea how long you've been in here?"

"Uhm, no," Paige said smiling.

"Long enough for me to have experienced multiple orgasms and on any other day I'd say, *go you*, but we are in a bit of a time crunch so wrap it up and get your ass outside!" She turned then and stomped through the store.

Paige giggled, watching Kim barrel through the store, her animated curses echoing off the walls while the customers gave her strange glances. She pushed the door back shut and turned back to Simon. "Well, I guess that means my friends are ready to go," she said.

"Guess so," Simon said. He stared at her for a few seconds before saying, "Well, I'll let you... do what ever it

is... you girls do after..." he stammered, waving his hand around a bit.

"Yeah," Paige said, giggling. Simon suddenly started to look uncomfortable as he moved towards the door.

"Well, you know where to find me," Simon said. "I'm there every night except Saturday and Sunday. I'll make sure the doorman knows who you are."

He leaned down and gave her another small kiss before reaching for the door. "Goodbye, Paige," he said, quietly.

Paige watched him stare at her for a few seconds before he opened the door and walked out, pulling it shut behind him. She sighed heavily, a dreamy smile covering her face.

She turned and looked into the mirror at her flushed cheeks. "And I'll definitely be there, Simon," she said to herself before she turned and locked the door again.

Chapter Ten



The girls outside all whistled, clapped and yelled when Simon finally walked outside. He smiled at them, hearing their cattle calls and giving them a brief wave of his hand before grabbing his helmet and putting it back on.

"Damn, Paige is one lucky bitch," Amy said, grinning as the loud roar of Simon's motorcycle rang out over the parking lot.

"That she is," Megan said, her smile matching her friends. They all watched Simon back the bike up and slowly pull away from the curb.

"I swear if she doesn't go after him for more than just the occasional ride, she's a bigger dork than Courtney is," Heather said grinning

"Hey!" Courtney yelled, turning to Heather and sticking her lip out. "I'm not a dork!"

"Of course you're not, sweetie," Megan said, patting Courtney on the back.

Paige almost dreaded going outside. The constant *Simon* talk coming down the road had been bad, but now she knew they'd *never* shut up about it. Taking a deep breath, she pushed the door of the store open and walked outside.

She couldn't help but smile at them. They were all leaning against her car. The minute they saw her they whistled, clapped and yelled. She blushed lightly and shook her head at them before stepping off the curb.

"Alright guys, enough with the whooping," Paige said when she reached the car and opened her door.

"Oh I don't think so, missy," Amy said, climbing into the car along with the others. "We want details."

Paige laughed, starting the car, before shaking her head "Not this time," she told them. "I'm leaving this one completely between me and Simon."

"Oh come on, Paige!" Kim yelled, "You can't leave us out!"

"Yeah! If it weren't for me, you wouldn't have even met him," Heather said. "We want all the slick and sweaty details!"

Paige laughed, looking up and down the road before she pulled out onto the highway and headed for Riverdale. "Sorry ladies, but this is one time you're not going to get anything."

"You'll spill or I swear I'll find the most hideous creature at the Reunion and tell him you were madly in love with him all through school!" Amy blurted out.

"Go ahead." Paige laughed. "There isn't anything you could do to get me to tell. It was private."

"Private!" Kim yelled, "You just fucked a man in a public restroom! There's nothing private about that," she said, laughing hard with the others.

"Fine then," Amy said, poking Kim in the side and winking at her. "I think the first person I find once we get to the Reunion is dull, mousy little... Colin!"

Paige's eyes shot up at that, staring at Amy in the rear view mirror before she clenched her teeth. She couldn't explain why, but her temper flared hotter than she ever imagined it would with her friends. "Amy, you do

what ever you think you have to, but you leave Colin alone!"

Everyone sat stunned in silence. Paige felt her face flame as anger surged through her body. Why did they always do that? Why did they act like spoiled bitches all the time? Why destroy someone for the sake of doing it?

She took a deep breath, trying to calm down. She glanced at Meg sitting in the seat next to her and her friend's eyes were wide. She leaned her head to the side and a question lurked behind her eyes. She saw her glance at the others before she turned her attention back to the road.

Paige sighed heavily, looking in the mirror before smiling slightly. "Look, I'm sorry Amy. I didn't mean to snap. Just...just promise me you won't go torturing Colin if he's there, okay? I think we did enough of that ten years ago. We're all a little old for childish games."

Her mind flashed back to the boy who had done nothing but adore her from the first day he'd arrived at their school. She hated their treatment of him, always had.

She wasn't sure why, but she felt brave enough to stop them now. To finally speak up and stop them from hurting him. She only wished she'd had the courage ten years ago.

Megan smiled, looking back at Paige before she turned to Amy and the others in the back seat. "You got that?" she asked, looking at each of them. "No one says anything remotely mean to Colin, or Paige will rip your hair out while I hold you down."

Heather rolled her eyes. "There's no point in going if we can't tease the dorks." Meg turned her head, looking over her shoulder and glared.

"Fine, whatever," Heather said, looking out the window.

"Well, back to more interesting topics," Kim said, breaking the eerie silence. "Did you at least get a sloppy good-bye kiss this time, or did he high tail it once the deed was done?"

Paige shook her head, and looked at Kim in the mirror. "You just don't ever give up, do you?"

Kim laughed. "Nope, we want details, girl."

"Well, I'm not giving any. I told you already."

"But—"

"No buts," Paige said, before they all became quiet again. Either her yelling had scared them all silent or Meg's evil glare did. Paige smiled to herself when everyone sat quietly. Of course it didn't last. Why did she think it would?

"You're going to see him again aren't you?"

Courtney asked softly, looking over at Amy when she snickered at her.

Paige grinned at them when she looked into her rearview mirror. All their faces were alight with laughter.

"Maybe."

"Was it as good as last night?"

"Better," Paige said, her smile widening, the soft giggles filling the car.

"Did you get good-bye smoochies?"

"Yes," she told them calmly. She thought about their last few minutes together. She wasn't about to tell her friends she actually had a *date* of any kind with him. They could find that out later. She'd never get them to shut up if she did.

She remembered the soft kiss he'd given her and him telling her bye. Her smile widened as the sound of his voice floated through her mind. The way her name sounded whispered from his lips sent chills up her spine.

"Well, that's a start," Kim said grinning. "Who knows, maybe you can venture back to the club and see if he wants more..."

Kim's words were lost to her as her last thought rang in her head. Simon said her name. He'd called her Paige before he left. She thought back on their encounter and remembered him whisper her name against her neck. He really had said her name. Twice!

"Oh my God!" Paige yelled, her head snapping around and looking at them wide eyed as she remembered.

Everyone screamed when the car swerved, running off the road as Paige screamed and straightened the wheel. She slammed on the breaks, her heart nearly bursting from her chest before the car came to a complete stop in the middle of the highway.

"What the hell is wrong with you!" Heather yelled, her hand over her heart.

Paige's eyes were huge as she looked at her friends. They were all wide-eyed and she turned in her seat to look at them before she whispered, "He said my name."

