The Wreckers: "Calypso Key" | Book #10

by Brent Clark Palmer

The Wreckers, Book 10

Chapter 1

Chapter One

Calypso Key

The boat moved through water the color of melted gemstones.

Vanessa Smart stood near the railing, one hand resting on the sun-warmed wood, the other holding a glass of chilled passionfruit and rum that had appeared the moment they stepped aboard. She was twenty-nine, long-limbed and striking, with hair the color of deep auburn that caught the light and turned it molten at the edges. She hadn't bothered to pin it up. The salt air was already working on it, loosening strands around her face. She wore nothing now except a thin gold chain around her neck and a pair of delicate sandals. The dress she'd worn from the airport lay folded neatly over Jordan's arm.

Beside her, Jordan Harlan leaned on his forearms, sleeves long gone, shirt open and then discarded. He was taller than almost everyone else on the small transfer boat, with sharp, clean features and the kind of calm, watchful presence that made people look twice. His dark hair was already messy from the wind. At thirty-four, he carried the quiet confidence of a man who had built and then walked away from something substantial.

They were both naked.

The rules had been clear from the moment they boarded in Montego Bay: once you were on the boat, the resort's policy began. By the time they reached the island, everyone would be bare. Most of the other passengers had already stripped down. A few still hesitated, clutching at linen shirts or sundresses like they weren't quite ready to let go of the outside world. Vanessa took a slow sip of her drink and let her eyes move over the water.

"I still can't believe you let me talk you into this," she said quietly, only for him. Jordan glanced at her. The corner of his mouth lifted.

"You didn't talk me into anything. I booked it."

"You suggested it after three glasses of wine and a very long debrief about the last job," she corrected. "I just agreed enthusiastically."

He was quiet for a moment, watching a gull wheel overhead.

"After Manhattan," he said finally, "I wanted somewhere that didn't require us to think. Or plan. Or be careful." His voice was low, almost lazy. "Somewhere we could just… exist. Naked. Decadent. No agendas."

Vanessa turned her head to look at him properly. The sun caught the edge of his jaw and the small scar near his temple that she had kissed a thousand times.

“Calypso Key felt right,” she said. “Private island. Fully nudist. Adults only. No children, no day visitors, no one who isn’t here for exactly the same reason we are.”

“Which is?”

She smiled. “To stop performing for a while.”

Jordan’s eyes moved over her face, then lower, slow and unhurried. He had always looked at her like this — like he was cataloguing what was his without needing to claim it out loud. “You organized events for people who could afford places like this,” he said after a moment. “Back when we still did that sort of thing.”

Vanessa let out a soft breath that might have been a laugh.

“And you got paid obscene amounts of money to tell very important men that their systems were broken and then fix them,” she answered. “We earned this.”

“We did,” he agreed. His hand found the small of her bare back, fingers spreading warm against her skin. “Ten days. No jobs. No games unless we decide we want one.”

“Unless we decide we want one,” she echoed.

The boat had begun to slow. Up ahead, the island rose out of the water like something conjured. Low green hills, white sand curving in a perfect crescent, elegant dark-wood buildings tucked into the landscape instead of dominating it. Even from this distance Vanessa could see the open-air pavilion, the private villas scattered along the beach and hillside, the glint of plunge pools catching sunlight. People moved freely along the sand and walkways — completely naked, unselfconscious, the way only guests at a place like this ever managed to be.

Calypso Key wasn’t a swingers resort in any formal sense. It was something rarer: a private, fully nudist adults-only sanctuary built for people who wanted beauty, luxury, and the freedom to exist without clothes or pretense. There were no organized events, no themes, no pressure. Just sun, water, excellent food and drink, and the understanding that everyone here had come to shed more than just fabric. Some guests spent the entire week having quiet, intense affairs. Others simply walked the beach naked and fucked their own partners with the windows open. The staff was discreet, professional, and entirely unsurprised by anything. Jordan had booked it after Vanessa told him she wanted somewhere that asked nothing of them except presence. She wanted to be looked at. She wanted to look. She wanted to feel the sun on her bare skin and Jordan’s hands on her body without either of them having to calculate consequences.

The boat bumped gently against the wooden dock.

That was when she noticed the couple standing near the bow.

They were young. Mid-twenties. Still glowing with that particular shine that came from having recently said vows in front of people they loved. The man was tall and lean, with sun-

streaked light brown hair and the kind of easy, athletic build that suggested he actually used his body. He had already taken off his shirt and shorts. His cock hung heavy and half-hard between his legs, not from anything overt, just from the combination of sun, nerves, and the sight of his wife standing naked beside him in public for the first time.

The woman beside him was lovely in a warm, unpolished way. Dark blonde hair twisted into a loose knot that was already coming undone in the wind. Full, natural breasts with soft pink nipples tightened by the breeze. A gentle curve to her belly and hips that made her look fertile and fuckable in the most uncomplicated way. She hadn't removed the thin gold wedding band on her left hand. She kept touching it with her thumb like she still couldn't quite believe it was there.

They were talking quietly to each other, heads close, the easy overlapping rhythm of two people who had already learned how the other breathed.

Vanessa felt Jordan's hand shift slightly on her back.

"They look like they're still in the post-wedding glow," he murmured, only for her. "First real trip as a married couple."

She didn't answer. She was already watching them.

The staff member on the dock — a smiling woman in her thirties wearing only a thin linen sarong and sandals — began helping passengers disembark. Vanessa and Jordan waited their turn. When it came, Jordan stepped off first and turned to offer her his hand. She took it, bare feet finding the warm wood of the dock.

That was when the young woman's voice reached them.

"Excuse me — sorry, I think we're on the same transfer list? We're in villa fourteen. Do you know if they're near each other?"

Vanessa turned.

The young woman was looking at them with open, friendly curiosity, one hand shading her eyes from the sun. Up close she was even prettier — wide hazel eyes, a scattering of freckles across her nose and shoulders, a mouth that looked like it smiled easily.

"We're in twelve," Vanessa said. "Probably close."

"Oh, perfect." The young woman smiled, relieved. "I'm Sophie. This is my husband, Liam." Liam stepped forward and offered his hand automatically, then seemed to remember they were all naked and dropped it with a slightly sheepish

laugh.

“Sorry. Force of habit. Hi.”

Jordan shook his hand anyway. “Jordan. This is Vanessa.”

“First time here?” Sophie asked, glancing between them.

“First time at Calypso Key,” Vanessa answered. “We’ve done other places. Nothing quite like this.”

Liam let out a low breath and looked around at the island, at the naked guests already walking the paths, at the open pavilion where people sat drinking and talking without a stitch of clothing.

“It’s… a lot,” he admitted. “In a good way. We just got married a few months ago. Did the big honeymoon in Italy. This is supposed to be the real first trip. Just us. No family, no wedding stress.”

Sophie bumped her shoulder against his arm, smiling. “He was nervous about the naked part. I told him he’d get over it in about six minutes.”

Liam laughed, the sound easy and self-deprecating. “She was right. Mostly.”

Vanessa let her eyes move over both of them without staring. Sophie’s body was soft in all the places that mattered — full breasts, rounded hips, the kind of ass that begged to be grabbed. Liam was leaner, more angular, with strong thighs and a cock that was still half-hard and showing no signs of going down. They were both fit without being obsessive about it. Young. In love. Still learning how to be married in public.

Jordan’s hand had returned to the small of Vanessa’s back. His thumb stroked once, slow and deliberate.

“You picked a good place for that,” he said to Liam. “Calypso doesn’t push. It just… removes the barriers. What happens after that is up to you.”

Sophie’s cheeks pinked slightly, but she didn’t look away.

“We’ve never done anything like this before,” she admitted. “The naked part. Or… any of the rest of it. But we talked about it a lot before we booked. We wanted to see what it felt like to be somewhere that didn’t judge.”

Vanessa smiled. It was the warm, genuine version of her smile — the one she used when she actually liked the people in front of her.

“You’ll figure it out,” she said. “Most people do by the second day.”

The staff member with the tablet appeared beside them, polite and efficient.

“Welcome to Calypso Key. If you’ll follow me, I’ll show you to your villas. Your bags will be delivered directly.”

They began walking along the wooden path that curved toward the beachfront villas. Sophie and Liam fell into step beside them naturally. The conversation continued in that easy, lowstakes way that happened when four attractive people found themselves naked together in paradise for the first time.

Liam asked Jordan what he did for work. Jordan answered with the lightest possible version of the truth.

“I used to consult,” he said. “Tech systems. The kind of work that paid extremely well and burned people out fast. I got out while I still liked myself.”

Sophie glanced at Vanessa. “And you?”

“I used to organize events,” Vanessa said. “Very private, very expensive ones. The kind where the guest list was smaller than most people’s weddings and the budget could buy a small island.” She let the corner of her mouth lift. “We both retired from real work a few years ago. Now we just… live.”

Liam let out a low whistle. “That’s the dream.”

“It has its moments,” Jordan said dryly.

They reached the turnoff for the villas. Twelve and fourteen were only a short walk apart along the same curved path. Sophie paused at the fork, one hand resting lightly on Liam’s hip.

“Maybe we’ll see you around,” she said. “At the pool or… wherever people end up.” Vanessa met her eyes. The young woman was trying very hard to sound casual. It was endearing.

“I’m sure we will,” Vanessa said.

Jordan’s hand slid a little lower on her back.

They said their goodbyes and turned toward their own villa. The path was dappled with sunlight and shadow. The air smelled like salt and flowers and warm wood. Somewhere nearby, music played at a volume that felt more like atmosphere than sound.

When they were out of earshot, Jordan spoke quietly.

“They’re sweet.”

“They are,” Vanessa agreed. She glanced at him sideways. “And they’re already curious. She kept looking at your cock. He kept looking at my tits and then pretending he wasn’t.” Jordan’s mouth curved.

“Ten days,” he said.

Vanessa stopped walking. She turned to face him fully, bare skin to bare skin, and looped her arms around his neck. The sun was hot on her shoulders. His body was warmer.

“Ten days,” she echoed. “And if we decide we want to play with the sweet married couple who just got off a plane from wherever they’re from… we do it together. Like always.”

Jordan’s hands settled on her hips. His thumbs pressed into the soft skin there. “Like always,” he said.

He kissed her then — slow, deep, unhurried. The kind of kiss that tasted like salt and rum and the beginning of something they both already knew they were going to do.

When he pulled back, his forehead rested against hers.

“Welcome to Calypso Key,” he murmured.

Vanessa smiled against his mouth.

“Welcome home,” she answered.

She took his hand and led him up the steps to villa twelve.

Behind them, the path curved toward villa fourteen, where a young couple named Liam and Sophie were standing in the sunlight, naked and newly married, trying very hard not to look back at the striking redhead and the tall, sharp-eyed man who had already decided — without saying it out loud — that this vacation might be more interesting than they had planned. The ocean kept moving.

The island waited.

And ten days suddenly felt like both a very long time and nowhere near long enough.

Chapter 2

Chapter Two

The morning came in soft and golden.

Vanessa woke first, the way she usually did. She lay on her stomach with the sheet tangled around her waist, one leg hooked over Jordan’s thigh. The doors to the deck were open, and the sound of the ocean moved through the villa like a slow heartbeat. Sunlight striped across the bed and the dark wood floor. Somewhere outside, a bird called once and then went quiet. She turned her head and looked at him.

Jordan was still asleep, one arm thrown above his head, the other resting across her lower back. Even relaxed, there was a kind of precision to the way he took up space. She studied the line of his jaw, the faint shadow of stubble, the small scar near his temple. Ten days. No jobs. That had been the plan.

Her mouth curved, small and private.

Plans changed.

She slid out from under his arm carefully, stood, and walked naked onto the deck. The plunge pool glittered. Beyond it, the beach curved away in both directions, already dotted with early risers. A few people were in the water. Others walked along the sand, bare and unhurried. Calypso Key in daylight looked even more like something that had been built for exactly this kind of indolence.

Vanessa leaned on the railing and let the sun warm her back.

She was still standing there when she heard Jordan’s voice behind her, low and rough with sleep.

“You’re thinking too loud.”

She didn’t turn around. “I’m thinking we should go down to the beach.”

“Before or after I fuck you?”

“After,” she said. Then, after a beat, “Or during. I’m flexible.”

He came up behind her, pressed his body against her back, and slid his hands around to cup her breasts. His palms were warm from the sheets. She leaned into him and closed her eyes. They stayed like that for a while, not speaking. His thumbs moved slowly over her nipples until they tightened. She could feel him getting hard against the curve of her ass. It would have been easy to turn around, to let him lift her onto the railing or bend her over it. Easy to start the day the way they usually did when they had nowhere to be.

Instead, Vanessa opened her eyes and looked down at the beach again.

Sophie and Liam were already there.

They were easy to spot. Sophie had spread a towel near the water's edge and was lying on her back, one knee bent, arms stretched above her head. The position made her breasts shift and settle in a way that looked both careless and deliberate. Liam sat beside her, half in the shade of a low palm, watching the water. Every so often his hand would drift over and rest on Sophie's thigh, like he needed the reminder that she was still there.

Vanessa felt Jordan's chin settle on her shoulder as he followed her gaze.

"They're up early," he murmured.

"They're on their first real vacation as a married couple," she said. "Everything still feels new."

Jordan's hands didn't stop moving. One slid down her stomach, fingers tracing the line of her hipbone.

"You want to go down there."

"I want to see what they're like when they're not on a boat and slightly overwhelmed," Vanessa answered. She tilted her head so her temple brushed his jaw. "And I want to see if she keeps looking at you the way she did yesterday."

Jordan's fingers dipped lower, brushing the top of her slit.

"And if she does?"

Vanessa smiled without turning around.

"Then we'll decide what to do about it."

They didn't fuck on the deck.

They showered together instead, slow and unhurried, hands moving over wet skin without any real goal. Jordan washed her hair. She ran her palms down his chest and stomach and let her fingers wrap around his cock for a few lazy strokes before letting go. By the time they stepped out, the sun was higher and the day already felt thick with heat.

They took their time with the sunscreen. Vanessa worked it slowly into her skin while Jordan watched. When she finished, she handed him the bottle without speaking. He did the same, his eyes on her the entire time.

When they were ready, they walked down to the beach together.

Sophie saw them first.

She sat up on her towel, one hand shading her eyes, and smiled with what looked like genuine pleasure.

"Hey," she called. "Good morning."

Liam turned at the sound of her voice. When he spotted them, his expression shifted into something warmer and slightly self-conscious.

“Morning,” he said. “You two look like you actually slept.”

Jordan’s mouth curved. “We did. Eventually.”

Vanessa dropped down onto the sand a few feet from Sophie’s towel, stretching her legs out in front of her. The sun hit her bare skin immediately.

Sophie’s eyes moved over her once — quick, appreciative, not quite hidden. Then she looked away, cheeks faintly pink.

Liam cleared his throat and gestured toward the small cooler they’d brought down. “We grabbed some fruit and water from the pavilion if you want any. They had these little mango things that are stupidly good.”

Vanessa accepted a piece of mango and bit into it. Juice ran down her fingers. She licked it off without thinking about it.

“This place is even better in daylight,” she said. “I keep expecting someone to show up and tell us we’re not allowed to just… exist like this.”

Liam laughed. “Right? We keep waiting for the other shoe to drop. Like there’s going to be some weird mandatory activity or someone judging us for not doing enough.”

“There isn’t,” Jordan said. He sat down beside Vanessa, close enough that their thighs touched. “That’s the point. You paid for the right to do nothing. Or everything. Whatever you want.”

Sophie glanced between them.

“Can I ask you something?” she said after a moment. “And you can tell me if it’s too personal.”

Vanessa tilted her head. “Go ahead.”

Sophie hesitated, then pushed forward. “How long have you two been together? You seem… really comfortable with each other. Like you’ve been doing this a long time.”

Jordan looked at Vanessa. She met his eyes and smiled faintly before answering.

“Almost five years,” she said. “We met under very strange circumstances and decided to keep each other.”

Liam raised his eyebrows. “That’s vague as hell.”

“It was vague as hell,” Jordan agreed. “It worked out anyway.”

Sophie was still watching them with open curiosity.

“You said yesterday that you used to organize events,” she said to Vanessa. “And you consulted,” she added, looking at Jordan. “And now you just… travel? Live like this?” Vanessa took another bite of mango and let the sweetness sit on her tongue for a second before she answered.

“We worked very hard for a long time,” she said. “Made more money than two people reasonably need. Decided we didn’t want to keep doing it until we hated each other or ourselves. So we stopped.”

Liam let out a low whistle. “That’s brave.”

“Or selfish,” Jordan said mildly. “Depends on who you ask.”

Sophie shook her head. “No, I think it’s brave. We’ve only been married a few months and I already catch myself worrying about what happens when the newness wears off. Like we’re supposed to have everything figured out already.”

The words hung there for a moment, more honest than she’d probably meant them to be. Vanessa didn’t push. She just let the silence sit until Sophie filled it again.

“I don’t know,” Sophie continued, quieter now. “Italy was amazing. It felt like a movie. But this… this feels like real life. Just us. And part of me loves it and part of me keeps waiting for it to feel normal.”

Liam reached over and rested his hand on her knee. He didn’t say anything, but the gesture was steady.

Jordan’s voice was low when he spoke.

“Most people never get the chance to find out what normal looks like without all the noise,” he said. “You two are doing it on purpose. That’s more than most.”

Sophie looked at him for a long moment. Something in her expression shifted — not quite flirtatious, but open in a way that made the air between them feel slightly thicker. Vanessa watched it happen and felt the low, familiar pull in her stomach.

They stayed on the beach for another hour.

The conversation moved in easy waves — light, occasionally deeper, never forced. Sophie asked more questions about the places they’d been. Liam talked about their wedding and how overwhelming it had been to have two hundred people watching them promise each other

forever. Vanessa and Jordan answered without giving too much away, the way they always did when they were still deciding whether someone was worth the effort.

