

Scarlet

Twelve hours. The answer to the question no one asked is twelve hours. Twelve hours before I'd be on a plane, leaving this place, possibly for good.

No, it *was* for good. It had to be.

But that wasn't the question no one asked.

The question also wasn't *how* fucking loud did this party have to be, or *how* many people could cram into a 4,000 square foot house. It also wasn't *why* I decided to come here in the first place when I should be back at my shitty little apartment getting my bags and boxes organized for the movers who were coming in...

Shit.

Seven hours.

The one thing I knew about the question was that I shouldn't be asking.

But here I was, anyway.

It was the reason I came here, the reason why pushing through sweating bodies was the least of my problems, and why the music blaring in my ears didn't break me further as I got closer...to him.

The air shifted the moment I stepped into the back room. Rivulets of black threaded over his forehead even with his head tilted back against the couch. Though I was still a few feet away from the reason I had this one burning question in my mind, I knew his pupils were blown. I knew he wouldn't be in the right headspace for a modicum of what I couldn't shake.

Why the fuck was I even trying?

What the fuck was I doing?

My stomach sank as his chin tipped down and his dark eyes slowly raised, almost as if he'd sensed the same shift in the room. Ink covered

arms stretched to either side of the back of the couch, and as his eyes turned to fine slits, I knew I'd fucked up.

I started to turn on my heels, ready to push through the crowd of bodies, smoke, and alcohol and run. I covered my ears, no longer able to keep how the thudding bass was vibrating more than just my head. Before I could get back through the doorway, a firm grip on my elbow pulled me backward, forcing me into another body.

One that wasn't sweaty. One that smelled familiar. One I'd grown up around for the better portion of my life. One I was just trying to run from like he wasn't the exact reason I'd come.

Warm breath fell over my ear as my hands fell to my sides, suddenly too heavy to keep up. "What are you doing here, Scarlet?"

"Leaving," I breathed out, my words coming out as weak as I felt.

He chuckled, pressing his firm body to my back. "Are you sure about that?" My throat turned dry as his lips grazed the shell of my ear. "Or were you here for me?"

"Get over yourself."

"I will if you do."

"Fuck off, Silas." I turned in his hold, which was the wrong move. He gripped my waist, pressing his lower half so close, I could feel...everything. I followed his sharp jawline to the piercing at the end of his brow before meeting his gaze.

"Is that what you want me to do?" he purred like he knew the answer.

What I wanted was increasingly becoming too complicated, even more so than it had been minutes ago when I stormed into this dumb party.

He smirked. "Does your brother know you're here?"

I glowered. "Does he know *you're* here?"

“No.” Silas spread his fingers along my waist, bringing my attention to just how thin my dress was. “Does he need to?” My forehead scrunched. He reached up and smoothed his thumb over the crease, continuing down over my cheek until stopping beneath my chin. “Scarlet. Answer me.”

I pinched my eyes closed, imagining this was all a dream. My brother’s best friend wasn’t pinning me to him, holding me in ways I’d only dreamt about. I pushed that all aside because I only had twelve fucking hours before *this* would be impossible.

“I’m leaving, and I...” I swallowed the thick lump in my throat.

The tips of his fingers dug into my waist as he groaned. “And you...what?”

My hands trailed up his forearm, eyes still closed as I murmured, “And you shouldn’t be touching me like this.”

No, Scarlet.

My eyes fluttered open to see a muscle along his jaw pop, then he grabbed onto my wrist and began dragging me through the sea of people. Too many eyes followed us until we rounded the corner, and when he started ascending stairs, he stopped to look back at me.

He’d always been beautiful. I’d thought so when he was a scraggly pre-teen. Then as he matured, and I did the same—it became unbearable.

And now I was moving across the world to go to a college where I wouldn’t have to think if he was around the corner, or down the hall, or anywhere close to me. I’d be free. And he’d be here, doing the same things he’d grown too used to.

What I should have done as he looked down at me was yank my arm back. Scream at him. Kick him and run. Something other than the quick nod I gave him.

His lips tilted to the side, and for once, it wasn’t snide, or rude.

It was knowing.

It was relief.

The question I'd had when I entered started to fade, because I knew tonight wasn't the night I'd get it. I wasn't going to find out when Silas would change and open his eyes and finally see me. There was no changing him. But I didn't need him to be any different. Tonight, I just wanted who he'd always been.

Silas

I really shouldn't be doing this.

I shouldn't be tugging my best friend's sister up the stairs, hoping for the first door I found on the right to have a bed. Or a dresser. A desk. It didn't fucking matter.

I needed a surface to lay Scarlet out on, because as much as she didn't think I cared that she was leaving, it had been fucking me up since her brother leaked that tidbit of info like he was proud. Like the knowledge of her leaving didn't rip a giant chasm in my chest that I didn't expect to feel until I heard those words—

Scarlet got accepted into a grad program abroad. She leaves next week.

Fucking. Kill. Me.

And then she turned up here, in a tight black dress with her blonde hair tied up like she wasn't quite prepared for a party. She looked ready for bed.

And that's where I was going to put her.