"Well that monster!" Amy yelled, sarcastically. "You almost gave me a fucking heart attack screaming like that! Are you trying to kill us?"

"He said my name."

"Big deal. Simon said your name. Men tend to do that from time to time!"

"He said my name!" Paige yelled back at her, turning to look out the front window. She remembered him saying it. At the time, she had smiled, loving the sound of it slipping past his lips, but now, as she thought about it, it horrified her.

She racked her brain trying to remember when exactly she told him what it was. As far as she knew, he didn't know her name. She hadn't told him. Did one of her friends tell him? No! When would they have done that?

Her breathing increased until she felt light headed.

"Paige, calm down," Megan said, laying her hand on Paige's arm. "Let's get off the highway, okay?"

"But, he said my name." Paige turned and looked at Megan. She stared at her before her body went numb. "I never told him my name, Meg. How did he know it?"

"Are you sure you didn't tell him?" Courtney asked, looking confused.

"Positive," Paige replied, turning to look at the others. "How does he know my name?"

As the question ran through her mind, Paige thought of every possible explanation she could think of. How did Simon know her name? Did she know him? She knew the answer to that the minute she thought it. No. There was no way she could ever forget him. But yet, he apparently knew her. But from where?

Chapter Eleven



The rest of the ride to Riverdale was made in silence. After Paige sat, mumbling quietly to herself for nearly five minutes, Megan forced her from the drivers seat and drove them to their destination.

Paige sat in the passenger seat, staring out the window while occasionally looking at one of the others, her thoughts a jumbled mess. She knew without a doubt she never told Simon her name and the fact he'd said it, twice, caused her brain to work overtime.

He apparently knew who she was. There was no other explanation. No contact with the others whatsoever except for back at the store and that was *after* he'd said it. It was all too confusing.

Her mind drifted back to the first night in the club and the way he came toward her from the minute he stepped onto the stage. She didn't think anything of it at the time, other than she happened to be the lucky girl of the night, but when she started to think heavily on it, she had to wonder if she hadn't been his target all along.

He told her the dance wasn't part of his act. Did he lie to her? Did the other ladies at the club expect that from him? Is that why he was so popular?

If it were, then why her? Why not one of the other ladies lined up watching him? She was sure some of them were regulars. Women he was guaranteed a huge tip from.

As the questions mounted, her mind raced to answer them. She couldn't explain why it upset her so much that he said her name other than he was hiding something, but what? If he knew her, then why didn't he just say so?

* * * *

"Did you hear me Paige?" Megan asked.

Paige looked up from the sidewalk. She'd stopped walking without noticing. They were all walking down Main Street, leisurely taking in the changes since their last visit to the little town. "I'm sorry. What did you say?"

Megan smiled, taking a step closer to Paige and threading her arm through her friends. "I asked you if you were hungry."

"Oh, no. I think I'll wait until the reunion," Paige replied. "I'm a little too freaked out at the moment to eat."

"Are you okay?"

"Yeah," she lied. She looked over at Meg, seeing the concern on her friends face, before sighing. "I'm just still thinking about the whole Simon thing."

"I figured as much," Meg smiled. "Don't drive yourself crazy over it."

"I won't," she said. Megan raised one eyebrow at her before she laughed lightly. "Okay, okay. No more Simon worries. We're here to reminisce and have fun."

"Damn straight we are." Megan laid her head against Paige's trying to show her support. "Speaking of

fun, we're heading over to the high school. Heather feels the need to walk-the-walk and talk-the-talk."

Paige cracked a grin, raising her eyes to look at the others. "That would be fun," she said. "Too bad there won't be anyone there to see."

"Oh, I'm sure we aren't the only ones going to be there."

* * * *

Simon stood on the sidewalk looking up at the building where he'd spent the better part of two years feeling like a total outcast. Starting a new school in his junior year wasn't the easiest transition, especially with the social groups established at the school. Being a new kid, and one so totally different from the others, only made it that more difficult to fit in. The only highlight in the whole experience was Paige.

He'd seen her not ten minutes after walking in the front door and she had literally taken his breath away. When the *girls* had all passed by him, Paige had turned to look at him, flashing a brilliant smile, and he knew at that moment he would be forever lost in her. She was the most beautiful girl he'd ever seen.

He spent years trying to get over her after graduation and finally convinced himself he did. Well, until he saw her again. The minute he laid eyes on her at the club, all those feelings came rushing back. He didn't know what it was about her that held his heart captive. She was like a drug he couldn't get enough of.

Was it the whole *challenge* aspect of it? Did wanting something you knew you couldn't have make it that much more tempting? He really didn't think that was the case. It was simply her. It was the smile she gave him for no reason. The way her eyes lit up when she laughed. Everything about her was intoxicating to him.

Even now--after ten years of not seeing her, with one tiny glance, she captured his heart and held it in the palm of her hand again. He only hoped this time it wouldn't destroy him like the first time.

Colin Gregory had died with every laugh he'd received on the day he poured his heart out on paper and with a single red rose. That was the day he gave her one last glance and vowed never to look upon her again. And he didn't. It was easier that way. He avoided her. Knew where her and her little group of friends hung out and purposely avoided them. Even on graduation, when her name was called, he'd sat there, staring at his feet. Her smile tore his heart out and he couldn't bring himself to even glance at her. It was too painful.

The endless nights of tears staining his pillow because of the cruel and heartless things her friends said to him had worn him down. But he suffered through it... for her.

He loved her enough to endure anything they dished out and he did. For a year and a half, he took everything they threw at him. He took it and filed it away in that tiny place in the back of his mind to use later on if he needed it.

But that day...that day had been different. That day he'd seen. He'd seen the look on her face when everyone in the room laughed. He'd seen her embarrassment...

because of him. His beautiful angel held pain in her eyes and he caused it. His world crumbled around him then. He'd hurt her. He hadn't meant to but he did. Every day he hurt her with the taunts and laughs of her friends. They weren't just directed at him. She felt them too.

He knew what he had to do then. He had to be someone she would want to love. Colin would never be the man she needed. Colin would never be the kind of man any woman would want.

Simon had risen from the ashes of his broken heart. A man who didn't take shit from anyone and didn't let his heart get in the way of what he wanted. He'd searched for years for someone equal to her but never found her.

There hadn't been a woman in ten years to stir any emotion in him other than the feelings that a pleasurable night wrapped around another warm body could give.

And he knew now that no one could ever take her place.

He would forever love the girl who couldn't see him for more than what her friends thought he was.

Taking a deep breath, Simon let it out slowly before he tossed his spent smoke to the ground and crushed it with the heel of his boot. He turned, sitting back down on his bike. The loud roar of the engine rang out across the street before he gave the old school one last glance, pulled away from the curb and headed into town.

Chapter Twelve



Paige pulled her car to a stop outside the Riverdale Country Club. She glanced at everyone milling around and took a calming breath before killing the engine.

Their afternoon consisted of walking the halls of their old high school before ending up at Meg's parents home. They spent time with the couple, reminiscing before retiring to Meg's old room to freshen up and change their clothes. The girls spent the rest of the evening dressing and getting made up. It wouldn't do for Riverdale's elite to show up wearing day old clothes, now would it?