At one point Sophie stood up to stretch, arms over her head, body arching in the sunlight. Liam's eyes followed the movement the way a man follows something he already knows belongs to him but still can't quite believe is real. When Sophie caught him looking, she smiled and didn't look away.

Vanessa felt Jordan's hand settle on her thigh, thumb stroking once.

She didn't need to look at him to know what he was thinking.

They said their goodbyes around midday, when the sun had gotten too strong and the pavilion was calling with cold drinks and shade. Sophie hugged Vanessa on impulse — bare skin against bare skin, quick and warm — and then seemed surprised at herself. Liam shook Jordan's hand and then, after a second, hugged Vanessa too.

"See you around," Sophie said.

"I'm sure you will," Vanessa answered.

They walked back toward the villas without speaking for the first minute. The path was quiet. The only sounds were the distant ocean and the soft slap of their feet on the wooden boards. Jordan broke the silence first.

"She's curious," he said.

"She is," Vanessa agreed. "And he's already a little bit in over his head."

They reached the turnoff for their villa. Jordan stopped walking.

Vanessa turned to face him.

The look on his face was familiar — calm on the surface, something sharper underneath. "You want to do it," he said. It wasn't a question.

Vanessa stepped in close, until her breasts brushed his chest. She slid her hands up his arms and linked her fingers behind his neck.

"I want to see what they look like when they stop trying so hard to be good," she said. "And I want to watch you take her apart while her husband watches. And I want to hear what she sounds like when she comes for someone who isn't him."

Jordan's hands settled on her hips. His thumbs pressed in.

"And after?"

Vanessa leaned up and kissed the corner of his mouth.

"After," she said, "we come back here and you fuck me until I can't remember my own name. Like always."

Jordan's grip tightened.

"Ten days," he said quietly.

“Ten days,” she echoed. Then, softer, “We don’t get to do that until we’re done with them. You know that.”

He let out a low breath that was almost a laugh and almost not.

“I know.”

Vanessa kissed him properly then — slow and deep, her body pressed against his. She could feel how hard he already was. She rocked against him once, just enough to make them both feel it, then pulled back.

“Come on,” she said. “Let’s go inside before I change my mind about waiting.”

They didn’t fuck when they got back to the villa.

They came close.

Jordan had her against the wall in the living room within thirty seconds of the door closing. His mouth was on her neck, one hand between her legs, two fingers sliding through how wet she already was. Vanessa had her hand wrapped around his cock, stroking him slow and tight the way she knew he liked. They were both breathing hard. It would have been so easy to keep going — to let him lift her, to wrap her legs around his waist, to let him fuck her right there against the wall like they usually did when they were this turned on.

Instead, Vanessa turned her head and spoke against his ear.

“We’re doing this,” she said. “We’re going to take them apart.”

Jordan’s fingers pushed deeper. His thumb found her clit and circled once, slow. “I know.”

“And we’re not going to fuck each other until it’s done,” she continued, voice low and a little rough. “Not once. Not even if we want to.”

Jordan made a sound against her throat — frustrated, aroused, resigned.

“I know,” he said again.

Vanessa kissed the side of his neck, then bit down gently.

“Good,” she whispered. “Then let’s go write it down.”

They waited until after midnight.

The beach was mostly empty by then. A few couples were still out, but they were far enough down the curve of the shore that they had privacy. The moon was high and bright, turning the sand silver and the water dark. The tide was coming in, the waves sliding up the beach in long, lazy sweeps before pulling back again.

Vanessa had brought a stick she’d found near the path. Jordan walked beside her, quiet. When they reached the wet sand near the water’s edge, she stopped.

For a moment neither of them spoke.

Then Jordan took the stick from her hand.

He crouched down and began to write.

The first line came out uneven in the sand.

We don’t fall in love with them.

Vanessa watched the letters form. When he finished, she spoke the words out loud, her voice low enough that it barely carried over the sound of the ocean.

“We don’t fall in love with them.”

Jordan moved a few feet down the beach and wrote the second line.

We don’t keep them.

Vanessa repeated it.

“We don’t keep them.”

He came back to stand beside her. For a second he just looked at the two lines already written, then at the blank space waiting for the third. The tide was already starting to creep toward the first line, the water darkening the sand around the letters.

Jordan handed her the stick.

Vanessa took it.

She crouched and wrote the last line carefully, the letters clear even in the moonlight. *When it’s over, we fuck each other like the world is ending.*

She stayed crouched for a moment, looking at the words. Then she stood up and let the stick fall from her fingers.

Jordan’s voice was quiet when he spoke.

“When it’s over,” he said, “we fuck each other like the world is ending.”

Vanessa turned to look at him. The moonlight caught the sharp lines of his face and turned his eyes darker than they usually were. She could see the tension in his shoulders, the way his hands flexed at his sides like he was stopping himself from reaching for her.

She stepped in close, close enough that their bodies almost touched, and looked up at him. “And we don’t fuck each other until it’s done,” she said, voice soft and a little disappointed, like she was reminding both of them of something they already wanted to ignore. “Not while we’re working. Not even once.”

Jordan’s jaw tightened. His eyes dropped to her mouth, then lower, to the way the moonlight moved over her bare breasts and stomach. He looked like a man

who was choosing, very deliberately, not to touch what was right in front of him.

“I know,” he said.

Vanessa reached up and touched his chest, right over his heart. She left her hand there. “We’re going to be so fucking good at this,” she murmured. “And then we’re going to come back here and you’re going to ruin me for it.”

Jordan’s hand came up and covered hers where it rested on his chest. He squeezed once. “Yeah,” he said. “We are.”

They stood there together and watched the tide.

The first wave reached the first line and began to blur the letters. The second wave came in stronger and took more. By the time the third wave rolled in, the words were already halfgone, the sand smoothing over itself like none of it had ever been written. Vanessa didn’t look away until the last trace of the third line had disappeared under the water. Only then did she turn and start walking back toward the path.

Jordan followed.

Neither of them spoke until they reached the villa. The lights were still off. The doors to the deck were still open. The sound of the ocean followed them inside.

Vanessa stopped in the middle of the living room and turned to face him.

Jordan stopped a few feet away, like he was giving himself distance on purpose.

For a long moment they just looked at each other.

Then Vanessa smiled — small, wicked, and full of promise.

“Tomorrow,” she said.

Jordan’s mouth curved in answer.

“Tomorrow.”

He turned and walked into the bedroom without another word.

Vanessa stayed where she was for a while longer, listening to the ocean and the sound of Jordan moving around in the other room. She could still feel the ghost of the words in the sand under her feet. She could still feel the ache between her legs that she wasn’t going to do anything about tonight.

She smiled again, to herself this time.

Then she followed him into the bedroom, closed the door behind her, and got into bed without touching him.

Outside, the tide kept coming in.

And somewhere down the beach, in villa fourteen, Sophie and Liam were probably asleep, still wrapped up in the newness of being married and naked in paradise, with no idea that two strangers had just written their marriage into the sand and watched the ocean take it away.

Chapter 3

Chapter Three

The sun was already high and brutal when Vanessa opened her eyes.

She was lying on her stomach on a large white towel, the heat of the sand pressing up through the fabric. Jordan was beside her on his back, one arm thrown over his eyes, his skin already darkening under the Caribbean sun. A few feet away, Sophie was sitting cross-legged on her own towel, wearing nothing but a pair of sunglasses and a thin gold anklet. Liam was in the water up to his waist, talking to another couple who had wandered over from further down the beach.

Vanessa watched Sophie without lifting her head from her arms.

The younger woman kept glancing toward the water, then back down at her phone, then over at Jordan. Her body language was restless in a way it hadn't been yesterday. She kept touching her mouth with her fingertips, like she was remembering something.

Jordan's voice was low beside her.

"She's been looking at you all morning."

Vanessa smiled against her forearm.

"I know."

She rolled onto her side and reached for the bottle of sunscreen. The motion made her breasts shift. Sophie's head turned immediately, even though her sunglasses hid her eyes. Vanessa squeezed lotion into her palm and started rubbing it slowly over her stomach and chest, taking her time. She didn't look directly at Sophie, but she could feel the other woman watching.

A few minutes later, Liam came jogging back up the beach, water dripping down his chest and thighs. He dropped onto the towel beside Sophie and leaned over to kiss her shoulder. "You good?" he asked.

Sophie smiled at him, but it was a beat too slow.

"Yeah. Just hot."

Liam didn't seem to notice the delay. He flopped onto his back and closed his eyes. Vanessa glanced at Jordan. He was watching the younger couple without any expression, but she knew that look. He was already calculating.

They spent the next hour rotating between the water and the towels. The conversation stayed light on the surface — favorite beaches, bad travel stories, how strange it felt to be naked in public without anyone caring. But underneath it, something had shifted since yesterday. Sophie laughed a little too loudly at

Jordan’s dry comments. Liam kept finding excuses to touch Sophie’s thigh or lower back, like he could feel her attention drifting and was trying to pull it back. Vanessa caught Sophie looking at Jordan’s cock more than once when he stood up to stretch. Each time, Sophie looked away quickly, cheeks faintly pink.

Around midday, Vanessa stood and stretched, arching her back.

“I’m going to get something cold to drink,” she said. “Anyone want anything?”

“I’ll come with you,” Sophie said immediately.

Liam started to sit up. “I can—”

“Stay,” Vanessa said, smiling at him. “You look comfortable. We’ll be right back.” She didn’t wait for an answer. She started walking toward the pavilion, and after a second she heard Sophie’s footsteps in the sand behind her.

They walked in silence for a few steps. Then Sophie spoke, her voice quieter than usual. “Can I ask you something?”

Vanessa glanced over. “Of course.”

Sophie kept her eyes forward. “Yesterday… on the boat. And last night at dinner. I felt like you and Jordan were… I don’t know. Watching us. Not in a creepy way. Just… paying attention.”

Vanessa didn’t answer right away. She let the silence stretch until Sophie glanced at her nervously.

“We were,” Vanessa said simply.

Sophie’s steps faltered for half a second.

“Why?”

Vanessa stopped walking and turned to face her. They were standing in a patch of shade from a cluster of palms. The sound of the ocean was loud enough to keep their conversation private.

“Because you’re beautiful,” Vanessa said. “Both of you. And because you look at my husband like you’re trying very hard not to.”

Sophie’s mouth opened, then closed. Her cheeks flushed deep red.

“I—I don’t—”

“It’s okay,” Vanessa said, her voice gentle. “I’m not upset. I noticed because I was watching too.”

Sophie stared at her. Her breathing had gone shallow.

Vanessa stepped in a little closer. Close enough that their bare arms brushed.

“You don’t have to be embarrassed,” she said. “It’s just the four of us here. No one else is keeping score.”

Sophie swallowed hard. Her eyes flicked down to Vanessa’s mouth, then away again. “I’ve never…” she started, then stopped. “Liam and I, we’ve only ever been with each other. Before the wedding, I mean. And since.”

Vanessa nodded slowly.

“I know.”

Sophie looked like she wanted to say more, but the words wouldn’t come. After a moment she just nodded, almost to herself, and they started walking again.

They returned with drinks. Liam thanked them and immediately pulled Sophie down beside him, wrapping an arm around her waist like he was anchoring her. Jordan caught Vanessa’s eye over the top of his sunglasses and gave her the smallest nod.

The rest of the afternoon moved in a strange, charged rhythm.

They played a lazy game of paddleball in the shallows. Sophie kept missing easy shots because she was distracted every time Jordan moved close to her. Liam laughed and teased her, but there was an edge to it now. At one point Jordan brushed against Sophie’s back while reaching for the ball, and Vanessa saw the way Sophie’s nipples tightened instantly. Later, they floated together in deeper water. Vanessa ended up between Liam and Jordan, while Sophie floated on Jordan’s other side. The conversation was easy, but the physical closeness wasn’t. Every time the current pushed Sophie against Jordan, she went very still for a second before pulling away.

By late afternoon they were all back on the towels, skin warm and tight from the sun. Liam had dozed off. Sophie was lying on her stomach, chin resting on her folded arms, staring out at the water.

Vanessa sat up and looked at Jordan.

“I think I’m done for the day,” she said. “You?”

Jordan nodded. He glanced at Sophie, then back at Vanessa.

“We were thinking about having a late dinner in the pavilion tonight,” he said, loud enough for Sophie to hear. “If you two want to join us.”

Sophie turned her head. Her eyes met Vanessa’s first, then Jordan’s.

“We’d like that,” she said.

Liam stirred beside her. “Yeah, sounds good.”

They agreed on a time and parted ways to shower and rest. As Vanessa and Jordan walked back toward their villa, Jordan’s hand found the small of her back.

“She’s going to do it tonight,” he said quietly.

Vanessa smiled.

“I know.”

--The pavilion was quieter at night.

Most of the guests had already eaten and drifted back to their villas or down to the beach. A few couples lingered at the bar or on the low couches scattered around the open space. Music played softly from hidden speakers. The lighting was low and warm, casting long shadows across bare skin.

Vanessa and Jordan arrived first. They took a table near the edge of the pavilion, half in shadow, with a clear view of the path that led down from the villas. Vanessa wore nothing but a thin gold bracelet. Jordan sat beside her, one arm draped along the back of her chair, his fingers occasionally brushing her shoulder.

Sophie and Liam appeared a few minutes later.

Sophie had done something to her hair — it was loose and slightly wavy, falling around her shoulders. She looked nervous but excited. Liam had his hand on her lower back as they walked, like he was trying to keep her close.

They ordered drinks and food. The conversation started easy enough — more stories about the resort, funny things they’d seen during the day, how strange it felt to have no schedules or responsibilities. But as the night went on, the undercurrent grew stronger.

Sophie kept looking at Jordan when she thought no one was watching. Every time she laughed at something he said, she leaned forward a little more than necessary. Liam noticed. Vanessa could see it in the way his jaw tightened and the way he kept trying to pull Sophie’s attention back to him with little touches and questions.

At one point, while Liam was talking to Jordan about some work thing from back home, Sophie met Vanessa’s eyes across the table. She held the look for several seconds. Her lips parted slightly. Then she looked away, cheeks flushed.

Vanessa felt the familiar, low pull in her stomach.

They finished eating. Liam ordered another round of drinks. Sophie excused herself to use the restroom. When she came back, she didn’t sit beside Liam again. Instead she took the empty seat next to Jordan.

Liam’s expression flickered, but he didn’t say anything.

The four of them talked for another hour. The drinks kept coming. Sophie grew bolder. She laughed more freely. Once, when Jordan made a dry comment about

something, she reached out and touched his arm without thinking, then left her hand there a second too long. Liam watched it happen. His fingers tightened around his glass.

Eventually Vanessa stood.

“I think I’m ready to call it a night,” she said.

Jordan rose with her. Sophie looked up at them, something like disappointment flashing across her face before she could hide it.

Liam stood too. “Yeah, us too. Long day.”

They walked together along the path that split toward the different villas. The night air was warm and thick with the sound of the ocean. When they reached the fork, Liam turned toward their villa, clearly expecting Sophie to follow.

Sophie hesitated.

Vanessa watched her.

For a moment, no one spoke.

Then Sophie looked at Jordan.

“I… I think I left my phone at the pavilion,” she said. Her voice was quiet but steady. “I should go back and check.”

Liam frowned. “I can come with you—”

“It’s fine,” Sophie said quickly. “It’ll only take a minute. You go ahead. I’ll meet you at the villa.”

Liam looked like he wanted to argue, but something in Sophie’s expression stopped him. He nodded once, stiffly, and started walking toward their villa without another word. Sophie stood there between Vanessa and Jordan, barefoot on the wooden path, the moonlight turning her skin silver.

Vanessa looked at Jordan.

He didn’t say anything. He just started walking back toward the pavilion.

Sophie followed without being asked.

They didn’t go all the way back to the pavilion.

Jordan turned off the main path onto a smaller one that led toward a cluster of outdoor showers tucked between the trees and the beach. The area was semi-private — the showers were open to the sky but screened by wooden walls on three sides, with only the ocean side open to the night. At this hour, the path was empty.

He stopped in front of one of the showers and turned to face Sophie.

She was breathing faster now. Her eyes were wide and dark.

Vanessa leaned against the wooden wall a few feet away, close enough to see everything but giving them space.

Jordan looked down at Sophie.

“You don’t have to do this,” he said quietly. His voice was calm, almost gentle. “You can go back to your husband right now.”

Sophie swallowed. She looked at Vanessa, then back at Jordan.

“I know,” she whispered.

She stepped closer to him.

Her hands were shaking slightly as she reached out and placed them on his chest. She looked up at him for a long moment, like she was giving herself one last chance to turn around. Then she sank slowly to her knees in the sand.

Jordan didn’t move. He just watched her.

Sophie’s hands slid down his stomach. Her fingers were hesitant at first, almost shy. She wrapped one hand around the base of his cock and stroked him slowly, getting used to the weight and heat of him in her palm. Her other hand rested on his thigh for balance. She leaned forward and pressed a soft, almost innocent kiss to the head of his cock. Jordan’s breath left him in a quiet exhale.

Sophie looked up at him through her lashes, then opened her mouth and took him in. She started slow. Sweet. Almost coy. Her lips were soft and careful as she worked her way down, taking only the first few inches at first. She used her hand at the base, stroking in time with the movement of her mouth. Every so often she would pull back and swirl her tongue around the head, tasting him, exploring.

Vanessa watched from where she stood, one shoulder against the wooden wall. Her own breathing had deepened.

Sophie made a small, quiet sound around Jordan’s cock — not quite a moan, more like a sigh of relief, like she had been waiting to do this all day and had finally given in. She took him deeper on the next stroke, her cheeks hollowing slightly. Her free hand slid up Jordan’s thigh and around to grip his ass, pulling him gently forward.

Jordan’s hand came down and rested lightly on the back of her head. He didn’t push. He just held her there, letting her set the pace.

Sophie found a rhythm. She was still a little clumsy, still learning, but what she lacked in experience she made up for in eagerness. She moaned softly every time she took him deeper, the sound vibrating through him. Her eyes stayed on his face most of the time, checking, wanting to see if she was doing it right.