I pushed the first door on the right open, dragging her behind me. My blood raced as I let her go and closed the door then flicked on the light, needing to see all of her.

The pouty lips, the tortured eyes that wandered over every inch of my skin like she was the only person who'd ever seen me for me. I was

a fucked up person, and she knew that. I didn't deserve her, or really anyone. I was the kind of guy you fucked for one night and then got ditched by before the sun could rise. The kind with no real plans for a future because every day was a struggle on its own.

She knew all of that, yet as I reached for her hand, she didn't hesitate to slide it into mine.

So soft.

Fragile.

Like she'd always been, only she grew up. We grew up. At some point in time, I stopped looking at her like my best friend's little sister. At some point, she claimed tiny pieces of me. The fragments I only showed around her because she, unlike so many others, didn't see my faults as failures. Something about the way she looked at me made it all feel okay. Being near her made the screams in my head subside.

But that's not what this could be. We couldn't be anything. Theo would kill me for even touching her like I was, and when she gasped as I tugged her flush to my body, I knew if this ever got out—

It could ruin everything.

"Silas," she said low, tossing her head back over her shoulder to check the locked door.

"No one is coming in here." I slipped my fingers beneath her chin, pulling her focus back to me. "It's just us."

She bit down on her lip, meeting my eyes with her hazel ones—where green and brown and gold collided into the most intricate of patterns. Patterns I could close my eyes and still see made of hues I could never forget.

Her eyes narrowed. "This was stupid. You're clearly high on something. I should've known better."

Tension flared along my jaw, the drugs in my system trying to fill the broken parts long before I saw her here. But now that she was—

“What does that change?”

“If you brought me up here to taunt me—”

I took a step closer. “That’s not what this is.”

“No? Then what is it, Silas? Because like I said, I’m leaving, and don’t have the time to stand here and wonder what it is you want.”

“What I want?” I huffed.

She scowled. “If you’re going to call Theo then just do it. I don’t care if he comes.”

“I think you do care.” I shifted my hold on her hand and brought it down to my cock. Her eyes flared. “Calling your brother right now is far from my fucking mind, Scarlet.”

She went to open her mouth, and I slammed mine to hers. Her hand squeezed my length over my jeans and I groaned as I slid my tongue inside her mouth.

Scarlet’s hand left my cock and pushed hard on my chest, sending my unprepared body back a step. “Damn you.”

“Damn me,” I repeated.

Our breaths were deep, her nipples pebbled to fine points beneath the dress that showed way too much.

I should be telling her to go home. Change. Get ready for her flight in the morning. But when she stepped up to me and gave another firm push, I did what she wanted. I took another step back, my thighs bumping into the mattress.

My brow arched, and with one more push, I was sitting on the edge of both the bed and my fucking sanity.

Her dress parted as she straddled my hips. “What are you doing”—My hands slid up her smooth thighs, inching closer to her exposed pussy—“with no panties on?”

She moaned, but gave no answer.

“You’ve wanted this for so long, haven’t you?” I murmured as I continued up higher until my thumb stroked right over her clit. Scarlet gave a quick nod, pressing her lips together to hide another moan as I stroked her again. “You’ve heard what it’s like to be with me, haven’t you?”

Another nod.

“It will have to be our little secret, do you understand?” I slipped a finger inside her, and her pussy clenched around the digit. “Fuck, you’re soaked.” She ground against my hand and whimpered as I pulled the finger out and sucked it into my mouth. She was as sweet as she looked. “Pure sin. That’s what you are.”

Her hands worked at my button and zipper, and after some shuffling, my cock was in her hold. She worked from root to tip and my hips bucked, a small bead of precum settling there like a taunt to her glistening cunt inches from me.

I couldn’t take it anymore.

“I’m fucking you raw,” I growled and gripped her ass, slamming her to my chest, then reached from behind until my cock was right at her entrance and surged in.

She gasped.

I gasped.

I fucking *shuddered*, my breathing stalling and failing to help me through this. Through what it felt like being inside her. Scarlet’s lips fell to the crook of my neck as her hips swirled, coaxing me on.

I leaned forward and roughly freed her breast, ripping the strap on her dress before sucking her nipple into my mouth. Her cunt squeezed my cock as she continued to swirl and ride me, seeking her own pleasure. My thumb picked back up on her swollen clit, flicking the bud, making her writhe in my lap.

She panted my name and my balls grew unbearably tight.

“Don’t stop. Please, keep going,” she murmured. “I’m so close, Silas.”

I wouldn’t dream of stopping.

I bit down on her nipple and pinched her clit, needing her to come on me before I did the same inside her. Her fingers threaded in my hair as she started to bounce, and I dug my fingers into her ass, guiding her up and down on my throbbing cock. Right as her pussy fluttered, I ground down on my molars, trying to hold back.

But it was no use. She came hard, her legs quaking along my flank and I followed her, spilling my release inside her. I spun us and pushed her back on the bed, then spread her quivering thighs apart, watching as my cum leaked from her pussy.

“I’m...I’m not on any—”

“Good,” I replied, then settled myself between her, stroking my growing erection like I hadn’t just cum. “Then maybe you’ll have a reason to come back.”