After primping and getting each hair in place, the girls made their way to the Country Club. From the looks they got from everyone milling around, their efforts would be rewarded.

"Man, I didn't think there would be this many people here," Courtney said from the back seat.

"Well, it is classmates and spouses," Amy told her. "It's going to be more than just who we went to school with."

"Are we ready ladies?" Heather asked, opening her door and climbing out.

Paige exited the car last. She watched the others make their way to the building before looking at her reflection in the windows of her car, smoothing her shirt down over her slacks and fussing with her hair.

Her mind once again shifted to Simon. Him knowing her still confused her but not nearly as much at the thoughts of her *date* did. Was he setting her up for something or was she just being paranoid?

The look on his face inside the bathroom puzzled her the most. He looked almost scared when he asked her out, but why? The more she thought about it, the more confused she became. She had a date with him and was nearly ready to bust from wanting to tell someone. She knew Meg could help her think things through and she wouldn't say anything if she told her not to, but she felt stupid for wanting to see him again considering everything that had happened. She frowned as she thought about it before glancing over at Meg. After all the fuss, why would she even consider a date with him? *Because he's hot and you like him.*

"What's with the frown?"

"Nothing," Paige said, looking at Meg before she smiled back at her. She shook her head, grabbing her friend by the arm and walking toward the building where the others were waiting. They all smiled before entering. Two girls seated at the "welcome" table in the entranceway immediately greeted them.

"Oh my God! Heather!" The blonde behind the table screamed when they all entered. "We were all hoping you would come."

"Wouldn't have missed it for the world," Heather said, flashing her million-watt smile.

"Well, you are the only one in the graduating class that is now a household name," the blonde told her smiling. "Here, just sign in and Tracy will help you find your badge."

"Badge?" Kim asked, walking toward the table and glancing up at Tracy. Kim had teased her relentlessly.

"Yes, it's a name tag, with your senior picture on it," the blonde proudly boasted, pointing towards her own. "In case you have trouble figuring out who anyone is."

"Oh, how... cute," Kim said, rolling her eyes before scanning through the badges with Tracy until she found hers. "God, did I actually wear my hair like that!" she yelled, holding her nametag up and looking at it. "Why the hell didn't one of you slap some sense into me?"

They all laughed, signing in and giving their ticket to Melissa, who they barely recognized, but remembered being the most annoying person on the planet. Finding their badges, the six girls ventured down the hall to the reception area.

"Wow!" Megan said happily. "This place looks great."

"I know," Courtney replied, looking around the large room.

There were tables lining the four walls, each holding photos of their high schools days, blown up and displayed for the classmates to reminisce and take the opportunity to remember days gone by.

Paige walked toward her right, the others scattering in separate directions, looking at photos or speaking to someone they hadn't seen in years. The room looked full to capacity already, most of them congregating in the center of the room, talking to old friends, while others scanned the photos lining the tables.

Paige stopped to talk to a few old classmates who said hello to her. It felt so much nicer to actually talk to these people rather than turning her nose up to them.

She'd been terrible in school. She knew it. Her friends expected her to be. They were snobs. All of them. Herself included. Of course, the others weren't around at the moment for her to put a front up for. She always hated that the most. Pretending to be someone she just didn't want to be.

She sighed thinking of her old high school self. No matter what she wanted or thought, the "girls" were the ones who dictated how Paige thought and felt. If they didn't like someone, Paige felt obligated to feel the same way. She wasn't a leader... she was a follower. Even though she loved her friends like sisters, she didn't always believe in the same things they did, but felt she had no other choice but to agree with what they said. It took her years to come to grips with the thought that she actually had a say-so in things. It felt nice to finally be able to say yes when she knew her friends wouldn't approve.

But now, looking across the room to her friends, she knew if they wanted to destroy everyone in the room, she'd be powerless to stop them. She'd stand by and watch. It's just what she did. She felt inferior to her friends. She always had.

Turning back to the table of photos, Paige walked slowly and scanned the pictures. Most were candid shots, taken during classes and at lunch as students mingled in the quad. It brought back memories of youth. The only care then was if she'd be able to convince her mother to increase her allowance and what to wear for her date on Friday night.

"Find anything interesting?" Kim asked when she stopped by Paige.

"No, not yet, you?"

"Oh yeah," Kim said grinning, grabbing Paige's arm. "Come on."

Kim led Paige over to the others, where they all stood staring toward the pictures lining the table on the far wall, whispering to each other.

Paige once again found herself staring at photos. She saw a photo of her and her friends sitting in the quad, their faces alight with laughter before her eyes landed on a large picture of her. She looked at the young girl staring back at her, her eyes shining and a happy smile gracing her face.

"Ah, to be young and carefree."

Paige turned and looked at Megan when she spoke before saying, "I can barely even remember being that young."

"It wasn't that long ago," Megan told her, looking at the photo.

"No, but it seems like forever." Paige turned back to the photo. "I mean, I didn't even have wrinkles then."

Megan laughed, shaking her head. "You don't have any wrinkles now, you goof."

"Well, maybe not, but they're hiding there, just under the surface. I can feel them," Paige laughed studying her photo.

"Do you see it, Paige?" Kim asked, butting in-between Paige and Megan. Kim let out a slow laugh before she shook her head. "Its kind of ironic, don't you think?"

"Yes and I still can't believe how young I was," she smiled. She stared at the photo, Kim's snickers causing her head to turn and look at her curiously. "What is so funny, Kim? Have you already found the bar or something?"

"No, I just think it's kind of hilarious, is all," she said staring at the photo.

"What?"

Kim turned, looking at Paige before looking back at the photo. "Uh, that!" she said loudly, pointing to the picture.

Paige bit back a remark before pointing to the badge on Kim's shirt. "And like that isn't?"

Kim looked at Paige before giggling louder. "Geez Paige, do you *not* see him!"

"See who?"

"Your stalker!" Kim stated loudly, pointing to the boy in the picture before laughing and walking off.

Paige turned back to the photo, looking at the others who were slightly out of focus before she finally saw who Kim was talking about. Sitting in the row over from where Paige sat in the photo, was Colin.

She smiled while looking at him. He had to have been the shyest person she'd ever known. The day he had asked her to the prom was the first time he'd ever said anything to her other than his daily "Hello Paige."

She instantly wondered if he were there and found herself looking around the room, scanning the faces of her old classmates. She shook her head, finding the action silly, before looking back at the photo.

Paige leaned her head to the side, looking closely at the boy in the photo. Colin looked different than she remembered. She wasn't sure what it was at first, but on closer examination, she realized his glasses were in his hand, not on his face. She couldn't remember ever seeing him with them off.

She smiled thinking he really wasn't as bad looking as everyone made him out to be, especially with the glasses off. Sure his clothes were a little on the dorky side and his hair was... well, unmanageable, but other than the exterior, he wasn't bad.

She studied his features, trying to imagine what he would look like now. Most everyone looked the same, other than a few extra pounds here and there and she pictured the man he would be today.