Jordan’s voice was low when he finally spoke.

“Look at you,” he murmured. “On your knees in the sand with my cock in your mouth. Does that feel good, Sophie?”

She nodded as best she could with her mouth full, eyes glassy.

Vanessa pushed away from the wall and stepped closer. She crouched down beside Sophie and reached out, brushing the younger woman’s hair back from her face with gentle fingers. “You’re doing so well,” Vanessa said softly. “He likes it when you use your tongue like that. Show him.”

Sophie’s eyes flicked to Vanessa, then back to Jordan. She pulled back until just the head was in her mouth and ran her tongue slowly, deliberately, along the underside. Jordan’s fingers tightened in her hair.

“Fuck,” he said quietly.

Encouraged, Sophie took him deeper again. She was getting bolder now. Her hand stroked faster at the base while her mouth worked the rest of him. Saliva dripped down her chin and onto her breasts. She didn’t seem to care. Her thighs pressed together as she knelt there, clearly wet and aching.

Vanessa stayed close. She ran her hand down Sophie’s back, over the curve of her ass, then slid two fingers between her legs from behind. Sophie was soaked. Vanessa stroked her slowly, teasingly, while Sophie kept sucking Jordan’s cock.

Sophie whimpered around him.

Jordan looked down at her, his voice rough.

“You’re going to make me come if you keep doing that,” he said. “Is that what you want?”

Sophie pulled off him just long enough to answer, her voice hoarse.

“Yes,” she whispered. “Please.”

She took him back into her mouth immediately, deeper than before. Her hand worked faster. She was moaning steadily now, the sound wet and desperate. Every time Vanessa’s fingers stroked over her clit, Sophie’s hips jerked forward.

Jordan’s breathing had gone ragged. His hand tightened in Sophie’s hair, guiding her now, not forcing, just showing her the rhythm he wanted.

“That’s it,” he said. “Just like that. Good girl.”

The praise made Sophie moan louder. She doubled her efforts, taking him as deep as she could, her throat working around him. Tears gathered at the corners of her eyes, but she didn’t stop.

Vanessa leaned in close to Sophie’s ear.

“He’s close,” she murmured. “You can feel it, can’t you? You’re going to swallow for him. Every drop.”

Sophie made a broken, eager sound.

Jordan’s hips jerked once, twice. He groaned low in his throat as he came, thick and hot across Sophie’s tongue. She didn’t pull away. She kept her mouth on him, swallowing as best she could, some of it escaping down her chin. Her eyes stayed on his face the entire time, wide and shining.

When he finally stopped, Sophie stayed on her knees for a moment, breathing hard, his cock still resting against her tongue. She looked dazed. Wrecked. Beautiful.

Vanessa gently pulled her back and helped her stand. Sophie’s legs were unsteady. Vanessa steadied her with an arm around her waist and kissed her temple.

Jordan reached out and wiped a smear of come from Sophie’s bottom lip with his thumb, then pressed it into her mouth. She sucked it clean without being asked.

For a long moment, none of them spoke.

Then Sophie let out a shaky laugh that was half disbelief and half something closer to wonder.

“I can’t believe I just did that,” she whispered.

Vanessa smiled against her hair.

“I can.”

Jordan’s hand was still in Sophie’s hair, stroking slowly.

“You should go back to your husband now,” he said quietly. “Before he comes looking for you.”

Sophie nodded, but she didn’t move right away. She looked between them, something desperate and hungry still in her eyes.

“I don’t want to,” she admitted, voice small.

Vanessa kissed her cheek.

“Go,” she said gently. “We’ll see you tomorrow.”

Sophie hesitated another second, then stepped back. She looked at Jordan one last time, then turned and started walking back toward the main path, her steps unsteady.

Vanessa and Jordan watched her go until she disappeared around the bend.

Jordan exhaled slowly and leaned back against the wooden wall of the shower. He looked at Vanessa.

“She’s going to be thinking about that all night,” he said.

Vanessa stepped into him and kissed him, slow and deep, tasting Sophie on his mouth. “I know,” she said against his lips. “And tomorrow, we’re going to do it again.” Jordan’s hand slid down to grip her ass.

“You’re enjoying this,” he murmured.

Vanessa smiled.

“So are you.”

They stood there for another minute in the quiet dark, the sound of the ocean loud around them. Then they turned and started walking back toward their villa, leaving the outdoor shower empty behind them.

Somewhere further up the path, Sophie was walking back to her own villa, her mouth still tasting like Jordan, her body still humming, and a line she could never uncross already far behind her.

Chapter 4

Chapter Four

Sophie woke up before the sun.

She lay on her back in the big bed, staring at the ceiling fan as it turned slowly above her. Liam was asleep beside her, one arm flung across her stomach, his breathing deep and even. The sheets were tangled around their legs. Her body felt heavy in a way that had nothing to do with sleep.

Her mouth still tasted like him.

She closed her eyes and let the memory come back in pieces.

The sand under her knees. The wooden wall of the outdoor shower at her back. Jordan's hand in her hair — not rough, just steady. The weight of him on her tongue. The low sound he made when he came. The way Vanessa had touched her while she did it, like she was helping, like she approved.

Sophie's thighs pressed together under the sheet.

She had swallowed. She had looked up at him while she did it. And when it was over, she had wanted to do it again.

A quiet, sick thrill moved through her chest.

She turned her head and looked at Liam.

He looked peaceful. Younger, somehow, in sleep. His mouth was slightly open. His hair was messy from the pillow. She felt a sharp, sudden wave of guilt so strong it made her eyes sting. She had done that to him. To them.

And the worst part was that she didn't feel as sorry as she should.

Sophie slipped out from under his arm as carefully as she could and padded naked into the bathroom. She closed the door behind her and leaned against the sink, staring at her reflection in the mirror.

Her lips looked a little swollen. There was a faint red mark on her knee from the sand. She touched her mouth with her fingertips and remembered the way Jordan had felt against her tongue.

She was wet again.

"Fuck," she whispered to her reflection.

She stayed in the bathroom longer than she needed to. When she finally came out, Liam was awake, propped up on one elbow, watching her.

"Hey," he said, voice rough with sleep. "You okay?"

Sophie forced a smile. "Yeah. Just couldn't sleep."

Liam studied her for a second, then held out his hand. She went to him and let him pull her back into bed. He wrapped his arms around her from behind and pressed his face into the curve of her neck.

“You’ve been quiet since last night,” he murmured.

Sophie closed her eyes.

“I’m fine,” she said. “Just tired. Long day yesterday.”

Liam was quiet for a moment. His hand rested on her stomach, warm and familiar.

“You sure?” he asked. “You seemed… off at dinner. And after.”

Sophie turned in his arms so she was facing him. She kissed him before he could say anything else. It was soft at first, then deeper. Liam made a low sound and rolled her onto her back, settling between her thighs.

She let him kiss her. She let him touch her. But when he reached down between her legs, she caught his wrist.

“Not right now,” she said quietly. “I’m still sore from yesterday. The sun, I mean.” It was a lie. She wasn’t sore. She was aching for something else entirely.

Liam pulled back a little, searching her face. For a second she thought he was going to push. Instead he just nodded and kissed her forehead.

“Okay,” he said. “Whatever you need.”

He got up and went into the bathroom. Sophie lay there staring at the ceiling again, her heart beating too fast.

She had never lied to him like that before.

Not once in their entire relationship.

--By mid-morning the sun was already brutal.

Sophie and Liam ended up back on the beach, but not with Vanessa and Jordan this time. Liam had suggested they have some time just the two of them. Sophie had agreed too quickly.

They floated in the water together for a while. Liam tried to kiss her a few times. She kissed him back, but her mind kept drifting. Every time she closed her eyes she saw Jordan’s face above her. Every time Liam touched her she compared it, without meaning to, to the way Vanessa’s fingers had felt between her legs the night before.

Eventually they went back to their towels. Liam dozed again. Sophie sat up and watched the waves, her arms wrapped around her knees.

She kept replaying it.

The way Jordan had looked at her when she sank to her knees. The way Vanessa had whispered in her ear while she was doing it. The way it had felt to have both of them focused on her like that — like she was the only thing in the world that mattered in that moment. She had never felt that way with Liam. Not even close.

The thought made her feel sick and excited at the same time.

She was still sitting there when she saw Vanessa walking along the edge of the water, alone. Vanessa was wearing nothing but a pair of sunglasses and a thin gold chain around her waist. Her red hair was loose, catching the light. She moved like she had all the time in the world. Sophie's stomach tightened.

Vanessa glanced over, saw her, and changed direction. She walked straight toward their towels.

Liam was still asleep.

Vanessa stopped a few feet away and smiled down at Sophie.

"Morning," she said. Her voice was warm, like nothing unusual had happened the night before.

Sophie swallowed. "Hi."

Vanessa glanced at Liam, then back at Sophie. "Mind if I sit?"

Sophie shook her head.

Vanessa lowered herself gracefully onto the sand beside her. For a minute they just sat there in silence, watching the water.

Then Vanessa spoke, quiet enough that only Sophie could hear.

"How are you feeling?"

Sophie didn't look at her. She kept her eyes on the horizon.

"I don't know," she said honestly. "Weird. Guilty. And… not guilty enough."

Vanessa nodded like she understood.

"That's normal," she said. "The first time is always the hardest. After that it gets easier to live with."

Sophie turned her head and looked at her.

"Does it?" she asked. "Or do you just get better at lying to yourself?"

Vanessa smiled, small and knowing.

"Both."

They sat in silence again. Sophie could feel Vanessa watching her. It wasn't uncomfortable. It felt like being seen.

After a while Vanessa spoke again.

“Where’s Jordan?” Sophie asked, trying to sound casual.

“Back at the villa. He’s not much of a morning person.” Vanessa tilted her head. “He asked about you, though.”

Sophie’s cheeks burned.

“What did he say?”

Vanessa’s smile deepened just a fraction.

“He said you have a very pretty mouth.”

Sophie made a small, helpless sound and dropped her face into her hands.

Vanessa laughed softly and reached out, resting a hand on Sophie’s bare back. Her touch was warm and steady.

“Hey,” she said gently. “It’s okay. You’re allowed to want things.”

Sophie lifted her head. Her eyes were wet.

“I love him,” she whispered, nodding toward Liam. “I really do. He’s a good man. He’s kind. He’s patient. He’s never done anything to deserve this.”

“I know,” Vanessa said. “That’s not why people do this. It’s not usually about what the other person deserves.”

Sophie looked at her. “Then why?”

Vanessa was quiet for a moment.

“Because sometimes you meet someone who makes you feel like you’re finally allowed to be exactly who you are,” she said. “And once you’ve felt that, it’s hard to go back to pretending.”

Sophie stared at her.

Vanessa met her eyes without flinching.

“You don’t have to decide anything right now,” she said. “You don’t even have to see us again if you don’t want to. But if you do… we’ll be here.”

She stood up then, brushing sand off her thighs.

“Tell Liam I said hi,” she said, and walked away without looking back.

Sophie watched her go until she disappeared around the curve of the beach.

Then she turned and looked at Liam, still asleep on the towel beside her, and felt something inside her chest crack a little more.

--Liam woke up a little while later.

They spent the rest of the morning together, but it felt off. Sophie kept catching herself drifting. Liam kept trying to pull her back with little jokes and touches. She smiled at the right times, but her mind was somewhere else.

By early afternoon Liam suggested they go back to the villa for a nap. Sophie said she wanted to stay on the beach a little longer. He looked at her for a second like he wanted to argue, then just nodded and kissed her on the forehead before walking off.

Sophie stayed where she was.

She was still there twenty minutes later when Vanessa appeared again, this time with two cold drinks in her hands.

“Peace offering,” Vanessa said, handing one to her.

Sophie took it. “For what?”

“For making things complicated.” Vanessa sat down beside her again. “Mind if I keep you company for a bit? Jordan’s working on something back at the villa and I’m bored.” Sophie hesitated, then nodded.

They talked.

At first it was light — favorite books, worst travel experiences, how strange it felt to be naked all the time. But gradually the conversation shifted. Vanessa asked questions that felt

simple on the surface but opened doors Sophie hadn’t realized were there.

She asked about Sophie’s childhood. About what she had wanted to be before she met Liam. About what she missed from her life before marriage. About what she was afraid of now. Sophie found herself talking more than she usually did. Vanessa listened like every word mattered. She didn’t interrupt. She didn’t try to fix anything. She just listened. At one point Sophie realized she was crying. Not dramatically — just quiet tears slipping down her face while she talked about how scared she was that she had already become someone she didn’t recognize.

Vanessa reached over and wiped one of the tears away with her thumb.

“You’re not broken,” she said quietly. “You’re just waking up.”

Sophie looked at her.

“I don’t know what I’m doing,” she whispered.

“I know,” Vanessa said. “That’s okay. You don’t have to know yet.”

They sat in silence for a while. The sun had started to lower. Most of the other people on the beach had gone back to their villas or the pavilion.

Vanessa shifted closer. Their bare thighs touched.

“Can I ask you something personal?” she said.

Sophie nodded.

Vanessa turned to face her more fully.

“Last night,” she said, “when you were with Jordan… did you like it when I touched you?” Sophie’s breath caught.

She nodded.

Vanessa’s voice stayed soft. “Did you like it when I told you what to do?”

Sophie nodded again, slower this time.

Vanessa reached out and tucked a strand of hair behind Sophie’s ear. Her fingers lingered against the side of Sophie’s neck.

“I liked it too,” she said. “I liked watching you. I liked how eager you were. I liked how wet you got when I touched you while you had him in your mouth.”

Sophie’s thighs pressed together. She couldn’t help it.

Vanessa noticed.

She smiled, small and knowing.

“You’re allowed to want this,” she said again. “You’re allowed to want both of us. You’re allowed to be selfish for a little while.”

Sophie’s voice was barely above a whisper.

“What if I can’t stop?”

Vanessa leaned in until her lips were almost touching Sophie’s ear.

“Then don’t,” she murmured.

She pulled back just enough to look Sophie in the eyes. For a long moment neither of them moved.

Then Vanessa kissed her.

It was slow. Gentle at first. Sophie made a small, surprised sound against her mouth, but she didn’t pull away. Vanessa’s hand came up to cup the side of her face, thumb stroking her cheek while she deepened the kiss.

Sophie kissed her back.

When they finally parted, Sophie was breathing hard. Her eyes were wide and wet. Vanessa rested her forehead against Sophie’s for a second.

“Go find Liam,” she said quietly. “Spend some time with him. Be present with him tonight. And when you’re lying in bed later, thinking about what you just did with me… remember that you can have more of it if you want it.”

She stood up.

“I’ll see you tomorrow,” Vanessa said.

Then she walked away, leaving Sophie sitting alone on the towel, heart hammering, lips still tingling, and a choice she wasn’t ready to make sitting heavy in her chest.

--Liam was already back at the villa when Sophie returned.

He was sitting on the edge of the bed, elbows on his knees, staring at the floor. He looked up when she came in.

“Hey,” he said. His voice was careful. “You were gone a while.”

Sophie closed the door behind her. She leaned against it for a second, trying to steady herself.

“I ran into Vanessa,” she said. “We talked for a bit.”

Liam nodded slowly. He didn’t ask what they talked about. Instead he patted the bed beside him.

“Come here.”

Sophie went to him. She sat down and let him pull her into his arms. He held her for a long time without saying anything.

Eventually he spoke, his voice low against her hair.

“I feel like I’m losing you,” he said.

Sophie closed her eyes.

“You’re not,” she lied.

Liam pulled back enough to look at her. His eyes were tired.

“Something’s different,” he said. “Since we got here. Since last night. I don’t know what it is, but I can feel it. You’re somewhere else.”

Sophie swallowed hard.

“I’m right here,” she said.

But even as she said it, she knew he could hear the distance in her voice.

Liam studied her face for a long moment. Then he leaned in and kissed her — slow, careful, like he was afraid she might break.

Sophie kissed him back.

She let him lay her down on the bed. She let him touch her. She even let him fuck her, slow and sweet, the way he always did when he was trying to reach her.

She came. It felt far away.

When it was over, Liam held her and fell asleep with his face buried in her neck. Sophie stayed awake long after the sun had gone down, staring at the ceiling, listening to the ocean, and wondering how she was supposed to go back to being the person she had been before she got on her knees in the sand for a man who wasn’t her husband.

She already knew the answer.

She couldn’t.

And the worst part was that some small, hungry part of her didn’t want to.

Chapter 5

Chapter 4.5

Vanessa walked away from Sophie with the taste of her still on her lips.

The kiss had been deliberate. Not rushed, not aggressive — just enough to let Sophie feel the shift. Enough to make it clear that the line between “watching” and “participating” had been crossed. Sophie had kissed her back with a kind of stunned hunger that Vanessa recognized. It was the hunger of someone who had just discovered they were capable of wanting more than they had allowed themselves to admit.

Vanessa didn’t look back as she walked along the edge of the water. She could still feel the warmth of Sophie’s mouth, the slight tremble in her body when Vanessa had pulled away. She knew Sophie would sit there for a while, dazed, trying to make sense of what had just happened and what it meant about who she was becoming.

That was fine. Let her sit with it.

Right now, Vanessa had someone else to attend to.

She had seen Liam earlier, sitting alone at one of the shaded tables near the pavilion. He’d looked like a man trying very hard to hold himself together. Vanessa had been planning to speak with him anyway, but after kissing Sophie, the timing felt even more important. The two of them were drifting in different directions, and if she and Jordan were going to finish what they’d started, both halves of the couple needed attention.

She found him exactly where she expected — still at the same table, still nursing the same mostly-melted drink. He was staring out at the water with the distant expression of someone whose thoughts were louder than the ocean.

Vanessa approached without hurry. When she reached his table she didn’t ask permission. She simply pulled out the chair across from him and sat down, crossing her legs like she had all the time in the world.

Liam looked up, startled.

“Hey,” he said. His voice was rough. “Didn’t see you.”

