

Chapter 3

//Flashback//

Continue...

Miles

WITH THE KIDS to bed, Harper headed to take a shower, and I decided to join her. I undressed, watching her as she relaxed in our steam shower with the jetted tub. Walking over, I pulled the shower handle and stepped in. When she looked up and smiled at me, my heart did a somersault.

The tub and shower were spacious enough to fit four to five people, so I easily positioned myself behind her, leaning back against the tub with the jets beating into my lower back. "Long week, huh?" I whispered in her ear, my face hovering just above her neck.

She nodded in agreement, her body sinking deeper into relaxation. As I began massaging her shoulders, I kissed her neck softly, leaving a

trail of tender kisses. Harper sighed, her body melting into mine as she leaned back against my chest. Wrapping my arms around her, I gently caressed her breast, feeling the intimacy between us build.

As my desire grew, she could feel me pressing against her back. Reaching over to the side where the buttons were, I lowered the pressure of the jets, making the water feel even more soothing. Things started to heat up between us as she turned around, sitting on my lap and facing me.

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Harper's eyes met mine, desire could be seen in both of our eyes. The steam from the shower got thicker, creating a cocoon of warmth and intimacy. I cupped her face gently, my thumb tracing her cheekbone as I leaned in for a kiss.

Our lips met softly at first, then with increasing passion. Harper's fingers tangled in my hair, pulling me closer as she shifted on my lap. The feeling of her skin against mine sent shivers down my spine, despite the heat of the water.

"I've missed you," I murmured against her neck, my hands roaming the familiar curves of her body. Harper sighed contentedly, her breath hitching as I found a sensitive spot.

"I've missed you too," she said her voice breathy.

The world outside our shower faded away as we lost ourselves in each other. Every touch, every kiss felt electric, reigniting the passion that had brought us together years ago. Harper's body moved against mine in a rhythm our breaths mingling in the steamy air.

As our movements became more urgent, I held her close, reveling in the feeling of her heart beating against my chest. The sound of the water

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couldn't mask our soft moans and whispered endearments as we reached the height of pleasure together.

Afterward, we held each other close, letting the warm water wash over us. Harper rested her head on my shoulder, and I stroked her back gently, feeling utterly content and connected.

"I love you," I said softly, pressing a kiss to her temple.

Harper lifted her head, her eyes shining with emotion. "I love you too," she replied, sealing her words with a tender kiss.

What we didn't know were the unforeseen shadows lurking behind us, waiting for the right moment to strike.

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Miles' week began on a high note—after a wonderful weekend with the family and a beautiful night with Harper. Exiting the elevator at work, with a pep in his step he was greeted by his assistant, Brittany. She wore a tight-fitting white button-down shirt, with a few top buttons undone, and a black pencil skirt that rode a bit too high above her knees. Her hair was curled, which was unusual for her. With a bright smile, she began briefing him on his schedule for the day, clearly hoping for a compliment or at least some attention.

But Miles, focused on his work, did not seem to notice. With no luck, she quickly excused herself, saying she would be back with his coffee. As she walked away, she muttered under her breath, "What more do I have to do for him to see me? Walk around butt naked or shave my damn head?"

Brittany paced furiously up and down the kitchen, trying to calm herself. Her thoughts raced: What if someone saw me acting like this?

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She knew she needed to pull herself together, to act rationally before she returned with Miles' coffee. Taking a deep breath, she straightened her shirt and smoothed her skirt, forcing a smile as she prepared to face him again determined to keep her emotions in check.

As soon as Brittany clocked out of work, she drove home in a fury. No matter how hard she tried, she could not seem to get Miles' attention. It had been over six years since she first became infatuated with him. Over the years, she had done everything to mold herself into what she thought was his ideal type. She had transformed herself from the girl who wore glasses to someone who now sported contacts, swapped out her plain style for something more fashionable, and even dyed her hair from brown to auburn in a failed attempt to appear more desirable.

Once home, she stripped down to her underwear and stood in front of the full-length mirror, analyzing her reflection.

Why won't he see me as a woman? she thought bitterly, touching her face. Am I not pretty enough? Her hands moved to her chest. Or my breasts are not big enough. She continued, squeezing her non-existent stomach, Am I not thin enough? Or it was something she could not change-Maybe I am just not rich enough.

Brittany had spent countless hours daydreaming about being with Miles, only to be blindsided when he introduced her to his then-girlfriend, now-wife, Harper. The memory still stung. And now they had children together, building the life she had only imagined.

Her frustration boiled over, and before she knew it, she punched the mirror.

The glass shattered, sending shards to the floor, and cutting her hand in the process. But even the physical pain could not compare to the hurt she felt in her heart.

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Staring at her fractured reflection, Brittany began to laugh-a cold, bitter sound. Through the blood and broken glass, she made a dark vow: Harper will feel the same pain I am feeling. I will make sure of it.