She imagined his hair different. The unruly curls finally managed and away from his face so everyone could see him. The blue in his eyes were bright and the longer she stared at him the more familiar the face became. The smile on her face slowly fell away as she took in his features.

The hair that curled wildly on top his head seemed to pull away from the sharp lines of his cheekbones she'd never really paid much attention to before. His lips were full, the bottom much thicker than the top and she leaned in, looking into the photo and her pulse seemed to quicken when she looked at his eyes. He was looking directly at the camera, almost as if he were looking at her. His eyes looked familiar, like one's she'd seen recently.

Suddenly a set of shocking blue eyes registered in her mind and her mouth gaped open. She stared at the photo before she shook her head. "That's impossible," she mumbled to herself, staring in disbelief at Colin. "It can't be."

When the Class President announced dinner was being served Paige never moved. She stood there, staring at the photo. She barely acknowledged her peers moving about the room and heading for the dining hall.

"You ready Paige?" Megan asked, coming to stand over by her friend.

Paige stood stock still, her breaths uneven, still staring at the photo.

"You know, if you like that photo so much, I bet they'll let you have it." Megan said, grinning. "What has you so intrigued with it anyway?"

"Colin," Paige said, flatly.

"Colin?"

"Right there in living color," Paige said, pointing him out.

"Wow. I bet he'd be tickled shitless if he knew he actually had a picture with you and him in it."

"Oh, I bet he would," Paige said, harshly. She continued to stare at the blue eyes she felt herself drown in every time she looked into them. She could see it so clearly now. She knew why Simon knew her name. Because he knew her.

"Well, come on," Megan said, taking Paige's arm and pulling her towards the door.

* * * *

Simon took a long draw from his smoke, staring at the building and trying to build enough nerve up to actually get off his bike and go inside. He knew Paige was in there, waiting just inside the door somewhere and the moment of truth was close at hand.

He'd been sitting in the parking lot for over ten minutes trying to go over exactly what he would say when

he saw her. He knew she wasn't going to be happy at first, but hoped after a little explanation of why he hadn't told her who he was from the beginning; she would see things from his perspective and not castrate him on sight.

Sighing heavily, he stood, throwing his cigarette to the ground before he straightened his shoulders and walked confidently toward the building. The nervous feelings in his gut churned slightly when he reached the door before grabbing the handle and pulling it open.

"Hi, welcome to Riverdale High's class reunion. Would you please sign in and find your badge," Melissa said cheerfully when Simon walked through the door.

Simon looked over at her before he reached into his pocket, pulling his ticket out and tossing it on the table as he walked by.

"Hey, wait a minute, you need to sign in!" Melissa yelled, standing from her seat. She watched his retreating form before glancing at Tracy.

"Who the hell is that?" Tracy asked, a huge smile on her face as she watched the black clad figure walk down the hall.

"I don't know. He didn't look familiar."

"I'll say," Tracy said, grinning, "I sure as hell would have remembered him."

Melissa sat back down, her eyes still riveted on Simon before he rounded the corner and was out of sight.

"Hurry, look and see who hasn't shown up yet. Maybe we can figure out who he is," she said giggling before she and Tracy dove into the remaining name badges, trying to find the classmate they hadn't recognized.

Simon walked slowly down the hall, stopping at the large easel sat up to hold all the information on the planned events. He scanned the schedule, seeing they were to first report to the lobby, where they would meet till everyone was accounted for before they would enter the dining room. He noted the time and saw that the meet and greet was over before glancing at the printed floor plan.

Looking down the hall and turning, he headed for the dining area and to the woman who would probably hate him forever.

* * * *

Paige allowed herself to be led down the hall, her mind going a thousand miles a minute while she tried to process the information in her head. Her logical self kept saying it wasn't possible, but the reasonable side kept seeing the sharp features that graced his face, the full lips she still had trouble forgetting and the piercing blue eyes that seemed to pull her into a place made for her and her alone.

The low rumble of voices barely registered when Megan guided her into the dining hall and towards their table.

Kim's loud voice carried over the chatter in the room. Her heated protest about the seating arrangements gained the eye of almost everyone in the room.

"You are not sitting there," Kim said, loudly.

"Sorry sweetheart, but this is my seat," Travis said, grinning.

"Well, just because you have to sit at our table, doesn't mean I have to sit beside you," she said, before going over to the other empty chairs.

"They're assigned, Kim," Courtney said, rolling her eyes at Kim's behavior.

"Like I care," she said, looking at the name cards at each setting.

Megan found her seat, sitting down beside Heather as Paige found hers and sat too.

She looked up when she heard voices and her anger vanished. She was suddenly face-to-face with the one person she didn't want to see again.

"Hey, Paige."

Her old high school flame, Lance, gave her his all too familiar hundred-watt smile before pulling out his chair, sitting down quietly as his date grabbed the chair next to him.

"Hey Lance," Paige said, trying not to stare but finding it difficult not to. The whole table seemed to calm down immediately.

She knew she would run in to him again and dreaded it from the time she received the announcement of the reunion. But looking at her old high school sweetheart, she felt absolutely nothing. He wasn't even as good looking as she remembered.

She wondered how'd she feel seeing him again and now that he sat two chairs over from her, he was just a guy who held memories to her past. Nothing more.

He stared back at her, and a slow smile began to form on her face when she realized she'd been worried

for nothing. No remaining feelings were there unless she counted her remorse at losing so much sleep when they'd broken up. Her friends were all in a tizzy at the time. It just didn't look right if one of the most popular was without a steady beau.

She almost rolled her eyes at her last thought. Her friends, although she loved them dearly, were the shallowest people she had ever known.

Kim walked around the table before grabbing the chair beside Paige. She sat down between her and Lance's date, smiling before looking down at the place setting.

Her eyes widened, a small grin curving her lips before saying, "You know what? I think my seat was just fine."

Paige watched her stand back up and walk back around the table, sitting down between Travis and Heather. She leaned over, whispering something to Heather before the two girls burst out laughing.

Reaching over to the place setting next to her, Paige picked up the name card and felt her pulse once again quicken at the name of the person assigned to sit beside of her. Colin Gregory was printed on the card. "Remind me to find the person responsible for the seating arrangements before we leave," she said hatefully, flinging the card back down and slumping back in her seat.

* * * *

Simon stood in the hall, reading the seating arrangement before glancing at the last few people walking into the dining hall. He couldn't believe his luck.

Okay, maybe luck was being a little too optimistic. He knew whoever made the seating arrangements had done this out of pure spite. No matter, he thought. She was where he was headed anyway.

"This is it," he said softly to himself. This was the minute he'd been dreading since first laying eyes on Paige back at the club.

Taking a deep breath, Simon let it out slowly, straightening his shoulders before turning and walking through the door.

* * * *

"Holy shit, Paige! That man is turning into a regular stalker!" Kim said, grinning.

Paige turned her head, looking over her shoulder and she clenched her jaw when she saw Simon walking toward them. It really was him. She tried to convince herself she was wrong but as he walked across the room and held her gaze, she knew better.