Vanessa smiled, small and easy. “You looked like you could use some company that isn’t pretending everything is fine.”

Liam let out a short, tired breath. He didn’t argue.

For a moment they sat in silence. Vanessa didn’t push. She simply existed in the space with him until he finally spoke.

“Can I ask you something?” he said.

“Of course.”

Liam glanced at her, then away again. “Your husband… Jordan. Has he always been like this?”

Vanessa tilted her head slightly. She let the word sit for a second before answering. “Jordan isn’t my husband,” she said, her tone calm and matter-of-fact. “We’re not married. We’re partners. Best friends. We chose each other a long time ago and we’ve stayed because we want to, not because of any contract.” She paused, then added, “But I understand why you assumed. Most people do.”

Liam looked surprised, then a little embarrassed.

“Sorry. I just… the way you two are together. It feels married.”

Vanessa smiled faintly. “We’re very intentional with each other. That can look like marriage from the outside.”

Liam nodded slowly, absorbing that. Then he asked, quieter, “Does he do this a lot? Go after other women while you’re… together?”

Vanessa didn’t flinch.

“Sometimes,” she said. “And sometimes I go after other men. Or women. We don’t keep each other on a leash. We trust each other enough to let the other person want what they want.” She looked at him directly. “But that only works because we’re honest about it. We don’t lie to each other. We don’t sneak around.”

Liam was quiet for a long time after that.

Eventually he spoke again, voice low.

“I think Sophie is sneaking around.”

Vanessa didn’t pretend to be surprised.

“I think you might be right,” she said.

Liam rubbed his face with both hands. “I don’t know what to do. I keep trying to act normal, but every time I look at her I can tell she’s somewhere else. And last night she disappeared for hours. When she came back she wouldn’t really look at me. She smelled like the ocean and… something else.”

He stopped, then forced himself to continue.

“I tried to touch her this morning and she pulled away. She said she was sore from the sun, but that’s bullshit. She’s never pulled away from me like that before.”

Vanessa listened without interrupting. When he finished, she spoke gently.

“You’re not crazy for noticing. And you’re not a bad person for being hurt by it.” Liam looked at her like he wanted to believe that but wasn’t sure he could.

Vanessa leaned forward slightly, resting her forearms on the table. The movement was casual, but it brought her closer to him.

“Can I be honest with you, Liam?”

He nodded.

“I think Sophie is waking up to parts of herself she didn’t know were there,” Vanessa said. “And I think that scares her. Not because she doesn’t want them, but because she’s realizing she *does* want them. And that makes her feel like she’s betraying you.”

Liam’s jaw tightened.

“I don’t want her to feel like she has to betray me just to be honest,” he said. “But I also don’t want to lose her.”

Vanessa was quiet for a moment.

“Then maybe the question isn’t how to stop her from wanting,” she said. “Maybe the question is whether you’re willing to see who she actually is when she stops performing.” Liam stared at her.

Vanessa reached across the table and rested her hand lightly on top of his. Her touch was warm and steady.

“You’ve been trying very hard to be the good husband,” she said. “The steady one. The one who doesn’t make waves. But I wonder when the last time was that someone made *you* feel wanted instead of just needed.”

Liam’s fingers twitched under hers.

“I don’t remember,” he admitted.

Vanessa’s thumb stroked slowly across the back of his hand.

“That’s a long time to go without being wanted,” she said softly.

She didn’t pull her hand away. She let the contact linger, let him feel it. Liam didn’t move his hand either. If anything, he seemed to lean into the touch without realizing he was doing it. Vanessa kept her voice low.

“You don’t have to figure everything out tonight,” she said. “But you also don’t have to keep swallowing how you feel just because you think that’s what a good husband does. Sometimes

being good to your partner means letting them see that you’re hurting too.”

Liam swallowed hard.

“I don’t know how to do that without it turning into a fight,” he said.

“Then maybe start smaller,” Vanessa said. “Start with someone who isn’t going to punish you for being honest.”

She held his gaze.

Liam looked back at her for a long time. Something in his expression shifted — not quite surrender, but the beginning of it. The beginning of letting himself be seen.

Vanessa stood up slowly, but she didn’t step away yet.

“I’m going for a walk down by the water,” she said. “You’re welcome to come with me if you want the company. Or you can stay here. No pressure either way.”

She turned and started walking toward the beach without looking back.

After a few seconds, she heard Liam’s chair scrape against the wooden deck as he stood up and followed her.

--They walked along the edge of the water in comfortable silence for a while. The late afternoon light was turning golden, casting long shadows across the sand. Most of the other guests had already gone back to their villas or the pavilion. It felt almost private. Eventually Liam spoke.

“Thank you,” he said. “For not treating me like I’m crazy for noticing things.”

Vanessa glanced at him. “You’re not crazy. You’re paying attention. That’s different.” Liam let out a short, humorless laugh. “Feels like the same thing sometimes.”

They walked a little farther. Then Liam stopped and turned to face her.

“Can I ask you something else?”

Vanessa nodded.

“Why are you being so kind to me?” he asked. “After everything that’s happening with Sophie and… your partner. Most people in your position would be protective. Or jealous. Or at least not sitting here talking to the husband of the woman their partner is interested in.” Vanessa smiled, small and genuine.

“Because I don’t see you as an obstacle,” she said. “I see you as a person who’s hurting. And because I think you deserve to be paid attention to, even if your wife is currently distracted.” She took a small step closer.

“And because,” she added, voice lower, “I think you’re more interesting than you’ve been allowed to be for a long time.”

Liam looked at her like he wasn’t sure whether to believe her.

Vanessa reached up and rested her hand lightly against the side of his neck. Her thumb brushed along his jaw.

“You’re allowed to want to be seen,” she said. “You’re allowed to want to be touched like you matter. You’re allowed to stop being the steady one for five minutes and just… feel something.”

Liam’s breathing had gone uneven.

Vanessa leaned in slowly, giving him every chance to pull away.

He didn’t.

She kissed him.

It was slow and deliberate, the same way she had kissed Sophie earlier — but this kiss carried a different weight. This one was about offering Liam something he had clearly been starving for: focused, unhurried attention.

Liam kissed her back like a man who had forgotten what it felt like to be wanted this directly. His hands came up to her waist, hesitant at first, then firmer when she didn’t pull away. Vanessa let the kiss deepen, let him feel the warmth of her body against his, let him feel that she was fully present with him in this moment.

When they finally parted, Liam looked dazed.

“I shouldn’t have done that,” he said, but there was no conviction in it.

Vanessa smiled against his mouth.

“You didn’t do it alone.”

She kissed him once more, softer this time, then rested her forehead against his for a second. “You don’t have to decide anything right now,” she said quietly. “But if you want more of this — more of being seen, more of being wanted — you know where to find me.”

She stepped back, her hand lingering on his chest for a moment before she let it fall. “I should get back,” she said. “But think about what I said.”

She turned and started walking back toward the path that led to the villas, leaving Liam standing in the shallow water, the sun setting behind him, and the taste of another woman still warm on his lips.

For the first time in a long time, he didn’t feel invisible.

Chapter 6

Chapter Five

“I don’t know if this is a good idea,” Sophie said.

Jordan didn’t answer right away. He was standing at the edge of the small wooden dock that jutted out from the quieter western curve of the island, one hand resting on the rope of the little motorboat they used for short trips. The sun was already low, turning the water gold and orange. Most of the other guests were back at the pavilion or their villas by now. Sophie stood a few feet away from him. She had her arms loosely wrapped around herself, the evening air cool against her bare skin. She kept glancing toward the path that led back to the main part of the resort, then back at Jordan.

Jordan finally looked at her.

“Do you want to go back?” he asked. His voice was calm, not pushing.

Sophie hesitated. She glanced toward the path that led back to the main part of the resort, then back at Jordan.

“No,” she said quietly. “I don’t.”

Jordan nodded once, like that was enough. He stepped into the boat and held out his hand to her. After another second, Sophie took it and let him help her in. The boat rocked gently under their weight.

He started the motor and steered them away from the dock, heading toward a small cove on the far side of the island that most guests didn’t bother with. The ride was short, maybe ten minutes. Neither of them spoke much. Sophie sat with her arms wrapped around her knees, watching the water. Jordan glanced at her every so often but didn’t try to fill the silence. When they reached the cove, he cut the engine and let the boat drift. The water here was calmer, almost glassy. The beach was narrow and private, screened by trees on both sides. No one else was around.

Jordan dropped the small anchor and turned to face her.

“You’ve been quiet all day,” he said.

Sophie let out a short, shaky laugh. “I wonder why.”

Jordan didn’t smile, but his expression softened slightly.

“You don’t have to explain anything to me,” he said. “But if you want to talk, I’ll listen.” Sophie looked at him for a long moment. Then she shook her head.

“I don’t know what I’d even say,” she admitted. “I keep thinking I should feel worse than I do. Or that I should be trying harder to fix things with Liam. But every time I try to picture going back to how things were before we got here, it

feels… wrong. Like I'd be lying." Jordan leaned back against the side of the boat, watching her.

"What feels wrong about it?" he asked.

Sophie was quiet for a while.

"Everything," she finally said. "The way he looks at me like he's waiting for me to go back to being the person he married. The way I keep catching myself comparing how he touches me to… other things." She swallowed. "The way I keep thinking about last night."

Jordan didn't move closer. He just waited.

Sophie's voice dropped lower.

"I've never done anything like that before," she said. "Not even close. And the part that scares me the most is that I didn't feel ashamed while I was doing it. I felt… alive. Like I was finally allowed to want something without apologizing for it."

She looked down at her hands.

"And then I went back to the villa and lied to my husband about where I'd been. And this morning I pulled away when he tried to touch me because I couldn't stop thinking about your cock in my mouth."

The words hung in the air between them.

Jordan's voice was quiet when he answered.

"You're allowed to want what you want, Sophie."

She looked up at him, eyes bright.

"Am I?" she asked. "Because it doesn't feel like it. It feels like I'm becoming someone I don't recognize, and I don't know how to stop."

Jordan studied her for a long moment.

"Do you want to stop?" he asked.

Sophie opened her mouth, then closed it again. She looked out at the water, then back at him. "No," she whispered. "I don't think I do."

Jordan nodded slowly, like he'd expected that answer.

He reached out and brushed a strand of hair away from her face, his fingers lingering against her cheek.

"Then don't," he said.

Sophie's breath caught.

Jordan’s hand slid down to the side of her neck, his thumb stroking slowly along her jaw. “You don’t have to decide what it means yet,” he said. “You don’t have to label it or justify it or figure out how it fits into the rest of your life. You can just want it. Right now. In this moment.”

Sophie leaned into his touch without meaning to.

“I’m scared,” she admitted.

“I know,” Jordan said. “That’s okay.”

He leaned in and kissed her.

It was slow at first, almost careful, like he was giving her every chance to pull away. Sophie kissed him back, and after a few seconds the hesitation in her melted. She made a small, desperate sound against his mouth and reached for him, pulling him closer.

Jordan shifted, guiding her until she was straddling his lap in the bottom of the boat. The boat rocked gently beneath them. Sophie’s hands were in his hair, her mouth hungry against his. Jordan’s hands slid over her bare skin, palms warm as they moved up her back and down to her hips.

He broke the kiss just long enough to look at her.

Sophie’s breathing was already uneven. She looked at him with wide, glassy eyes, like she was still surprised by how much she wanted this.

Jordan’s hands moved between her legs. She was already wet — had been since they left the dock. He stroked her slowly, deliberately, watching her face as his fingers slid through her slickness. Sophie’s hips rolled forward with a soft moan.

“Jordan,” she breathed.

He kept his touch steady, circling her clit with two fingers while his other hand gripped her hip. Sophie braced herself on his shoulders, rocking against his hand as the boat moved gently beneath them.

She reached down between them and wrapped her hand around his cock, stroking him in time with the movement of his fingers. Jordan groaned low in his throat.

They stayed like that for a while, touching each other, the only sounds the water against the hull and their breathing. Sophie was getting close — Jordan could feel it in the way her thighs started to tremble and the way her strokes on his cock became less coordinated. Then her phone buzzed where she’d left it on the seat beside them.

Sophie froze.

Jordan lifted his head and looked at her. Sophie’s eyes were wide, guilty, and full of conflict. “It’s Liam,” she said, voice small.

She didn’t reach for the phone.

Jordan didn’t move his hand away from between her legs. He just watched her face. “You can answer it,” he said quietly. “Or you can not.”

Sophie stared at the phone like it was something dangerous.

After a long moment, she reached for it with a shaking hand and opened the message. It was from Liam.

Hey. Just checking in. You okay? Haven’t seen you in a while.

Sophie stared at the screen. Her thumb hovered over the reply box, then dropped away without typing anything.

Jordan’s fingers moved again, slow and deliberate, circling her clit while she held the phone in her hand.

Sophie made a broken sound.

“I can’t,” she whispered. “I can’t text him back right now. Not while you’re—”

“You don’t have to,” Jordan said against her neck. “You can just feel this.”

He kept touching her, steady and unrelenting. Sophie’s hips rolled helplessly against his hand. She was breathing hard, eyes squeezed shut, the phone still clutched in one fist like she didn’t know what else to do with it.

Jordan’s voice was low in her ear.

“You’re allowed to want this,” he murmured. “Even if it makes everything else complicated. Even if it makes you feel like a bad person. You’re allowed to want it anyway.”

Sophie’s free hand gripped his shoulder hard enough to leave marks.

“I’m so close,” she gasped. “Jordan, I’m—”

Her phone buzzed again in her hand.

Another message from Liam.

Sophie’s eyes flew open. She looked at the screen, then at Jordan, then back at the screen. Her whole body was trembling.

Jordan didn’t stop touching her.

Sophie let out a shaky, desperate sound and dropped the phone onto the seat beside them without answering. She grabbed Jordan’s face with both hands and kissed him hard, almost frantic, while she came against his fingers with a broken moan.

Jordan held her through it, one arm around her waist, the other still working between her legs until the tremors eased.

When she finally went limp against him, breathing hard, Jordan kissed the side of her neck and slowly withdrew his hand.

Sophie stayed where she was, forehead resting against his shoulder, for a long time. Eventually she spoke, voice hoarse.

“I didn’t answer him.”

“I know,” Jordan said.

Sophie pulled back enough to look at him. Her eyes were wet.

“I’m a terrible person,” she whispered.

Jordan brushed her hair back from her face.

“No,” he said. “You’re just a person who wants more than she thought she was allowed to have.”

Sophie stared at him for a long moment. Then she leaned in and kissed him again, slower this time, almost grateful.

They stayed in the boat for a while longer, the sun sinking lower, the water lapping gently against the hull. Sophie didn’t reach for her phone again.

--Back at the resort, Vanessa found Liam exactly where she expected — sitting alone at the same shaded table from earlier, staring out at the water like it might have answers for him. She didn’t sit across from him this time. Instead she walked straight over and rested a hand lightly on his shoulder.

“Come with me,” she said.

Liam looked up at her. He didn’t ask where. He just stood up and followed.

Vanessa led him down one of the smaller paths that curved away from the main pavilion, toward a more secluded stretch of beach that was usually empty this time of day. When they

reached a spot that was screened by trees on one side and open to the water on the other, she stopped and turned to face him.

Liam looked at her, uncertain but clearly not unwilling.

Vanessa stepped in close and kissed him.

It wasn’t the slow, careful kiss from earlier. This one was deeper, more intentional. Liam made a low sound against her mouth and kissed her back without hesitation this time. His hands found her waist, then slid up her back.

They stayed like that for a while, kissing in the shade, the sound of the ocean covering the small noises they made. Vanessa could feel the tension in Liam's body — the frustration, the confusion, the hunger he was trying so hard to keep leashed.

She reached down between them and wrapped her hand around his cock, stroking him slowly while she kissed him. Liam groaned into her mouth and pressed closer.

"Vanessa," he said against her lips. "Fuck."

"I know," she murmured. "It's okay."

She stroked him steadily, her other hand resting on the back of his neck, keeping him close. Liam's breathing grew rougher. His hips moved with her hand. Vanessa could feel how close he was getting — the way his muscles tightened, the way his breathing changed.

She kept going.

Liam's head dropped to her shoulder. His voice was strained.

"I'm gonna come," he warned. "Vanessa, I'm—"

Right then, Vanessa's phone buzzed in her hand where she'd been holding it against his back. She didn't even have to look at it to know who it was.

She slowed her hand immediately, then stopped completely, her grip loosening just enough to take the edge off without letting him tip over.

Liam made a frustrated, confused sound.

"What—?"

Vanessa glanced at her phone. A single message from Sophie lit up the screen.

Are you with Liam right now?

Vanessa smiled faintly, then looked back at Liam. She kept her hand on him, but her strokes were deliberately slow now, almost lazy. Just enough to keep him hard and aching. Not enough to let him finish.

Liam's breathing was ragged. He looked at her with a mix of frustration and confusion. "Why did you stop?" he asked.

Vanessa didn't answer right away. She stroked him once, twice, then stopped again when his hips jerked forward.

"Because I wanted to," she said simply.

Liam stared at her, chest heaving.

Vanessa's phone buzzed again.

Another message from Sophie.

Please don’t let him come.

Vanessa read it, then looked back at Liam. She wrapped her hand around him again and started stroking once more, faster this time, bringing him right to the edge. Liam’s head fell back. His hands gripped her hips hard.

Just as his breathing hitched and his body tensed, Vanessa stopped again.

Liam let out a broken, frustrated sound.

“Vanessa—”

She kissed him, slow and deep, while her hand stayed still on his cock. When she pulled back, she rested her forehead against his.

“Not yet,” she said quietly.

Liam’s voice was rough. “Why?”

Vanessa’s thumb brushed over the head of his cock, spreading the wetness there, but she didn’t stroke him again.

“Because I want you to feel this,” she said. “I want you to feel how much you want it. And I want you to remember that you let someone else decide when you get to have it.”

Liam’s eyes were dark, confused, and more turned on than he probably wanted to admit. Vanessa kissed him again, then stepped back, letting her hand fall away completely. Liam stood there, breathing hard, his cock still hard and aching between them.

Vanessa reached up and touched his face.

“Go back to your villa,” she said gently. “Take a shower. Think about what you actually want. And if you still want more of this tomorrow… you know where to find me.”

She turned and walked away without looking back, leaving Liam standing there in the shade, frustrated, confused, and more aware than ever that something fundamental had shifted inside him.

--Sophie was already back at her villa when Liam returned.

She was sitting on the edge of the bed, still naked, staring at her phone like it might have answers. When Liam walked in, she looked up quickly, guilt flashing across her face before she could hide it.

“Hey,” she said. “Where were you?”

Liam didn’t answer right away. He closed the door behind him and leaned against it, studying her.

“Out,” he said. “Walking. Thinking.”

Sophie nodded, looking down at her hands.

The silence stretched between them.

Eventually Liam spoke again, his voice quieter.

“Did you go somewhere with Jordan?”

Sophie’s head snapped up. She opened her mouth, then closed it again. For a second she looked like she might lie. Then she just nodded once, small and defeated.

“Yeah,” she said. “I did.”

Liam nodded slowly, like he’d already known.

He didn’t ask for details. He didn’t yell. He just stood there for a long moment, then walked over and sat down on the bed beside her, leaving a careful space between them.

Sophie stared at him, eyes wet.

“I’m sorry,” she whispered.

Liam didn’t look at her. He kept his eyes on the floor.

“I don’t know what we’re doing anymore,” he said. “And I don’t know how to fix it.” Sophie reached for his hand. He let her take it, but he didn’t squeeze back.

They sat like that for a long time, side by side but not touching beyond that single point of contact, both of them hiding things the other could already feel.

Neither of them spoke again for the rest of the night.

Chapter 7

Chapter Six

The sun had already dropped behind the hills when Jordan found Liam sitting alone at one of the shaded tables near the pavilion. Liam had a half-finished drink in front of him and was staring out at the water with the same distant, unsettled expression he'd been wearing for the past two days.

Jordan pulled out the chair across from him and sat down without asking.

"You look like you could use a change of scenery," Jordan said.

Liam glanced at him, then looked back at the water. "I'm fine."

"You're not," Jordan replied, calm and direct. "And that's okay. This place has a way of making people confront things they weren't expecting."

Liam let out a short, humorless laugh. "Yeah. You could say that."

Jordan leaned back in his chair. "Come have dinner with me. There's a quieter spot on the other side of the island — good food, better drinks. We can talk. Or not talk. Whatever you need."

Liam hesitated. "I should probably wait for Sophie. She's been gone a while."

Jordan shook his head. "She's with Vanessa. They're talking. Let them have some time. You and I can do the same."

Liam studied him for a long moment, clearly trying to decide whether he trusted the offer. Eventually he nodded.

"Alright," he said. "Dinner sounds fine."

Jordan stood. "Good. Let's go."

They left together, walking along the path that curved away from the main pavilion. Jordan kept the conversation light at first — asking Liam about his work back home, what he missed, what he didn't. Liam answered, but his responses were distracted. Every so often he would glance back toward the villas like he was expecting Sophie to appear.

Jordan didn't push. He let the silence sit when it needed to and filled it when it didn't. By the time they reached the small, more exclusive restaurant on the quieter side of the island, Liam had started to relax — not completely, but enough that his shoulders weren't quite so tight. They were seated at a corner table with a view of the water. Jordan ordered a bottle of wine without asking and poured them both a glass.

"So," Jordan said once the waiter had left, "you want to tell me what's actually going on in your head, or are we going to keep pretending this is just two guys

having dinner?” Liam stared into his glass for a long moment.

“I don’t know what’s happening to my marriage,” he said finally. “And I’m starting to think I don’t know my wife anymore.”

Jordan didn’t rush to fill the silence.

Liam continued, voice low. “She’s never been like this. Not once in the years we’ve been together. And now we’re here and it’s like… something cracked open in her and I don’t know how to close it again. Or if I even should.”

Jordan took a slow sip of wine.

“Sometimes things don’t need to be closed,” he said. “Sometimes they need to be seen.” Liam looked at him. “That’s easy for you to say. Your… partner… seems to enjoy watching other people want you.”

Jordan smiled faintly. “Vanessa and I have a different arrangement than most. We don’t lie to each other. We don’t hide what we want. And we trust each other enough to let the other person explore without it threatening what we have.”

Liam shook his head. “I don’t think I could do that. I don’t think I *want* to do that.” “I’m not saying you should,” Jordan replied. “I’m saying that pretending Sophie hasn’t changed isn’t going to make her go back to who she was before you got on that boat.” Liam was quiet for a long time after that.

They ordered food. They drank more wine. Jordan kept the conversation going without forcing it, steering it toward safer topics when Liam seemed overwhelmed and circling back when he seemed ready to talk. By the time their plates were cleared, Liam was visibly more relaxed than he had been when they arrived — not happy, but no longer wound so tightly he looked ready to snap.

Jordan paid the bill and stood.

“Come on,” he said. “There’s a bar a little further down the beach. Better view, stronger drinks. We can stay out as long as you want.”

Liam hesitated only a second before nodding.

They left together, walking along the sand as the last of the light faded from the sky. ---

Sophie stood outside Vanessa and Jordan’s villa for nearly five full minutes before she worked up the courage to knock.

She had spent the last hour wandering the paths, trying to convince herself to go back to her own villa. Liam wasn’t there anyway — Jordan had texted her earlier saying he was taking Liam out for dinner and drinks. “Business talk,” the message had said. Sophie knew it was a lie. She also knew she was grateful for it.

Her hand hovered near the door again. She almost turned around.

Then she knocked.

The door opened after a few seconds.

Vanessa stood there, completely naked, her red hair loose around her shoulders. She didn't look surprised to see Sophie. If anything, she looked like she had been expecting her. "Hi," Sophie said, her voice small.

"Hi," Vanessa answered, soft and warm. She stepped aside. "Come in."

Sophie hesitated on the threshold for one more second, then stepped inside. Vanessa closed the door behind her.

The villa was quiet. The doors to the deck were open, letting in the sound of the ocean and the warm evening air. A single lamp glowed in the corner of the living room, casting everything in soft, golden light.

Sophie stood in the middle of the room, arms wrapped around herself, suddenly unsure of what she was doing there.

"I was looking for Liam," she said, even though they both knew it wasn't true.

Vanessa smiled gently. "He's not here."

"I know." Sophie swallowed. "Jordan took him out."

"He did."

Sophie looked around the villa like she was searching for something to anchor herself to. Her eyes landed on Vanessa and stayed there.

"I shouldn't be here," she whispered.

Vanessa took a slow step closer. "Why not?"

Sophie's voice cracked. "Because I know why I came."

Vanessa stopped in front of her. Close, but not touching. She reached out and tucked a strand of hair behind Sophie's ear, her fingers lingering against the side of her neck.

"And why did you come?" she asked quietly.

Sophie's eyes filled with tears she refused to let fall.

"Because I can't stop thinking about you," she admitted. "Because when you kissed me, I felt something I've never felt before. And because I'm terrified of what that means about who I am."

Vanessa's thumb stroked slowly along Sophie's jaw.

"You don't have to be terrified," she said. "Not here. Not with me."

Sophie looked at her, eyes wide and wet.

“I’ve never been with a woman,” she whispered. “I don’t know what I’m doing. I don’t even know if I’ll be any good at it.”

Vanessa smiled, small and reassuring.

“You don’t have to be good at it,” she said. “You just have to want it. And I’ll teach you the rest.”

Sophie’s breath hitched.

Vanessa leaned in and kissed her.

It started soft. But this time there was no one else around. No Liam. No Jordan. No audience. Just the two of them in the quiet villa with the sound of the ocean coming through the open doors.

Sophie kissed her back with more certainty than before. Her hands came up to Vanessa’s waist, tentative at first, then firmer when Vanessa didn’t pull away. Vanessa let the kiss deepen slowly, giving Sophie time to adjust, time to feel what it was like to kiss another woman without rushing.

When they finally broke apart, Sophie was breathing harder.

Vanessa rested her forehead against Sophie’s for a moment.

“Come with me,” she said.

She took Sophie’s hand and led her through the villa to the bedroom. The bed was large and low, the sheets already turned down. Vanessa stopped at the foot of it and turned to face Sophie again.

She reached for the hem of Sophie’s thin cover-up and slowly lifted it over her head. Sophie raised her arms without being asked, letting Vanessa undress her until she stood completely bare in the soft light.

Vanessa took a small step back and looked at her.

“You’re beautiful,” she said, voice low and sincere. “Every part of you.”

Sophie flushed, but she didn’t try to cover herself.

Vanessa reached out and ran her hands slowly down Sophie’s sides, over the curve of her waist and hips, then back up to cup her breasts. She brushed her thumbs over Sophie’s nipples, watching the way they tightened under her touch.

Sophie’s breath caught.

“Sensitive?” Vanessa asked.

Sophie nodded.

Vanessa smiled. “Good. That’s going to make this even better.”

She leaned in and kissed Sophie again, deeper this time. While they kissed, Vanessa's hands kept moving — exploring, learning, touching Sophie like she was something worth taking time with. Sophie's hands were less certain, but she followed Vanessa's lead, letting her fingers trail over Vanessa's back and down to the curve of her ass.

Vanessa broke the kiss and took Sophie's hand again.

"Lie down with me," she said.

They moved onto the bed together. Vanessa guided Sophie onto her back and settled beside her, propped up on one elbow so she could look at her. She ran her hand slowly down Sophie's stomach, then lower, until her fingers brushed between her legs.

Sophie's thighs parted without being asked.

Vanessa stroked her gently, just enough to make Sophie's hips lift toward her hand. "Tell me how this feels," Vanessa said.

"Good," Sophie breathed. "Really good."

Vanessa kept her touch light, circling Sophie's clit with two fingers, watching her face the entire time.

"Everyone's clit is a little different," she said softly, like she was teaching a lesson. "Some are more sensitive on the left side. Some on the right. Some like direct pressure. Some like it when you circle around it instead of pressing straight on it." She demonstrated with her fingers, changing the pressure and movement as she spoke. "You have to pay attention to what the other person responds to."

Sophie's breathing had gone shallow. Her hips moved in small, involuntary circles. Vanessa watched her closely.

"Yours likes when I use the flat of my fingers like this," she murmured, demonstrating. "And when I go a little slower at first."

Sophie moaned, soft and helpless.

Vanessa leaned down and kissed her again while she kept touching her. After a minute, she pulled back just enough to speak.

"I want to show you something else," she said.

She shifted on the bed, moving between Sophie's legs. She kissed her way down Sophie's stomach, taking her time, letting Sophie feel every inch of the journey. When she finally settled between her thighs, she looked up at her.

"Watch me," Vanessa said.

Sophie propped herself up on her elbows, eyes wide.

Vanessa lowered her mouth to Sophie’s pussy and licked her slowly, deliberately. She started with long, flat strokes of her tongue, then focused on her clit with smaller, more precise movements. She paid attention to every sound Sophie made, every twitch of her hips, adjusting what she was doing based on Sophie’s reactions.

Sophie’s head fell back with a moan.

“Oh my god…”

Vanessa kept going, patient and thorough. She used her tongue and lips and the gentlest pressure from her fingers, building Sophie up slowly. When Sophie’s thighs started to tremble, Vanessa eased off just enough to keep her on the edge without letting her come. Sophie made a desperate, frustrated sound.

“Please,” she gasped. “Vanessa, please—”

Vanessa lifted her head, her mouth wet and shining.

“Not yet,” she said. “I want you to feel this longer.”

She moved back up Sophie’s body and kissed her, letting Sophie taste herself on Vanessa’s tongue. While they kissed, Vanessa reached down and guided one of Sophie’s hands between her own legs.

“Touch me,” she said against Sophie’s mouth. “I’ll show you how.”

Sophie’s fingers were hesitant at first, but Vanessa guided her patiently, showing her how to circle, how to press, how to listen to the way Vanessa’s body responded. Sophie watched Vanessa’s face the entire time, learning.

“That’s it,” Vanessa murmured. “Right there. You’re doing so well.”

They touched each other like that for a long time — slow, exploratory, learning each other’s bodies. Sophie was breathing hard, overwhelmed in the best way. Every new sensation seemed to hit her harder than the last.

Eventually Vanessa pulled back and looked at her.

“I want to show you something else,” she said. “Something that feels really good with another woman.”

She shifted on the bed, moving so she was lying on her side facing Sophie. She lifted one of Sophie’s legs and hooked it over her own hip, bringing their bodies closer until their pussies pressed together.

Sophie’s eyes widened.

“This is called scissoring,” Vanessa said, her voice low and intimate. “It’s not always the main event, but it can feel incredible when you get the angle right.”

She rocked her hips slowly, grinding her clit against Sophie's. The sensation was different from anything Sophie had felt before — softer, more indirect, but deeply intimate. Their bodies moved together in a slow, rolling rhythm.

Sophie moaned, her hands gripping Vanessa's thigh.

"Oh… fuck…"

Vanessa kept the movement steady, watching Sophie's face.

"Feel how our clits are rubbing together?" she asked. "That's the best part. You can control how much pressure you want by how close you pull me in."

Sophie's hips started moving on their own, chasing the feeling. Her breathing was ragged. Vanessa reached down and slid two fingers inside Sophie while they kept grinding together. Sophie cried out, her whole body arching.

"That's it," Vanessa whispered. "Let yourself feel it. You don't have to hold back with me." They moved like that for a long time — slow and deep and connected. Sophie came once, then again, her body shaking as Vanessa held her through it. Vanessa didn't stop touching her, didn't stop moving against her, until Sophie was gasping and oversensitive.

Only then did Vanessa ease back.

She kissed Sophie's forehead, her cheeks, her mouth.

"You're doing so well," she murmured. "I'm so proud of you."

Sophie was crying, quiet tears slipping down her temples. She didn't seem to notice.

"I didn't know it could feel like this," she whispered. "I didn't know *I* could feel like this." Vanessa kissed her again, slower this time.

"There's more," she said. "If you want it."

Sophie nodded, still dazed. "I want it. I want everything."

Vanessa smiled.

She shifted on the bed again, turning around so her head was near Sophie's feet and her pussy was above Sophie's face. She looked back at her over her shoulder.

"This is called sixty-nine," she said. "We can lick each other at the same time. It takes a little coordination, but it feels incredible when you get the rhythm right."

Sophie's eyes were wide, but she nodded.

Vanessa lowered herself slowly, giving Sophie time to adjust. She felt Sophie's hesitant tongue against her first, tentative and careful. Vanessa moaned softly to encourage her. "That's good," she said. "Just like that. You can use your fingers

too if you want.” She lowered her own mouth back to Sophie’s pussy and started licking her again, slower this time, more focused on drawing it out. Sophie followed her lead, growing bolder as she realized what Vanessa liked.

They moved together like that for a long time — licking, touching, learning each other’s bodies in real time. Sophie came again, her moan muffled against Vanessa’s pussy. Vanessa kept going, patient and thorough, until Sophie was trembling and overwhelmed.

Only then did Vanessa let herself focus on her own pleasure.

She rocked against Sophie’s mouth, guiding her with soft words and gentle touches until she came — once, then again almost immediately after, her body shuddering with the force of it. The second orgasm rolled through her harder than the first, drawn out by how turned on she was from teaching Sophie, from watching her discover everything for the first time. When it was over, Vanessa carefully moved off of Sophie and turned around, pulling her into her arms. Sophie was crying again — soft, overwhelmed tears that she didn’t try to hide. Vanessa held her, stroking her hair and kissing her forehead.

“You were perfect,” she whispered. “You were so brave.”

Sophie buried her face in Vanessa’s neck.

“I don’t know who I am anymore,” she whispered.

Vanessa held her tighter.

“You’re still you,” she said. “You’re just learning new things about what you like. That doesn’t make you someone else. It just makes you more honest.”

Sophie clung to her, breathing hard.

They stayed like that for a long time, tangled together in the bed, the sound of the ocean coming through the open doors. Sophie’s tears eventually slowed, but she didn’t let go of Vanessa.

Vanessa kissed the top of her head.

“Stay here tonight,” she said quietly. “If you want to.”

Sophie nodded against her skin.

“I don’t want to leave,” she admitted.

Vanessa pulled the sheet over them and held her close.

“Then don’t,” she said.

Outside, the night moved on. Somewhere else on the island, Jordan was still keeping Liam occupied. But here, in this quiet villa, Sophie lay in Vanessa’s arms, her body still humming, her mind racing with everything she had just learned

about herself — and everything she was no longer sure she could go back to pretending she didn’t want.

Chapter 8

Chapter Seven

The morning light was soft and golden when the door to the villa opened.

Jordan stepped inside first, still a little unsteady on his feet. Liam followed a step behind, naked, his hair messy from the night and his skin still carrying the faint scent of salt and rum. Both of them had clearly stayed out later than planned.

Liam rubbed his face with one hand as he stepped into the living room.

“Jesus,” he muttered. “I think I’m still drunk.”

Jordan gave a low, tired laugh. “You and me both.”

They moved toward the bedroom without much thought, both of them assuming Sophie would be asleep. The villa was quiet. The only sound was the distant ocean and the soft creak of the wooden floors under their feet.

Jordan pushed the bedroom door open.

And stopped.

Liam nearly walked into his back.

On the bed, tangled in the sheets, were two naked bodies.

Sophie was lying on her back, her skin flushed and marked with faint red traces from hours of touch. Her legs were still slightly parted. One of Vanessa’s arms was draped possessively across her stomach, and Vanessa’s face was tucked against the curve of Sophie’s neck. They looked peaceful. Intimate. Spent.

Liam froze.

For several long seconds, no one moved.

Then Sophie’s eyes fluttered open.

She blinked slowly, still half-asleep, and turned her head toward the doorway. When she saw Liam standing there, her expression shifted from drowsy contentment to something much more complicated — shock, guilt, and a flicker of something darker that she couldn’t quite hide.