"Hell, if my stalkers looked like that, I wouldn't feel the need to have them locked up all the time," Heather said, smiling as Simon approached the table.

"No doubt about that one."

The girls all smiled when Simon finally made it to the table, pulling the chair beside of Paige out and sitting down.

"Hey Simon, you aren't following Paige, now are you?" Kim asked. "Not that she would mind, now would you, Paige?"

Paige sat staring at Simon, unable to look away. She could see it clearly now, the quiet shy boy that used to blush every time she smiled at him.

The look in his eyes wasn't the same as it had been earlier that day. His entire demeanor was different. The badass, cocky man she'd met the day before, was gone. Now, he was Colin, just wearing Simon's clothes. The insecure boy who followed her around finally emerged, and she felt her anger wavering slightly as she looked at him.

"How did you get in here anyway?" Kim asked, staring at Simon.

"Through the front door," Simon told her, tearing his eyes away from Paige and looking at the others.

"How'd you find us? You left the store before we did."

Simon ignored their questions, looking back over at Paige. He stared at her for a few minutes, turning in his seat slightly before saying, "Paige can I talk to you... in private? There's something I need to tell you."

"Yeah, something you should have told me two days ago," Paige snapped, her voice louder than she had intended.

Paige saw Heather and Kim both glance at each other, one of them whispering, "he said her name again," before Kim spoke up. "Uh, Simon, we've kind of been wondering how you knew Paige's name."

"He knew it because he already knew me. Just like he knows all of your names."

"Huh?" Heather and Kim both said simultaneously.

"Isn't that right... Colin?" Paige said, her head leaning to the side she looked at him. The anger resurfaced and she took a deep breath to try and calm down. She waited for him to deny it. Waited for him to tell her she was crazy and she never wanted anything more in her life.

When Simon sighed heavily and looked at her, she knew. "I wanted to tell you," he said softly, his eyes darting away briefly before he looked back up at her.

"Then why didn't you?"

"Wait a minute!" Kim said loudly, getting everyone's attention. "Would someone like to run that last bit by me one more time `cause it sounded a whole lot like you said his name was Colin."

"That's because I did," Paige said. "Girls, you remember Colin, don't you?"

Kim stared across the table at Simon for a few minutes before she giggled, the sound abruptly stopping before her eyes widened. "Colin? Colin Gregory?"

Paige nodded her head in confirmation before Kim laughed again and yelled, "You're Colin Gregory!"

The noise in the room vanished completely. Everyone in the dining hall turned to stare at them.

Simon sighed again, looking at Paige for a minute longer before turning towards Kim. "Yes, you remember don't you? Tall, glasses, the one you and your friends made a daily habit of torturing with your constant taunting."

Kim shook her head, looking at the others at the table before turning her attention back to Simon. "Colin Gregory? *You're* Colin Gregory?"

"Yes Kim, I'm Colin Gregory," Simon said irritated.

Kim stared at him for a few seconds before she laughed loud and boisterously, the sound bouncing off the walls around the room before she stopped abruptly and yelled, "No Fucking Way!"

Chapter Thirteen



No matter how upset Paige was at the situation, she couldn't help but be amused at Kim's reaction. The look on her face was priceless, her loud outburst sending the entire room into a frenzy of hushed whispers. There wasn't a person in the room that wasn't focused in on them... or more specifically... Simon.

The others at the table sat in stunned silence, each of them undoubtedly trying to grasp the concept that Simon, the guy they had all practically drooled over and made lewd comments about all weekend, was Colin.

Every person at the table sat gob-smacked. They stared at the now completely transformed man sitting with them. Paige looked around her, seeing every eye in the room on them before she looked back at Kim and said, "Kim, sit down."

Kim stared at Simon with her mouth gaping open, her eyes wide. She blinked a few times, finally looking over at Paige before she started to laugh.

Paige sighed heavily, looking around the room when Kim fell back in her chair holding her stomach. Her laughter rang out through the banquet hall and the longer Kim laughed, the angrier Paige became. "Heather, make her shut up before I hurt her."

No one moved. Paige gritted her teeth, listening to Kim before she saw Megan stand. She grabbed Kim's arm and pulled her from the chair before guiding her out of the room.

Paige watched them go, noticing that everyone's attention was still on them. She rolled her eyes. It didn't matter how much time past; people still gawked.

Looking back over at Simon, she noticed his entire demeanor had changed. The muscle in his jaw ticked, his fists were clenched tight and his eyes were hard and cold. He stared down at the table, his body still and quiet. He'd sat there throughout Kim's whole hysterical laughing without saying a word.

He didn't look scared anymore. He looked mad as hell and Paige felt horrible. She realized by the look on his face that what he'd just been subjected to wasn't anything he hadn't suffered through before. Laughter, at his expense, all because of her. He spent two years being the butt of everyone's jokes for one reason or another. Now ten years later, he still was.

"Colin Gregory?"

Paige turned to Lance the same time Simon did and she wanted to slap her ex. After ten years he was still just as immature as her friends were. He sat there, laughing at Simon and she felt her heart break a little bit more for him. Why did they still do this? Treat him like he was... nobody.

She looked back over at Simon. She saw the same hurt look she witnessed more times than she cared to remember cross his face before his jaw twitched and he straightened in his seat. The pain in her heart for this man was nothing compared to the way he probably felt.

Reaching out, she laid her hand on his arm just as he turned to her. "Simon...."

"Forget it, Paige," he spat out hatefully, jerking his arm away. "I thought maybe ten years was enough time

for you and your friends to get over yourselves. Apparently I was wrong." He stood and turned, walking away from the table.

"Simon wait," she said, quickly standing up from her seat and following him. She couldn't let him leave like that. She knew the hurt look on his face was once again her fault and she wasn't about to let it end like this. She wasn't the same girl anymore. She owed him something for all those years of torment he'd taken because of her, regardless of his motives in not telling her who he was. He deserved more than laughter and ridicule.

Simon stopped, turning back before taking a step closer to her, anger now replacing his obvious pain. "Oh, before I forget," he said leaning down close to her ear.

"Thanks for the fuck. It was quite a memory. The next time you have an itch you need to scratch, you know where to find me."

Paige's eyes flew open at his harsh words before Simon stood up straight and smiled at her before turning and walking to the door. Every eye in the room was trained on her and when the whispers from everyone watching the scene started, her anger resurfaced.

"Do you people not have anything better to do!" she yelled before taking off after Simon.

* * * *

Simon didn't know what pissed him off more. The fact that things had actually gone worse than he expected or that his chances of having anything other than a quick

fuck with Paige were over. Or the familiar fact that he was once again left feeling like the odd man out while the “in” crowd got their laugh.

He walked through the door of the dining hall, hearing the whispers of everyone before Paige yelled. He held back a smile. Bout time the girl spoke up for herself. His shoulders were straight, his stride sure and no matter how confident he looked in his departure, all he could think of was the tears that stung the back of his eyes.