Vanessa stirred a moment later. She lifted her head, took in the scene without any visible surprise, and calmly pulled the sheet up over Sophie’s body with one hand while keeping the other resting on Sophie’s hip.

The silence in the room was thick.

Liam’s voice, when it finally came, was hoarse.

“What the fuck is this?”

Jordan didn’t answer. He simply stepped further into the room and leaned against the wall, arms crossed, watching.

Sophie sat up slowly, clutching the sheet to her chest. Her hair was a mess. There were faint marks on her neck and breasts — evidence of a night that had clearly gone far beyond anything she had ever done with her husband.

“Liam…” she started, but her voice cracked.

Vanessa spoke first. Her tone was calm, almost gentle, but there was steel underneath it. “She came here last night,” she said. “Looking for you. You weren’t here.”

Liam’s face had gone pale, then flushed dark with anger and humiliation.

“So you just… what? Decided to fuck my wife?”

Vanessa didn’t flinch.

“I didn’t decide anything,” she said. “Sophie did.”

Sophie’s eyes were wet. She looked between Liam and Vanessa, then at Jordan, like she was drowning and didn’t know which direction to reach.

“I’m sorry,” she whispered. “Liam, I’m so sorry.”

But even as she said it, her body language betrayed her. She hadn’t moved away from Vanessa. If anything, she was leaning into the other woman’s side, as if seeking protection. Liam stared at them, his breathing ragged.

He had known something was happening. He had felt it for days. But seeing it — seeing his wife naked in another woman’s arms, marked by her, clearly having spent the night with her — was something else entirely.

Jordan finally spoke, his voice low and steady.

“You should sit down, Liam.”

Liam didn’t move.

Vanessa’s hand was still resting on Sophie’s hip under the sheet, thumb stroking slowly, almost absently. The gesture was intimate. Possessive. It made Liam’s stomach turn.

Jordan pushed off the wall and walked closer to the bed. He stopped beside Vanessa, already naked, and rested a hand on her shoulder, his eyes on Liam the entire time.

Liam looked at Sophie again.

She was still crying, but she wasn’t reaching for him. She was holding onto Vanessa’s hand under the covers like it was the only thing keeping her from falling apart.

The sight of it made something twist violently in Liam’s chest.

He had spent the entire night trying to convince himself that things weren’t as bad as they seemed. That Sophie was just confused. That they could still fix this.

But standing here, looking at her marked skin and the way she was curled against another woman, he realized the truth he had been avoiding.

His marriage was already over.

He just hadn’t been willing to see it until now.

Liam’s voice was barely above a whisper when he finally spoke again.

“Get out of my bed.”

Vanessa didn’t move.

Sophie looked at Liam, then at Vanessa, then back at Liam. Her expression was devastated, but there was something else underneath it — something raw and hungry that she couldn’t quite hide.

And that was what finally broke Liam completely.

Because even now, even with him standing right there, part of Sophie still wanted this. Vanessa turned her head and looked at Sophie.

The question in her eyes was clear.

Sophie’s answer was even clearer.

She didn’t get out of the bed.

Instead, she reached for Vanessa’s hand under the sheet and held on.

Liam watched it happen. He watched his wife choose.

And something inside him went very, very quiet.

--The tension in the room was suffocating.

Liam stood frozen near the doorway, his face pale beneath the flush of alcohol and anger. His hands were clenched into fists at his sides, but he didn’t move forward. He didn’t yell. He just stared at the bed like he was watching something die in real time.

Sophie was still curled against Vanessa, the sheet pulled up to her chest. Her eyes were red and wet, but she wasn’t reaching for Liam. She was holding onto Vanessa’s hand under the covers like it was the only thing keeping her from falling apart.

Vanessa, for her part, looked completely calm. She sat upright against the headboard, one arm around Sophie’s shoulders, her expression unreadable but steady. Jordan stood beside the bed, already naked, watching Liam with quiet

intensity.

No one spoke for a long moment.

Then Liam let out a shaky, disbelieving laugh.

“This is really happening,” he said, more to himself than anyone else. “I go out for one fucking night and come back to this.”

His voice cracked on the last word.

Sophie flinched.

“Liam…” she tried again, but he cut her off.

“Don’t,” he said, sharp and broken. “Don’t say my name like that. Not while you’re sitting there naked in her arms.”

Sophie’s face crumpled. Fresh tears spilled down her cheeks.

“I’m sorry,” she whispered. “I’m so sorry. I didn’t mean for this to happen.”

But even as she said it, her body language betrayed her. She hadn’t moved away from Vanessa. If anything, she was leaning into the other woman’s side, as if seeking protection. Liam stared at them, his breathing ragged.

He had known something was happening. He had felt it for days. But seeing it — seeing his wife naked in another woman’s arms, marked by her, clearly having spent the night with her — was something else entirely.

Jordan finally spoke, his voice low and steady.

“You should sit down, Liam.”

Liam’s head snapped toward him.

“Don’t tell me what to do in my own fucking villa.”

Jordan didn’t react to the anger. He simply gestured to the chair near the window.

“Sit down,” he repeated, calmer this time. “Or leave. Those are your options right now.” Liam looked like he wanted to argue. His whole body was vibrating with tension. But something in Jordan’s calm, steady gaze made him hesitate. After a long, painful moment, Liam moved. He walked stiffly to the chair and dropped into it like his legs could no longer hold him up.

He buried his face in his hands for a second, then dragged them down and looked at the bed again.

Sophie was still there. Still pressed against Vanessa. Still not reaching for him. The sight of it made something twist violently in Liam’s chest.

Vanessa spoke next. Her voice was quiet, but it carried.

“You already knew something was happening,” she said. “You’ve known for days. You just didn’t want to see it.”

Liam’s jaw clenched.

“I was trying to save my marriage.”

“No,” Vanessa said gently. “You were trying to pretend it was still the same marriage it was before you got on that boat. It isn’t.”

Liam looked at Sophie again.

“Is this what you want?” he asked, voice raw. “Her? Them?”

Sophie’s lip trembled. She looked at Liam, then at Vanessa, then back at Liam. The conflict in her face was painful to watch.

“I don’t know,” she whispered. “I don’t know what I want anymore. But I know I can’t go back to how things were. I can’t pretend I’m still the same person.”

Liam let out a harsh, broken sound.

“So that’s it?” he said. “You just decide you’re someone else now and I’m supposed to what? Watch?”

Vanessa’s hand slid slowly down Sophie’s arm, then back up again — a deliberate, soothing motion that Liam couldn’t miss.

“If you stay,” she said, “that’s exactly what you’ll be doing. Watching.”

Liam stared at her.

“You’re enjoying this,” he said, voice thick with disgust. “You’re getting off on it.” Vanessa didn’t deny it.

“I’m getting off on watching Sophie finally be honest about what she wants,” she said. “And right now, what she wants is sitting right here with me. Not across the room with you.” Sophie made a small, wounded sound and turned her face into Vanessa’s neck.

Liam watched the movement like it physically hurt him.

Jordan stepped forward, stopping at the foot of the bed. He looked at Liam for a long moment, then at Sophie.

“Last chance,” he said quietly. “You can walk out that door right now. We won’t stop you. But if you stay… things are going to get worse before they get better. For all of us.” Liam didn’t move.

He couldn’t.

Because some sick, broken part of him needed to see what would happen next. Needed to know exactly how far this had gone. Needed to watch the moment his

marriage officially died.

He stayed in the chair.

Vanessa noticed.

She turned her head and looked at Sophie, who was still hiding her face against her neck. “Sophie,” she said softly.

Sophie lifted her head.

Vanessa studied her face for a moment, then spoke with quiet authority.

“Show him what you really want.”

Sophie’s breathing changed. Her eyes flicked first to Jordan — a quick, instinctive glance — then back to Vanessa. There was fear there. Shame. But there was also something hungry and desperate that had been growing for days.

Vanessa didn’t push. She simply waited, one hand still resting on Sophie’s hip under the sheet.

Sophie looked at Liam again.

He was staring at her like he didn’t recognize her anymore.

And in that moment, something inside Sophie shifted.

She was tired of pretending.

She was tired of lying.

She was tired of trying to be the version of herself that made everyone else comfortable while she slowly suffocated.

Sophie reached up with a trembling hand and pulled the sheet down, exposing her body. She didn’t cover herself. She let Liam see the marks Vanessa had left on her skin — the faint bruises on her breasts, the redness on her inner thighs, the evidence of a night spent being touched and kissed and fucked in ways she had never experienced before.

Liam’s face went slack with pain.

Sophie’s voice, when it came, was small but steady.

“I’m sorry,” she said again. “But I can’t lie anymore.”

Then she turned to Vanessa.

And kissed her.

It wasn’t hesitant this time. It wasn’t careful. Sophie kissed Vanessa like she was starving for it — deep, open-mouthed, desperate. Vanessa kissed her back without hesitation, one hand sliding into Sophie’s hair while the other cupped her breast.

Liam made a sound like he’d been punched.

He didn’t look away.

Vanessa broke the kiss after a long moment and looked at Liam over Sophie’s shoulder. Her eyes were dark, calm, and completely in control.

“Watch,” she said quietly. “Or leave. But don’t pretend you don’t know what’s happening.” Then she turned her attention back to Sophie.

And the real breaking began.

--Vanessa guided Sophie onto her back with gentle but firm hands. The sheet was pulled away completely, leaving Sophie bare in the morning light. She didn’t resist. If anything, she seemed relieved to stop hiding.

Vanessa moved over her, straddling one of Sophie’s thighs as she leaned down to kiss her again. This time the kiss was slower, deeper, more deliberate. Vanessa took her time, letting Sophie feel every second of it.

Liam watched from the chair.

His breathing was harsh. His hands were gripping the arms of the chair so tightly his knuckles had gone white.

Vanessa broke the kiss and looked down at Sophie.

“Tell him what you want,” she said, loud enough for Liam to hear.

Sophie’s eyes flicked to her husband, then back to Vanessa. Her voice was shaky but clear. “I want him,” she whispered.

Vanessa smiled, small and satisfied.

“Good girl.”

She kissed her way down Sophie’s body — slow, unhurried, making sure Liam saw every touch. She kissed Sophie’s breasts, her stomach, the soft skin of her inner thighs. When she finally settled between Sophie’s legs, she looked up at her one more time.

“Keep your eyes on him,” Vanessa said quietly. “I want you to watch his face while I make you come.”

Sophie obeyed.

She turned her head and looked at Liam as Vanessa lowered her mouth to her pussy. The first slow lick made Sophie’s back arch. Her hands fisted in the sheets. She didn’t look away from Liam.

Vanessa took her time. She licked Sophie with long, deliberate strokes, then focused on her clit with precise, circling movements. She knew exactly what Sophie liked now — how much pressure, how much speed, when to ease off and

when to push harder. She used that knowledge ruthlessly.

Sophie's breathing grew faster. Her hips started to roll against Vanessa's mouth. Soft, helpless sounds escaped her throat.

Liam couldn't look away.

He watched his wife's face as another woman made her moan. He watched the way her body responded — the way her nipples tightened, the way her thighs trembled, the way her stomach muscles fluttered with every flick of Vanessa's tongue.

Sophie came with a broken cry, her eyes still locked on Liam's.

Her whole body shook with it. She reached down and grabbed Vanessa's hair, holding her in place as the orgasm rolled through her. It was louder, longer, and more intense than anything Liam had ever seen from her.

When it was over, Sophie collapsed back against the pillows, panting.

Vanessa kissed the inside of her thigh, then looked at Liam again.

"That was just the beginning," she said.

She moved up Sophie's body and kissed her deeply, letting her taste herself. Sophie kissed her back with desperate hunger.

Vanessa glanced at Jordan.

Jordan stepped forward and climbed onto the bed without a word.

Vanessa looked back at Sophie.

"Do you want him inside you?" she asked, loud enough for Liam to hear.

Sophie's eyes were glassy, her breathing still ragged from her orgasm.

"Yes," she whispered.

Vanessa smiled.

"Then take what you want."

She helped Sophie sit up and guided her over Jordan's lap. Sophie straddled him, her hands braced on his chest as she positioned herself above his cock. She looked down at him for a moment, then glanced once more at Liam — her husband, still frozen in the chair — before she slowly sank down onto Jordan.

A long, broken moan escaped her as he filled her.

Liam made a wounded sound from the chair.

Vanessa moved behind him.

She placed her hands firmly on Liam’s shoulders and pushed him back into the chair when he tried to stand. Her grip was strong and unyielding.

“Sit,” she said quietly, her mouth close to his ear. “You’re going to watch every second of this.”

Liam struggled for a moment, but Vanessa held him down. Her fingers dug into his shoulders as she kept him pinned in the chair.

On the bed, Sophie began to move.

She rode Jordan slowly at first, her hands braced on his chest, her hips rolling in deep, deliberate circles. Jordan’s hands settled on her waist, guiding her but letting her set the pace. Sophie’s head fell back as she found her rhythm, riding him with growing confidence. Her moans grew louder.

She rode him harder — bouncing on his cock, her breasts moving with every thrust, her thighs flexing as she took him deep again and again. It was raw and unrestrained, nothing like

the careful, almost polite sex she had with Liam. This was hungry. Desperate. Honest. Liam watched, held in place by Vanessa’s hands on his shoulders.

He watched his wife fuck another man with complete abandon. He watched the way her body moved, the way her face twisted in pleasure, the way she moaned Jordan’s name like she couldn’t help herself.

Sophie came again — harder than before. Her whole body locked up as she cried out, grinding down onto Jordan as the orgasm tore through her. Jordan groaned beneath her but didn’t come. He held her through it, letting her ride out every wave.

When Sophie finally collapsed forward onto Jordan’s chest, breathing hard, Vanessa leaned down close to Liam’s ear again.

“Look at her,” she murmured. “That’s what she really wanted. That’s what she’s been hiding from you.”

Liam’s eyes were glassy. His breathing was ragged. He looked broken.

On the bed, Sophie slowly pushed herself upright again. She looked down at Jordan, then turned her head and looked directly at Liam.

There were tears on her face.

But she didn’t stop moving.

She started riding Jordan again — slower this time, but no less intense. Her eyes stayed on Liam as she fucked another man in front of him.

Vanessa kept her hands on Liam’s shoulders, holding him in the chair.

“You’re not going anywhere,” she said softly. “You’re going to watch your wife come on his cock until she can’t anymore.”

Sophie moaned again, louder this time, and rode Jordan harder.

Liam sat there, held down, forced to watch as his marriage collapsed in front of him. And for the first time, he didn’t look away.

Chapter 9

Chapter Eight

Liam stood on the deck of the villa, gripping the wooden railing so hard his knuckles had gone white. The morning sun was already climbing, warm against his bare skin, but he felt cold all the way through. Inside, he could still hear the faint sounds of movement — Sophie's soft voice, Vanessa's lower one answering. He couldn't make out the words, but he didn't need to. He had seen enough.

He had seen *everything*.

His wife riding another man while he was forced to watch. Sophie coming harder than she ever had with him. Vanessa holding him in the chair like he was some kind of spectator at his own execution. The image was burned into the back of his eyelids. Every time he blinked, he saw it again.

Liam let out a shaky breath and pushed away from the railing. His legs felt unsteady beneath him. He walked back inside, moving through the living room like a man in a dream. Or a nightmare.

Sophie was sitting on the edge of the bed now, wrapped in the sheet. Vanessa stood nearby, arms crossed, watching her with quiet patience. Jordan was leaning against the wall, arms folded over his chest. All three of them looked up when Liam stepped into the doorway. The silence was heavy.

Sophie's eyes were red and swollen. She looked at him like she was bracing for impact. Liam's voice came out rough, almost unrecognizable.

"I'm leaving."

Sophie flinched like he'd struck her.

Vanessa didn't react. Jordan simply nodded once, as if he'd been expecting this. Sophie's voice was small. "Liam…"

He didn't let her finish.

"I can't stay here," he said. His tone was flat, almost numb. "Not after that. Not after watching you…" He stopped, jaw tightening. "I can't do this. I won't."

Sophie stood up, the sheet clutched to her chest. "Please. Can we just talk? Just the two of us?"

Liam let out a short, bitter laugh. "Talk? What the fuck is there left to talk about, Sophie? I left for a few hours and came back to find you in bed with her. Then you fucked him while I was made to sit there and watch. What part of that do you think we can talk our way out of?" Sophie's face crumpled. Fresh tears spilled down her cheeks.

“I didn’t plan any of this,” she whispered. “I didn’t know I was going to feel this way. I didn’t know I could *want* this.”

Liam stared at her, something dark and exhausted flickering behind his eyes.

“And now you do,” he said. “So what? I’m just supposed to be okay with it? I’m supposed to stay here and pretend like my wife didn’t just choose someone else in front of me?” Sophie took a shaky step toward him. “Liam, I still love you. That hasn’t changed.” He shook his head, taking a step back.

“Maybe not,” he said. “But it doesn’t matter anymore. Because I can’t unsee what I just saw. I can’t pretend I’m enough for you. I can’t pretend this marriage is still what I thought it was.”

He ran a hand through his hair, then let it drop to his side.

“I’m booking the first flight out,” he said. “Today. I’m not staying another night.” Sophie’s breath hitched. “Liam, please—”

“I’m getting an annulment,” he cut in, voice steady even though his hands were shaking. “As soon as I’m back. I’ll start the paperwork. You can fight it if you want, but I’m not staying married to you like this.”

The words landed like a physical blow. Sophie’s knees buckled slightly. Vanessa moved forward on instinct and caught her elbow, steadying her. Sophie didn’t pull away. Liam watched the small gesture and felt something inside him die a little more.

He turned his gaze to Vanessa and Jordan.

“You two got what you wanted,” he said, voice hollow. “Congratulations.”

Jordan didn’t flinch. Vanessa’s expression remained calm, though there was a flicker of something — not quite pity, but close — in her eyes.

Liam looked back at Sophie one last time.

“I loved you,” he said quietly. “I really did.”

Then he turned and walked out of the bedroom.

Sophie made a broken sound behind him, but he didn’t stop.

He grabbed his phone from the living room table and stepped out onto the deck again. His hands were shaking so badly he could barely navigate the screen. He pulled up the airline app and started searching for flights off the island. The first available one was in four hours. He booked it without hesitation, using the emergency credit card he kept for situations just like this — though he had never imagined *this* situation.

When he finished, he stood there for a long moment, staring at the confirmation on his screen. His chest felt tight. His throat burned. But he didn’t cry. He just

felt… empty. Inside, he could hear Sophie crying. Vanessa's low voice murmuring something he couldn't make out. He didn't want to know what she was saying. He didn't want to know if Sophie was defending herself or falling apart or asking to stay with them.

It didn't matter anymore.

He went back inside just long enough to throw his few belongings into his bag. He didn't look toward the bedroom. He couldn't.

When he was done, he stood in the middle of the living room for a moment, bag slung over his shoulder, and waited.

Sophie appeared in the doorway a minute later. She had thrown on a thin cover-up, but it did nothing to hide the marks on her skin or the devastation on her face. Vanessa stood behind her, one hand resting lightly on Sophie's back.

Liam looked at his wife — or the woman who had been his wife — and felt nothing but a deep, exhausted sadness.

"I'm leaving in a few hours," he said. "I already booked the flight."

Sophie's eyes filled with fresh tears. "Liam, please don't do this. Not like this. We can talk when we get home. We can go to counseling. We can—"

"We're not going home together," Liam said, cutting her off. His voice was quiet but final. "I'm going home. You're staying here. Or wherever the fuck you want. But not with me." Sophie took another step forward. "I still love you."

Liam's jaw tightened.

"Maybe," he said. "But it's not enough. Not after this."

He looked past her to Vanessa and Jordan.

"Take care of her," he said, the words bitter on his tongue. "Since that's what she wants now." Vanessa didn't answer. Jordan gave a single, solemn nod.

Liam turned back to Sophie one last time.

"I hope you find whatever it is you're looking for," he said. "I really do."

Then he walked out the door without looking back.

Sophie stood in the doorway, watching him go. Her hands were clenched into fists at her sides. Tears streamed down her face unchecked. She didn't call after him. She didn't run after him. She just stood there, shaking, as the man she had married walked away from her for good.

Vanessa stepped up behind her and gently pulled her back inside. She closed the door and turned Sophie to face her.

Sophie collapsed against her chest, sobbing.

Vanessa held her, one hand stroking her hair, the other rubbing slow circles on her back. She didn't tell her it would be okay. She didn't offer empty comfort. She just held her while the reality of what had just happened settled in.

Jordan watched them from across the room, his expression unreadable.

After a long time, Sophie's sobs quieted into shaky breaths. She pulled back just enough to look up at Vanessa, her eyes red and swollen.

"He's really gone," she whispered.

Vanessa nodded. "He is."

Sophie's voice cracked. "What do I do now?"

Vanessa brushed a tear from Sophie's cheek with her thumb.

"You breathe," she said quietly. "And then you figure out who you are without him." Sophie let out a broken laugh that turned into another sob.

"I don't know who that is."

Vanessa's hand slid down to the back of Sophie's neck, grounding her.

"You will," she said. "One way or another."

Jordan pushed off the wall and walked over. He stopped beside them and rested a hand on Sophie's shoulder.

"You're not alone," he said simply.

Sophie looked between the two of them — these two people who had helped destroy her marriage and were now the only ones left standing beside her. She didn't know whether to feel grateful or terrified.

She felt both.

Outside, the island continued on as if nothing had changed. The ocean kept moving. The sun kept shining. Somewhere down the path, Liam was walking toward the dock with his bag over his shoulder, leaving behind the wreckage of the life he thought he had.

And inside the villa, Sophie stood between Vanessa and Jordan, untethered for the first time in years, and wondered what the hell she was supposed to do now that the person she had built her entire adult life around was gone.

Chapter 10

Chapter Nine

Sophie stood outside their villa for a long time before she knocked.

It was late afternoon on the ninth day. The sun was low and heavy, turning the sky soft orange and pink. She had spent most of the day wandering the island alone, walking the same stretches of beach over and over, trying to outrun the quiet that had settled inside her after Liam left.

She hadn't slept much. Every time she closed her eyes she saw his face when he walked out — the way something in him had gone still and final. She had cried until she couldn't anymore, then sat in silence, staring at nothing. The villa felt too big without him. Too empty. And yet the thought of going home to their old life felt impossible now.

She kept thinking about Vanessa and Jordan.

They hadn't pushed her after Liam left. Vanessa had stayed with her for a while the night before, holding her while she fell apart, then quietly left her alone when it became clear Sophie needed space. Jordan had handled the practical things without being asked. They had given her room. They hadn't tried to claim her or comfort her into something she wasn't ready for.

But Sophie had felt the pull anyway.

It had grown stronger all day. A quiet, persistent ache in her chest that had nothing to do with grief and everything to do with the way she had felt when she was with them — seen, wanted, allowed to want in return. She had tried to ignore it. She had tried to tell herself she needed to be alone, to think, to grieve properly. But the truth was simpler and harder to sit with.

She didn't want to be alone.

Not tonight.

So she had walked here. And now she stood at their door, heart beating too fast, unsure if she was making a mistake but unable to turn around.

She knocked.

Vanessa opened the door.

She didn't look surprised. She simply stepped back and let Sophie inside without a word. Jordan was in the living room, sitting on the edge of the low couch with a glass in his hand. He looked up when Sophie entered. His expression was calm, but his eyes were careful as

they moved over her face.

Sophie stood just inside the doorway, arms wrapped around herself. She felt exposed in a way that had nothing to do with being naked.

“I didn’t know where else to go,” she said quietly.

Vanessa closed the door behind her.

“You don’t have to explain,” she said. Her voice was soft, but there was no pity in it. Just quiet understanding.

Sophie swallowed. Her throat felt tight.

“I keep thinking I should be falling apart more than I am,” she admitted. “Liam left. My marriage is over. I should be devastated. And part of me is. But there’s this other part…” She trailed off, shaking her head. “I feel relieved. And that makes me feel like shit.” Jordan set his glass down and leaned forward, resting his forearms on his knees. “Relief doesn’t mean you didn’t love him,” he said. “It just means part of you knew it wasn’t working anymore.”

Sophie looked at him, then at Vanessa.

“I don’t know who I’m supposed to be now,” she said. “I was someone’s wife. I was careful and good and predictable. And now I’m… this. I let another man fuck me while my husband watched. I let another woman touch me in ways I’ve never let anyone touch me. And I liked it. I still like it. Even after everything that happened.”

Her voice cracked on the last word.

Vanessa stepped closer. She reached out and brushed Sophie’s hair back from her face, her fingers lingering against her cheek.

“You’re allowed to like it,” she said. “You’re allowed to want things that scare you. That doesn’t make you a bad person. It just makes you human.”

Sophie’s eyes filled with tears she refused to let fall.

“I feel like I’m losing myself,” she whispered. “And at the same time, I feel like I’m finally finding something I didn’t know was missing. I don’t know how to hold both of those things at once.”

Vanessa’s hand slid down to the side of Sophie’s neck, thumb stroking slowly.

“You don’t have to hold them alone,” she said.

Sophie looked at her for a long moment. Then her gaze shifted to Jordan, who was still watching her from the couch with that same steady, patient attention.

She took a shaky breath.

“I don’t want to think anymore,” she said. “I don’t want to analyze or explain or feel guilty. I just want to feel something that isn’t this… emptiness.”

Vanessa studied her face.

“What do you want, Sophie?” she asked quietly.

Sophie’s voice was barely above a whisper.

“I want you,” she said. “Both of you. I want to stop being careful. I want to stop pretending I’m still the person I was when I got on that boat. I want to feel like I did the other night — like I’m allowed to want without apologizing for it.”

She looked at Jordan again, then back at Vanessa.

“I want you to touch me,” she said. “I want you to take me apart. I want to feel like I belong to something tonight, even if it’s only for a few hours.”

The words hung in the air between them.

Vanessa didn’t answer right away. She just looked at Sophie with that same calm, knowing expression she always wore when she was deciding how far to push.

Then she leaned in and kissed her.

It wasn’t the careful, exploratory kiss from before. This one was deeper, more certain. Vanessa’s hand slid into Sophie’s hair and held her there as she kissed her like she was claiming something. Sophie made a soft, desperate sound and kissed her back, her hands coming up to grip Vanessa’s waist.

Jordan stood.

He moved behind Sophie and placed his hands on her hips, his chest warm against her back. He didn’t say anything at first. He just held her there while Vanessa kissed her, letting Sophie feel surrounded.

When Vanessa finally pulled back, her voice was low.

“Say it again,” she said. “What you want.”

Sophie’s breathing was uneven.

“I want you to fuck me,” she said. “Both of you. I want to stop thinking. I want to feel.” Jordan’s hands tightened slightly on her hips.

Vanessa kissed her again, slower this time, then stepped back just enough to look at her. “Then come with us,” she said.

They took her to the bedroom.

The light was low, the doors to the deck open so the sound of the ocean moved through the space. Vanessa guided Sophie onto the bed and followed her down, settling over her. Jordan moved to the side, one hand resting on Sophie’s thigh as he watched.

Vanessa kissed her slowly, thoroughly, like she had all the time in the world. Her hands moved over Sophie's body with deliberate care — not rushing, not demanding, just touching. Learning. Claiming.

Sophie's hands slid up Vanessa's back, pulling her closer. She was already wet, had been since she knocked on their door. The ache between her legs was constant now, a low, steady pulse that made it hard to think about anything else.

Vanessa broke the kiss and looked down at her.

"Tell Jordan what you want him to do," she said.

Sophie's eyes flicked to him. He was watching her with that same calm intensity, waiting. "I want you inside me," she said, voice soft but clear. "I want you to fuck me while she touches me."

Jordan's expression didn't change, but something in his eyes darkened.

He moved between her legs and leaned down to kiss her. It was slower than she expected, almost careful. Sophie kissed him back, her hands sliding up his arms as he settled over her. Vanessa stayed beside them, one hand resting on Sophie's thigh, the other stroking slow circles over her stomach.

Jordan reached down and guided himself against her. He pushed in slowly, watching her face the entire time. Sophie's mouth fell open on a soft moan as he filled her. She was so wet there was almost no resistance, just the slow, deep stretch of him.

Vanessa leaned in close to her ear.

"Breathe," she murmured. "Let yourself feel him."

Jordan started to move — long, steady strokes that made Sophie's back arch. Vanessa's hand slid lower, her fingers finding Sophie's clit and circling it in time with Jordan's thrusts. Sophie moaned, louder this time.

Jordan leaned down and kissed her again, deeper now, while Vanessa kept touching her. The combination was overwhelming — the feeling of being filled while someone else touched her exactly the way she needed. Sophie's hands gripped Jordan's back, her nails digging in as the pleasure built fast and sharp.

Vanessa's voice stayed low and steady in her ear.

"You're so wet for him," she said. "Do you like this? Being fucked while I touch you?" Sophie nodded frantically.

"Yes—god, yes—"

Jordan's pace stayed steady, deep and unrelenting. Vanessa's fingers never stopped moving. Sophie came with a broken cry, her whole body locking up as the orgasm tore through her. Jordan fucked her through it, drawing it out until

she was shaking and gasping.

Only then did he slow down.

He pulled out carefully and sat back on his heels, breathing hard. Sophie lay there, dazed, staring up at the ceiling.

Vanessa kissed her temple.

“You’re doing so well,” she murmured.

She shifted on the bed, moving so she was lying on her side facing Sophie. She lifted one of Sophie’s legs and hooked it over her own hip, bringing their bodies closer until their pussies pressed together.

Sophie’s eyes widened slightly, but she didn’t pull away.

Vanessa rocked her hips slowly, grinding her clit against Sophie’s. The sensation was different — softer, more indirect, but deeply intimate. Sophie moaned and moved with her, their bodies finding a slow, rolling rhythm.

Vanessa reached down and slid two fingers inside Sophie while they kept moving together. Sophie cried out, her head falling back.

“That’s it,” Vanessa whispered. “Let yourself feel it. You don’t have to hold anything back here.”

They moved like that for a long time — grinding, touching, lost in each other. Sophie came again, her moan muffled against Vanessa’s shoulder. Vanessa kept going until Sophie was trembling and oversensitive, then eased off.

She kissed Sophie’s forehead, her cheeks, her mouth.

“You’re incredible,” she said quietly.

Jordan had been watching them, his hand wrapped around his cock, stroking slowly. Vanessa glanced at him, then back at Sophie.

“Do you still want him?” she asked.

Sophie nodded without hesitation.

“Yes.”

Vanessa helped her sit up and guided her over Jordan’s lap again. Sophie straddled him, her hands braced on his chest as she positioned herself above his cock. She looked down at him for a moment, then glanced once at Vanessa before she slowly sank down onto him. A long, broken moan escaped her as he filled her again.

This time she set the pace.

She rode him with deep, rolling movements, her head falling back as she took him again and again. Jordan's hands settled on her hips, guiding her but letting her lead. Vanessa stayed beside them, one hand resting on Sophie's lower back, the other sliding between them to circle her clit.

Sophie was lost in it.

Every thrust, every touch, every low sound Jordan made beneath her pushed her further from the person she had been when she arrived on this island. She felt untethered in the best and worst way — free from the version of herself that had tried so hard to be good, but also unmoored from everything she had once believed about who she was.

Vanessa leaned in close to her ear.

"Tell us how far you're willing to go," she said, voice low and intimate. "If we called you tomorrow and told you to come to us, would you?"

Sophie's hips stuttered for a second, but she didn't stop moving.

"Yes," she gasped.

"And if we told you we wanted you available whenever we wanted you?" Vanessa continued. "No matter what else was happening in your life. Would you still say yes?"

Sophie's breathing was ragged. She was close again, her body trembling with it.

"Yes," she whispered.

Vanessa's fingers kept moving on her clit, steady and unrelenting.

"And if we told you that you could be ours in whatever way we wanted," she said, voice even softer now. "That we could use you however we liked. Would you still want that?" Sophie's eyes were glassy, her movements growing more desperate.

"Yes," she said again, voice breaking. "I would. I do. I want it."

She was crying now, quiet tears slipping down her face even as she kept riding Jordan, kept chasing the pleasure that was building again, sharper this time.

Vanessa kissed the side of her neck.

"Say it," she murmured. "Say what you want to be for us."

Sophie's voice cracked on the words.

"I want to be your on-call girl," she said. "I want to be available whenever you want me. However you want me. I want to drop everything if you call. I want to be yours." Jordan's hands tightened on her hips. He thrust up into her harder, meeting her movements. Vanessa's voice stayed calm, almost gentle.

“And if we told you that you could be that for anyone who asked?” she said. “Not just us. Anyone who wanted you. Would you still say yes?”

Sophie’s whole body was shaking now. She was right on the edge, tears still slipping down her face.

“Yes,” she gasped. “I would. I’d do it. I’d be whatever anyone wanted if that’s what you told me to be.”

She came again with a broken, sobbing moan, her body locking up as the orgasm tore through her. Jordan held her through it, fucking her steadily until she collapsed forward onto his chest, shaking and breathless.

Vanessa stroked her hair, kissing the top of her head.

“You’re okay,” she murmured. “You’re okay.”

Sophie stayed there for a long time, breathing hard against Jordan’s skin. When she finally lifted her head, her eyes were red and wet, but there was something clearer in them now. Something settled.

She looked at Vanessa, then at Jordan.

“I meant it,” she said quietly. “All of it.”

Vanessa studied her face for a long moment.

Then she leaned in and kissed her — slow, deep, and final.

When she pulled back, her voice was soft.

“We know,” she said.

She didn’t promise anything.

She didn’t tell Sophie she belonged to them.

She simply held her, and let Sophie feel the weight of what she had just offered settle over both of them like something that could never be taken back.

Outside, the ocean kept moving.

And inside the villa, Sophie lay between them, her body still humming, her heart cracked wide open, and the words she had spoken hanging in the air like a door that had just been opened — one she wasn’t sure she would ever be able to close again.

Chapter 11

Chapter Ten*

Sophie moved through the villa slowly, her hands lingering on each thing she touched. It was early afternoon on the tenth day. Sunlight slanted through the open doors in long, golden bars, catching on the edges of the furniture and turning the wooden floors warm. She had already folded most of her things — what little she had brought — but she kept pausing between tasks, her fingers resting on the edge of a drawer or the strap of her bag as if she needed to remind herself what she was doing.

She wasn't crying anymore. The tears had come and gone in waves since Liam left, but now there was only this quiet, heavy stillness inside her. She felt older than she had ten days ago. Not wiser, exactly. Just… altered. Like something fundamental had shifted in her chest and hadn't quite settled back into place.

She folded the last of her things and placed them in the bag.

Her phone sat on the nightstand, screen dark. She hadn't looked at it much since Liam left. There was nothing waiting for her there that she wanted to see. No messages from him. No missed calls. Just the quiet confirmation that he had meant what he said when he walked out. Sophie sat on the edge of the bed and stared at the floor for a long time.

She kept thinking about what she had said during the threesome. The words had come out of her in the heat of it — raw and desperate and completely honest in the moment. She had begged to be their on-call girl. She had offered to be available whenever they wanted her, however they wanted her. She had gone further and said she would do it for anyone who asked if that was what they wanted from her.

The memory made her stomach twist with a complicated mix of shame and arousal. She had meant it when she said it. She still felt the echo of that want in her body. But in the clear light of day, with Liam gone and the island feeling suddenly too big and too empty, those words felt like something dangerous. Something that had changed her in a way she couldn't take back.

She stood up again and continued packing.

When the knock came at the door, she wasn't surprised.

She had known they would come.

Sophie took a slow breath, smoothed her hands over her bare stomach without thinking, and walked to the door.

Vanessa and Jordan stood on the other side.