He'd buried Colin a long time ago, covering the weak, shy boy he used to be with the strong, cocky man who didn't take shit from anyone. Now, not ten minutes after entering the room, all his insecurities resurfaced and he cursed himself for even trying to be seen as anything other than what they thought him to be.

He'd known coming back here would be a mistake, especially after seeing Paige again, but the insane notion that she had grown up and started living for herself and not just to impress her friends made him think that maybe she wouldn't care. That maybe, she would be able to see past what her friends thought, and make a decision on her own.

He should have known better.

Reaching inside his jacket, Simon searched for his smokes, pulling them from his pocket, only to have them snatched away and a hand grab his arm and jerk him back.

"Just where the hell do you get off!" Paige yelled, glaring hard up at him. "You think you can just waltz in here, flash some cocky grin and then just leave without even an explanation?"

Simon sighed heavily as he stared down at the now red-faced blonde before him. Her eyes were glassy and she was trembling, her anger at him apparent by the look on her face. "What do you want me to say, darling?"

"First off, I'm *not* your darling," Paige began, "And how about... oh, I don't know, why you forgot to mention that you were Colin Gregory! And don't even get me started on that rude-ass comment back there."

Simon shoved his hands deep inside his jacket pockets and leaned against the wall. "The comment was a cheap shot and I don't exactly remember you telling me 'your' name at the time."

"You *knew* who I was! The fact that you knew should have—"

"Should have what!" Simon said loudly, pushing off the wall and taking a step towards her. "Should have made me crawl at your feet, whining like some pathetic fool to try and get your attention? Sorry gorgeous, but I don't play that game anymore."

"What game is that, *Colin*? Your attempts to woo me with your useless poetry or following me around like some lost puppy trying to find a home," she ranted before she started to pace the floor.

"You know my mother told me! She said, 'Paige, don't go sleeping around, it'll only get you into trouble.' Why did I not believe her?" she asked no one as she continued to make short laps up and down the hall. "I mean, I know people have casual sex all the time... but not me! Not Paige Foster!" she yelled, half laughing as she stopped to look at Simon before returning to her one sided conversation.

"What was I thinking?" she yelled to herself, "Sure you looked good and all, and the dancing was... but I had sex with you! A complete stranger! Unprotected I might add!" She yelled as she shot daggers at Simon. "*Twice!*"

Simon watched her pace the hall in front of him, yelling and flinging her arms around. She looked like she was talking more to herself than to him. He knew she would be upset, but he didn't expect this. She was furious.

"I should have just stayed at home! I didn't even want to go to that stupid club," Paige said, sparing a glance over at Simon. "I should have just listened to myself for once and done exactly that!"

Simon snorted a laugh at her comment. "That's always been your problem."

"What?" Paige yelled, stopping to turn around. He looked completely calm lounging against the wall and when he turned his head to look at her, she could see his disposition change in a matter of seconds.

"I said, that's always been your problem," Simon repeated.

"And what is that, oh wise one?" Paige asked, crossing her arms over her chest.

Simon shook his head before pushing off the wall and taking a few steps closer to her. "You, following that little herd of hyena's around and doing exactly what they want you to, that's what."

"I do what I want."

"Since when?" Simon asked, laughing. "You've always done exactly what your friends thought you should. You did it then, and ten years later, you're still doing it."

"For your information, this is the first time I've seen any of them in years."

"Yeah, and the minute you do, you fall right back into the pack, following orders like some confused groupie."

"I do not."

"Then tell me... why are you so upset?" Simon asked her. "Is it because of who I am, or is it because of who *they* think I am?"

Paige stared up at him, completely lost for words. She'd always done exactly what *they* told her she should, even when she'd felt she should do differently. Her friends were all she had, what they thought mattered... at least she thought it did.

Simon sighed. "Paige, I'm not going to lie to you and tell you that the minute I saw you at the club that I didn't rejoice in the prospects that you'd finally be able to see me. *Me*, not who they thought I was," he told her calmly, closing the distance between them. "I have done nothing since the first day I saw you but hope that maybe, someday, you'd be able to see. To see past what everyone else thought. To see me for who I really am."

Paige looked up at him and the quiet shy boy she remembered once again came shining through. The small voice and scared, almost terrified look in his eyes made her look away. She remembered all the things that had been done and said to him, things she didn't like, but stood by and let them happen... all because she felt powerless to stop them.

"Paige."

Paige closed her eyes briefly before she slowly opened them, looking up into the same blue depths that

made her skin tingle and pull her into a world where nothing seemed to matter but her.

"You don't have to listen to them anymore," Simon said, quietly. "You can make your own choices."

"Simon, I don't—"

"No. I know what you're going to say Paige and it shouldn't matter what your friends think. You can't tell me you didn't feel anything. I know you did. I could see it in your eyes."

Paige glanced down the hall when she heard footsteps, seeing her friends finally emerge from the dining hall and she felt every ounce of breath leave her lungs when Simon reached out and turned her face back to him.

"They won't be here to run your life after tomorrow," he said, "Do what you want, Paige. For once, make your own decision. Come with me."

Paige swallowed hard, the lump forming in her throat making it difficult to swallow as her mouth went completely dry. She looked at him when he held his hand out to her and the fear in his eyes made her wish for the first time in her life that she'd had the strength to do what she'd wanted to ten years ago.

"Paige?"

Paige turned her head, looking back down the hall when Heather said her name. Her mind was cluttered with rights and wrongs and the line between the two was rapidly becoming confused.

She looked between her friends and Simon. She knew they all had their own reasons for wanting her to go with them and she was sure they would all be legitimate... right or wrong.

The question was... did she do what *she* wanted to do or what her friends thought was best.

Chapter Fourteen



Paige stretched out her limbs, the morning sun shining through the room and bathing her in bright light before she looked out the window.

The sounds from the open window of the rolling ocean waves tossing along the surf were calming. She smiled, snuggling down into the blankets, the warmth a comfort against the cool breeze carrying through the window.

Her eyes closed, blocking out the sights as a contented sigh escaped her. For the first time in her life, she made decisions for *her* and she was happy in her choices.

"Paige?"

Paige looked at her friends standing at the end of the hall before they slowly made their way to her. She knew she had to choose. She turned her head, looking back at Simon and the questioning look still in his eyes. He stared down at her and her heart leapt with the possibilities.

"Paige, they're serving; we need to get back inside," Heather said as the group came to a stop.

Paige looked back over at them, their gazes flickering between her and Simon and she had never felt more alone than at that moment. She was torn. Would her friends hate her if she left with him? Would she ever see him again if she didn't?

She took too long to decide.

One minute, she was staring up into clear blue eyes that held so much promise, the next she was watching him walk away. A man, that in two days made her feel alive. A man that made her body burn and beg for more. A man who she knew would never purposely hurt her.

She watched him leave, the scene almost playing in slow motion as the door closed behind him... the voices of her friends a dull thud in her head. She was frozen in place, her mind going in ten different directions at once.

"Come on Paige, our dinner is getting cold," Amy said, smiling as she turned and started down the hall.

The roar of his motorcycle echoed in her head when a light touch on her arm finally snapped her attention back to her friends. Megan was still there and the reassuring smile she always got from her best friend calmed her slightly.