They looked the same as they always had — calm, composed, untouched by the storm that had torn through Sophie's life. Vanessa's red hair caught the sunlight. Jordan stood just behind her, his expression steady and unreadable. They were both naked, as everyone on the island was, and for a brief, disorienting second Sophie felt a strange, distant pang of something like grief at how normal that had become to her.

Vanessa offered a small, gentle smile.

"We thought we'd walk you to the dock," she said.

Sophie nodded. She didn't trust her voice yet.

She stepped back and let them inside.

The three of them stood in the living room for a moment without speaking. Sophie's bag sat by the door, already zipped and ready. The villa felt strangely sterile now that she had packed everything away.

Vanessa was the first to break the silence.

"How are you feeling?" she asked quietly.

Sophie let out a shaky breath.

"I don't know," she admitted. "Numb, mostly. And… raw. Like someone took sandpaper to the inside of my chest."

Jordan moved to lean against the wall near the window, giving her space but staying close enough that she could feel his presence.

"That sounds about right," he said.

Sophie looked between them. She had spent so much of the last few days trying to understand what they were to her — what she was to them. They had been kind after Liam left. They had held her when she cried. But there had also been a distance to them, a quiet detachment that she hadn't been able to ignore. They had given her comfort without promising anything. They had touched her without claiming her.

And she had offered herself anyway.

She swallowed hard.

"I keep thinking about what I said," she said. "During the threesome. About being available. About being your… on-call girl. About doing it for anyone if that's what you wanted." Her face flushed, but she didn't look away.

"I meant it when I said it," she continued. "I still feel it. But now that everything's quiet and Liam's gone and I'm standing here packing to leave… it feels bigger than I thought it would. Like I opened a door I don't know how to close."

Vanessa studied her face with that same calm, knowing expression she always wore. “You don’t have to close it,” she said. “Not today. Not ever, if you don’t want to.” Sophie’s eyes filled with tears she refused to let fall.

“But you’re not going to keep me,” she said. It wasn’t a question.

Vanessa didn’t answer right away.

Jordan spoke instead, his voice low and steady.

“We don’t keep people,” he said. “That’s not how this works for us.”

Sophie nodded slowly. She had known that. She had known it from the beginning, even when she was offering herself in the heat of the moment. But hearing it said out loud still hurt in a way she hadn’t expected.

“I know,” she said. “I think I always knew.”

She looked down at her hands.

“I just… I wanted to matter to someone,” she said. “Not because I was convenient or familiar or safe. I wanted to matter because someone saw me and wanted me anyway. And for a little while, with both of you, I felt like I did.”

Vanessa squeezed her hand once.

“You did matter,” she said. “You still do. That doesn’t change just because we’re not keeping you.”

Sophie let out a shaky laugh that sounded more like a sob.

“That’s a nice way of saying you’re letting me go.”

Vanessa didn’t deny it.

“We’re not keeping you,” she repeated, gently. “But that doesn’t mean you didn’t matter. It doesn’t mean what happened here wasn’t real.”

Sophie looked at her for a long moment, then at Jordan.

“Did you mean it?” she asked. “When you said I was on speed dial?”

Vanessa’s expression softened, but there was a careful distance in it now.

“You’re on speed dial,” she said. “If you ever need us, you can reach out.”

It was kind. It was warm, even. But Sophie could hear what wasn’t being said.

They weren’t promising to call her. They weren’t promising to use her. They were giving her a door that would probably stay closed unless she was the one who opened it first. Sophie nodded, because what else was there to do?

“Thank you,” she said quietly. “For everything. For seeing me. For letting me… be this version of myself, even if it was only for a little while.”

Jordan pushed off the wall and walked over. He stopped in front of her and rested a hand on her shoulder.

“You were never pretending with us,” he said. “That’s the difference.”

Sophie’s eyes filled again.

“I don’t know how to go back to my life,” she admitted. “I don’t know who I’m supposed to be now that I’m not Liam’s wife. I don’t know how to live with these new… wants. These new parts of me.”

Vanessa squeezed her hand.

“You don’t have to know right away,” she said. “You just have to keep going. One day at a time. One choice at a time.”

Sophie nodded, but the words felt distant. She was already drifting somewhere else in her mind — already imagining what it would feel like to walk through her old apartment alone. To sleep in a bed that didn’t have Liam in it. To look at herself in the mirror and not recognize the woman staring back.

She took a slow breath and stepped back.

“I should finish packing,” she said. “My boat leaves in an hour.”

Vanessa nodded.

“We’ll walk you to the dock,” she said.

Sophie managed a small, tired smile.

“Thank you.”

They waited while she finished gathering the last of her things. The process felt both endless and too fast. Every item she placed in her bag felt like another thread being cut. When she was finally done, she stood in the middle of the villa and looked around one last time. This place had changed her more than she knew how to name.

She picked up her bag and turned to Vanessa and Jordan.

“I’m ready,” she said.

They walked together along the path toward the dock.

The island was quiet in the way it always was in the middle of the day — the sound of the ocean steady and constant, the air warm and thick with salt. A few other guests passed them on the path, naked and unhurried, but Sophie barely noticed them. Her focus had narrowed to the feel of the wooden boards under her feet and the growing distance between herself and the villa she was leaving behind.

Vanessa walked on her left. Jordan on her right. Neither of them tried to fill the silence with small talk. They simply walked with her, steady and present, as if they understood that this was the only thing she needed from them now.

When they reached the dock, Sophie's boat was already waiting.

A staff member stood nearby, ready to help with bags. Sophie handed hers over without looking at him. Her eyes were on the water, on the boat that would carry her away from this place and back into whatever life was waiting for her on the other side.

She turned to Vanessa and Jordan one last time.

There were a thousand things she wanted to say. Thank you. I'm sorry. I don't know how to do this. Please don't forget me. But none of them felt big enough or true enough for the moment.

So she said the only thing that felt honest.

"I'm not the same person who arrived here," she said. "I don't think I'll ever be her again." Vanessa reached out and took her hand.

"No," she said quietly. "You won't."

Jordan rested a hand on Sophie's shoulder.

"That's not a bad thing," he said.

Sophie looked at them both — these two people who had seen the worst and best of her in the space of ten days. Who had held her while she broke and touched her while she came apart and listened without judgment while she offered herself in ways she had never imagined she could.

She didn't know what they would remember about her when she was gone. She didn't know if she would ever hear from them again. But she knew, with a clarity that settled deep in her bones, that she would carry them with her for the rest of her life.

She squeezed Vanessa's hand once, then let go.

"Thank you," she said again. "For all of it."

Vanessa nodded.

"Safe travels, Sophie."

Jordan gave her a small, solemn nod.

Sophie turned and stepped onto the boat.

She didn't look back as it pulled away from the dock. She kept her eyes on the water ahead, on the horizon line where the sky met the sea. The wind moved through her hair. The sun warmed her skin. The sound of the engine mixed with

the waves until it became its own kind of silence.

She thought about Liam.

She thought about the version of herself that had stepped onto this island ten days ago — hopeful, nervous, certain that she and her husband were building something real and lasting. She thought about the woman she was now — changed in ways she was still learning how to name. Carrying desires she didn't know how to live with. Marked by people who had seen her more clearly than anyone ever had before.

She didn't know what came next.

She didn't know who she would be when she stepped off this boat and back into her old life. But as the island grew smaller behind her, Sophie closed her eyes and let herself feel the full weight of what she had done and what she had become.

She had hammered the nails into her own coffin.

And she wasn't sure she wanted to climb out. It felt so big in there.

Chapter 12

Chapter Eleven

The boat had been gone for almost an hour.

Vanessa stood on the deck of their villa, arms resting on the wooden railing, watching the place where the water met the horizon. The sun was low, turning the sky into long streaks of orange and pink that bled into the sea. A warm breeze moved across her bare skin, carrying the steady sound of the waves. Somewhere in the distance, music drifted up from the pavilion, soft and distant, like it belonged to another world.

Jordan stepped out behind her. He didn't speak at first. He simply came to stand beside her, close enough that their arms brushed. For a while they stayed like that, side by side, watching the last light fade from the sky.

Eventually Vanessa spoke.

"They're getting younger."

Jordan let out a quiet breath that might have been a laugh.

"I know," he said. "Every time."

Vanessa kept her eyes on the water.

"I felt like their fairy godparents."

This time Jordan did laugh, low and tired.

"Yeah," he said. "That's exactly what it felt like."

He reached out and rested his hand on the small of her back. His palm was warm. Familiar. After days of restraint, even that small touch felt charged.

Vanessa turned her head to look at him.

"She meant it," she said. "When she offered herself. All of it."

"I know," Jordan replied. "I could feel it when she said it. She wasn't performing. She was giving something real."

Vanessa was quiet for a moment.

"I almost wanted to take her up on it," she admitted. "Just to see if she'd really do it. If she'd drop everything and come running the next time we called."

Jordan's hand slid a little lower on her back.

"But we didn't," he said.

"No," Vanessa answered. "We didn't."

She turned fully toward him then. The fading light caught the natural red in her hair and turned it molten. Her expression was calm, but there was something deeper in her eyes — something thoughtful and slightly weary.

“She’s going to carry this with her for a long time,” Vanessa said. “What we did to her. What we let her do to herself.”

Jordan nodded.

“She wanted it,” he said. “She asked for it. We didn’t force anything.”

“I know,” Vanessa said. “But that doesn’t mean we didn’t change her. She came here as someone’s wife. She’s leaving as… something else. Someone who knows things about herself she didn’t know before. Someone who offered to be available to strangers if that’s what we wanted from her.”

She looked back out at the water.

“I wonder if she’ll ever be able to go back to normal life after this,” she said quietly. “Or if she’ll spend the rest of her days chasing something she only got a taste of here.” Jordan was quiet for a long moment.

“Probably,” he said eventually. “Most of them do.”

Vanessa turned to him again. This time there was a small, knowing smile on her face. “We’re getting old,” she said.

Jordan raised an eyebrow.

“Speak for yourself.”

Vanessa’s smile widened just a fraction.

“I’m serious. They’re getting younger every time. Or maybe we’re just getting older. Either way, the gap feels bigger lately.”

Jordan studied her face in the fading light.

“Do you want to stop?” he asked.

Vanessa didn’t answer right away. She let the question sit between them.

“No,” she said finally. “Not yet. But I think I’m starting to understand why we do this. It’s not just for the sex. It’s not even just for the power. It’s because we get to watch people

become who they really are when they stop pretending. And sometimes that’s beautiful. And sometimes it’s ugly. But it’s almost always honest.”

Jordan reached up and tucked a strand of hair behind her ear.

“And what about us?” he asked. “Are we still honest?”

Vanessa met his eyes.

“I think so,” she said. “As honest as two people can be when they’ve built their entire relationship around watching other people fall apart.”

Jordan’s hand slid from her ear to the side of her neck. His thumb brushed along her jaw. “I’ve been hard for you for eight days,” he said, voice low. “Ever since we decided we weren’t going to touch each other until it was over.”

Vanessa’s smile turned sharper.

“I know,” she said. “I’ve been counting.”

She stepped closer, pressing her body against his. Her hands slid up his chest.

“We don’t have to be careful anymore,” she said. “We don’t have to hold back. We can just… take what we need.”

Jordan’s hands moved to her hips. His grip was firm.

“Say it again,” he murmured.

Vanessa leaned in until her mouth was almost touching his.

“We can fuck each other like the world is ending.”

Jordan kissed her.

It wasn’t slow. It wasn’t careful. It was the kind of kiss that came after days of denial — hungry and rough and full of everything they had been holding back. Vanessa met him with equal force, her hands sliding into his hair, her body pressing hard against his. They stumbled backward until Vanessa’s back hit the wooden railing of the deck.

Jordan’s hands moved over her with purpose now. He gripped her thighs and lifted her onto the railing in one smooth motion. Vanessa wrapped her legs around his waist without breaking the kiss. She could feel how hard he was against her, how much tension he had been carrying.

She pulled back just enough to speak against his mouth.

“Inside,” she said. “Now.”

They didn’t make it to the bedroom.

Jordan carried her through the open doors and into the living room. He set her down on the low couch and followed her down, his body covering hers. Vanessa reached between them and wrapped her hand around his cock, stroking him once, twice, before guiding him to her entrance.

She was already wet. She had been for hours.

Jordan pushed into her in one deep thrust.

Vanessa cried out — not from pain, but from the overwhelming relief of finally being filled after days of restraint. Her head fell back against the cushions. Jordan didn't give her time to adjust. He started moving immediately, hard and fast, like he was trying to fuck the tension of the last week out of both of them.

Vanessa met every thrust. Her nails dug into his back. Her legs wrapped around his waist, pulling him deeper. The sound of skin against skin filled the room, mixed with their breathing and the low, rough sounds they made.

Jordan leaned down and bit the side of her neck, not hard enough to break the skin, but hard enough to leave a mark.

"Fuck," he growled against her throat. "I needed this."

Vanessa's voice was breathless.

"I know," she gasped. "I know. Harder."

He gave her what she asked for. His hips snapped forward with more force, driving into her with a rhythm that bordered on punishing. Vanessa took it all. She welcomed it. After days of being in control — of guiding Sophie, of managing Liam, of holding everything together — she let herself be taken. Let herself be fucked like she was the one who needed to be broken open.

She came first.

It hit her hard and sudden, her whole body locking up as the orgasm tore through her. She cried out Jordan's name, her back arching off the couch. Jordan didn't stop. He fucked her through it, drawing it out until she was shaking and oversensitive.

Only then did he let himself go.

He came with a low, guttural sound, his face buried in her neck, his body shuddering as he emptied himself inside her.

For a long moment, neither of them moved.

They stayed tangled together on the couch, breathing hard, sweat-slicked skin pressed together. Jordan's weight was heavy on top of her, but Vanessa didn't push him away. She liked the feeling of being pinned. Of being claimed after days of doing the claiming.

Eventually Jordan lifted his head and looked at her.

His voice was rough when he spoke.

"Better?"

Vanessa smiled, small and tired.

"Much."

He kissed her — slower this time, softer. Then he carefully pulled out and shifted so he was lying beside her on the couch. Vanessa turned onto her side to face him. She reached up and brushed his hair back from his forehead.

They lay like that for a while, quiet, letting their breathing settle.

It was Jordan who broke the silence first.

“She’s going to be thinking about us for a long time,” he said.

Vanessa nodded.

“Probably for the rest of her life,” she said. “At least in some way. You don’t go through something like that and just… move on like it never happened.”

Jordan traced slow circles on her hip with his fingers.

“Do you think she’ll ever try to contact us?” he asked.

Vanessa was quiet for a moment.

“Maybe,” she said. “If she gets lonely enough. Or desperate enough. Or curious enough. But I don’t think we’ll ever see her again. Not in person.”

Jordan nodded.

“That’s probably for the best.”

Vanessa studied his face in the low light.

“You sound like you almost regret it,” she said.

Jordan shook his head.

“I don’t regret it,” he said. “I just… I saw the look on her face when she left. She looked like someone who had lost something she didn’t know she could lose. And I wonder if we helped her find something real, or if we just gave her a new kind of emptiness to carry.” Vanessa reached out and rested her hand on his chest, right over his heart.

“Both,” she said. “Probably both. That’s usually how it goes.”

Jordan covered her hand with his.

“What do you think she’ll do now?” he asked.

Vanessa was quiet for a long time.

“I think she’ll try to go back to her old life,” she said. “She’ll try to be normal. She’ll date. She might even try to fall in love again. But it won’t feel the same. Because now she knows what it’s like to be wanted without conditions. To be seen without having to perform. And once you’ve had that, it’s hard to settle for anything less.”

Jordan nodded slowly.

“And Liam?”

Vanessa sighed.

“Liam will probably spend a long time being angry. Then he’ll spend even longer being sad. Eventually he’ll convince himself that Sophie was always broken and he just didn’t see it. It’ll be easier than admitting that he lost her because he never really knew who she was in the first place.”

Jordan let out a low breath.

“Harsh.”

“True,” Vanessa said. “Most people don’t actually want to know who their partner really is. They want the version that makes them feel safe. Sophie stopped being that version. And Liam couldn’t handle it.”

Jordan was quiet for a while.

“Do you think we did the right thing?” he asked eventually.

Vanessa looked at him.

“I think we did what we always do,” she said. “We gave them the space to become who they really were. We didn’t force anything. We just… removed the barriers. What they did with that freedom was up to them.”

Jordan studied her face.

“And what about us?” he asked. “Do you ever wonder if we’re doing the same thing to ourselves? Removing barriers until there’s nothing left to hide behind?”

Vanessa smiled, small and tired.

“Every day,” she said. “But I think that’s the point. We keep doing this because we want to see what happens when people stop hiding. Even if it breaks them. Even if it breaks us a little too.”

Jordan reached up and tucked a strand of hair behind her ear.

“I love you,” he said quietly.

Vanessa leaned in and kissed him.

“I know,” she said against his mouth. “I love you too.”

They stayed like that for a long time — tangled together on the couch, the sound of the ocean moving through the open doors. Outside, the island continued on without them. Somewhere, Sophie was on a boat heading back to whatever life was waiting for her. Somewhere else, Liam was probably sitting in an airport, trying to make sense of how everything had fallen apart so quickly.

But here, in this quiet villa, Vanessa and Jordan held each other and let the weight of what they had done settle over them like a second skin.

They didn’t pretend it had been simple.

They didn’t pretend they were heroes or villains.

They were just two people who had watched another couple come apart — and in the process, had been reminded of all the ways love can fail and all the ways desire can rewrite a person from the inside out.

Vanessa closed her eyes and rested her forehead against Jordan’s.

“We should probably eat something,” she said eventually.

Jordan made a low sound that might have been agreement.

“In a minute,” he said.

Vanessa smiled against his skin.

“In a minute,” she echoed.

Outside, the tide kept coming in.

And inside the villa, two monsters who had spent the last ten days carefully dismantling someone else’s life finally allowed themselves to rest — not because the work was finished, but because, for tonight at least, there was nothing left to break.