"So, what's it going to be?" Megan asked, "It's your choice you know."

Paige glanced at the others as they slowly trickled down the hall back towards the dining hall before she looked back out the windows. "What if it goes bad?"

"What if it doesn't?"

Paige looked back at Megan, a tiny smile forming on her lips. "I really love you Meg, you know that, right?"

"I know, Paige."

Paige opened her eyes when the alarm on the clock began to play. She reached over, switching it off before her attention fell back to the view outside. She sighed, closing her eyes briefly before throwing the covers back and crawling from the bed. She walked to the window and shut it, cutting off the chilling air blowing through.

She stared out at the ocean, the blue water bringing another smile to her face when it reminded her of him.

Turning, her smile lingered as she walked back to the bed, crawled under the covers and snuggled in.

"Whose turn is it?"

Paige pulled the blankets up higher around her neck before her eyes snapped open when cover was jerked away. "Yours," she giggled.

Her heart pounded in her chest as she ran through the parking lot. The loud roar of his motorcycle drowning out her voice as she called his name.

"Okay. Let's see. How about... your biggest regret."

"Now or then?" she asked.

"Then."

The loud blaring sound of a car horn startled her as she ran out between the parked cars, the driver slamming on his breaks just as she stopped and looked at him. Her already pounding heart quickening its pace when she realized what had nearly just happened.

She turned quickly, once again running toward the street, watching Simon pull away without even glancing back. She felt like her world was crumbling right before her eyes.

Paige turned, lying on her back before closing her eyes and thinking. A slow smile played across her lips before she opened them. "Probably me listening to your brother when he told me to never call back."

"My brother?"

"Yeah," Paige said. "He wasn't very nice about it either."

Paige screamed his name when she finally stopped running and made it to the road. She watched him drive

out of sight, her heart sinking in her chest. Her eyes closed briefly before she finally turned, walking slowly back toward the building where her friends were all waiting.

"When was this?"

"You know that's very distracting," Paige said as slow wet kisses were placed on her neck.

"Your point?"

A light giggle escaped her as the kisses began to rain over her collarbone, the light sweep of his tongue darting out and tasting her skin. "My point is, I can't think clearly when you're doing that." She moaned when he found his way to her breast.

"Too bad," he said smiling, his tongue flicking out, teasing her nipple before his gazes lifted to her face.

"Now, what's this about my brother?"

Paige took a deep breath, her hand on the door handle, trying to compose herself before facing everyone in that room again. She pulled the door open; her friends were all whispering and waiting just down the hall as she looked at them. She sighed heavily, pulling a fake smile onto her face before her body went numb.

Walking in, the door slowly closed behind her and her eyes widened when she heard it.

"Well, I called and he told me to not ever call back."

"You called my house?" he asked, surprised, lifting his head.

"Yeah."

Turning slowly, Paige looked out the windows on the door, the fake smile on her face turning into a true smile, as the roar of his motorcycle echoed off the building.

She looked back at her friends, smiling at them before turning back to the door and opening it and walking back outside.

"I made it three blocks before I realized what I had done."

"And what was that?" Paige asked, walking over to him.

"I walked away without a fight. I haven't done that in years," he told her grinning.

Paige smiled as she stopped beside him. "Do you always win?"

"Yes." Simon said looking up at her.

"Really?" she asked, raising her arm and touching his cheek with her hand.

"Yeah, I'm kind of used to getting my way," he told her, leaning into her hand as it cupped his cheek. "I get a little cranky when I don't."

"And what do you want now?"

"The same thing I've always wanted, Paige. You."

"I don't ever remember you calling my house."

"It was two nights before prom," Paige told him smiling.

"He never told me you called."

"Figured as much."

"Well, why is that a regret?"

Paige raised her hand, running it through the short tussled curls on his head before looking up at him.

"Because, I never got to tell you."

"Tell me what?" he asked, his voice quiet.

"I never got to tell you, that I'd love to be your date for the prom."

Simon let out the breath he hadn't realized he was holding in as he stared down at her.

Ten years had passed since then and the memory of that day was as fresh as if it had happened yesterday. As much as he hated to admit it, it still hurt.

"You ran out of the room so fast that day, I never got a chance to answer you," Paige said smiling. "And after school, I tried to tell you, but you walked away," she said quietly, her hand lowering to cup his cheek. "I ended up going with Lance, only after Heather said she'd drag me there kicking and screaming if I didn't. I've never been so humiliated as I was that night. There wasn't a person there who didn't know what he'd done to me, and I looked like the biggest fool in the world, walking around with him on my arm. The worst part was, the whole time I was there, I was wishing I was with you."

Simon's eyes closed, his jaw twitching slightly as he ran her words through his head. "You really wanted to go?"

"Yes. I was tired of being everyone's Stepford friend and wanted to do something for me, just once, before I graduated. I refused to go, especially with Lance. I kept waiting for you to talk to me or to just even look at me. When you didn't, I tried calling you, to see if... to see if you still wanted to go, but your brother told me you weren't there and to never call back, so I didn't. I just figured you hated me by that point, so I didn't even try again."

"I could never hate you," Simon told her as he laid his forehead against hers. "I love you. I have from the minute I saw you."

"I know," Paige said smiling as she leaned up and kissed him.

It felt better than anything she had ever felt. Free to make her own decisions, free from the guilt of what her friends would think. With the wind whipping around her face, Paige's arms wrapped tighter around Simon's waist as they headed back to L.A. on his bike and she knew she'd made the right decision.

It had been an easy choice to make once she realized he was right. Her friends didn't live her life. They wouldn't be there day in and day out to help her cope with the everyday things she faced. She made her own choices daily. Why, just because they were here, could she not make them now?

She wondered why she hadn't ever done it before. The looks on her friends' faces were filled with surprise, but when she tossed her car keys to Megan and seated herself behind Simon on this bike, they were smiling. Would it have been that easy all along? Could she have told them no all those years ago and it still have worked out okay?

Paige held Simon to her as the kiss deepened. A month had past since the reunion and there hadn't been a day since, they hadn't been together. She'd almost given up on her apartment all together as his beach house felt more like home.

They spent most of their time together talking or walking along the beach or their favorite pastime, exploring each other and learning what pleased them. Paige wondered daily what it would have been like over the last ten years if she had been strong enough to stand up for herself and admit that she had always sort of liked him when they were in school. Would he have been like he is now, or had he needed time to discover himself as she had?

She didn't know the answer but she saw him differently now. She saw him for who he was, not what her friends thought he was. And she liked what she saw. She saw a man who loved her--completely. A man who would probably take his last breath loving her and the thought warmed her to the bone. Simon loved her, he always had.

Paige's eyes opened when Simon broke the kiss. She smiled up at him when his hand slipped down her body to her leg, moving it aside to allow himself room to settle between them. She was constantly amazed at how the slightest touches sent her body into a rush of tingles.

One soft touch of his lips across her skin and she was completely swept away.

He had become a constant fixture in her life over the last month and she knew she'd be miserable if he were no longer there.

She felt him enter her and their eyes locked. Limbs entangled and emotions poured out through light touches and soft kisses. No matter how many times they came together, it always felt like the first time. Whether it was fast and hard or slow and passionate like now, it was always like finding their way home.

Simon lowered his head, kissing her before slowly grinding his hips into hers. He had one hand tangled in her hair while the other was wrapped around her waist, pulling her to him. A small moan escaped her throat when his tongue slipped between her lips.

As the rhythm of Simon's thrusts increased, Paige's nails bit into his back and her legs wrapped around his waist.

Her eyes opened, staring up at him and she felt the fluttering in her stomach as her release neared. Simon's grip around her waist tightened, his hips rocking against her in a steady but urgent rhythm.

Leaning up, she kissed him as her body began to hum with electricity, the friction between them increasing until she pulled away with a gasp as her body began to tremble.

Simon's head lowered to her shoulder when he felt her muscles clench around him before she let out a small scream, her body trembling beneath him. His own release quickly became apparent, his thrusts increased, his hips pushing against her before his world slowly exploded around him.

Paige lay breathless, her arms and legs wrapped tightly around him as he lay on top of her. Her hot breath tickled his neck as he tried to regain hold of his erratic breathing while their bodies calmed. A small sigh escaped her as she held him to her and leaned in, placing a small kiss on his shoulder.

"You know, you just keep getting better and better at that," Paige said, breathing in deeply.

Simon chuckled against her neck before raising his head.

"Well, I aim to please, Ms. Foster," he told her before stealing a quick kiss from her.

"Do you now?" Paige asked raising an eyebrow, "Cause if you *really* want to please me, you can skip out of work tonight and every other night for that matter."

"Here we go again," Simon said laughing before moving to lie beside her. "You know, I still can't for the life of me figure out why me working at the club is such an

issue now, when I distinctly remember a certain gorgeous blonde, namely you, checking me out there not more than a month ago."

"Well, that's different," Paige said, before rolling to her side so she could see him. "Me gawking at you is different than others gawking at you."

Simon looked up at her when she rose up on her elbow and looked down at him. "I'll tell you what. When I finish paying off the beach house, I'll quit."

"Really?" Paige asked excitedly, her smile huge as she stared down at him.

"Really," Simon said smiling back at her.

Paige giggled before kissing him hard and laying her head on his chest. "So, how long till the house is paid for?" she asked, tracing circles around his stomach with her finger.

"Twenty-eight years."

Paige's head shot up, her eyes and mouth wide and she stared down at him before he laughed and tackled her onto her back. "What? I've only had the place a few years. I don't make *that* much money, you know."

He knew he should tell her he had already put in his notice, but just watching her pout about it daily gave his ego a boost he'd never get tired of. Just knowing she wanted him all to herself was enough for him to keep the information to himself.

"You really aren't funny," Paige said pouting up at him.

"Yes I am," Simon said, lowering his head.

"Are not," Paige said finally smiling.

"Are too,"

Paige giggled when he kissed her, his hand grabbing at her side as his fingers dug into her flesh. "Stop!" she yelled, laughing as he tickled her before she started tickling him back, sending them both into a fit of giggles.

They finally both released their hold on each other.

"What am I going to do with you?" Paige asked as they both lay panting for breath.

Simon looked down at her, his eyes softening as he said, "Love me forever."

Paige smiled before saying, "I don't think that will ever be a problem, Colin."

He smiled down at her when she said his name and knew she meant what she said. He could see it in her eyes. He stared at her as she raised her head and their lips finally made contact. Never in his wildest dreams did he ever think his fantasies of having a life with her would ever come true, but here he was. He held heaven in the palm of his hands and his entire world existed in the eyes of an angel.

The End

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Destined Hearts - Contemporary Romance

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A love that transcends time. A Passion that couldn't be denied.

Caitlyn Edwards has always lived her life between two worlds. One...in the hustle and bustle of modern day Boston, where she spends her days taking care of her widowed father and helping him run their small auto repair shop. The other...in the arms of a man she only sees in her dreams. Her nights are filled with promises of a love so passionate, she's spent the last fifteen years trying to find out who he is.

William Davenport is a man torn between duty and what he wants. He's led a life only the privileged and very rich can afford, but his controlling father still feels the need to dictate his every move. A chance encounter with Caitlyn triggers dreams of a life he can't remember living and soon a woman he can't seem to forget, starts to invade his every day world.

Will Caitlyn and William discover their past in time to change their future? Will the mistakes of years gone by repeat themselves? Or will a love once denied be reunited?

The Lawman - Historical Western Romance

Book 1 in the best selling, historical western romance,
Willow Creek Series

On the run from her ex-lover...
Jilted by a no-show husband...
And now mistaken for a whore in the Diamond Back Saloon...

Abigail Thornton doesn't think things can get any worse. That is until a single slap to a man's face starts a barroom brawl that lands her in the last place she expected to be.

Town Marshal Morgan Avery wants nothing more than to wash away the trail-dust and sleep for a week, preferably with a soft, willing woman by his side. Instead, he gets Abigail Thornton – all one hundred pounds of her thrust at him seconds before a fist connects with his face. Breaking up the fight takes more effort than he wants to admit and when the last man falls he finds Abigail still standing and not looking the least bit contrite.

Throwing her into the town jail for the night would salve his wounded pride and then he will let her go. Or that was the plan. When morning comes he finds himself oddly reluctant to do so. Miss Thornton is hiding something and he aims to find out what, even if he has to bed her to do so. But will one night in her bed be enough?

Available now at participating retailers. Find out how to get your free copy by visiting LilyGraison.Com's [Free Ebook Specials](#) page.

Other books by Lily Graison

Western Romance

- The Lawman (Willow Creek #1)
- The Outlaw (Willow Creek #2)
- The Gambler (Willow Creek #3)
- The Rancher (Willow Creek #4)
- His Brother's Wife (Willow Creek #5)
- A Willow Creek Christmas (Willow Creek #6)

Contemporary Romance

- Wicked: Tempt Me Not (Wicked Series #1)
 - Wicked: Leather and Lace (Wicked Series #2)
 - Wicked: Jade Butterfly (Wicked Series #3)
 - Wicked: Sweet Temptation (Wicked Series #4)
 - Wicked: The Complete Series (Books 1 - 4)
- Blame It On The Mistletoe (Single Title Romance)
- That First Christmas (Single Title Romance)

Paranormal Romance

- The Calling (Night Breeds Series #1)
- The Gathering (Night Breeds Series #2)

About the Author:

Lily Graison lives in the foothills of North Carolina with her husband, two high-strung Yorkies, more cats than she can count and the neighbour's chicken who thinks he's part of her family. First published in 2005, she is the author of over a dozen published books in the Western, Contemporary and Paranormal Romance genres.

When not writing, Lily can be found at her sewing machine creating 1800's period clothing or participating in civil war re-enactments and area living history events. When not portraying a southern belle, you can find her at a nearby store feeding her obsession for all things resembling office supplies.

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A Touch of Heaven by Lily Graison

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