

Chapter 32

“Excuse me?” Andy said, trying to buy himself some time.

“I said, why don't you tell me a bit about the poker game where you won the lives of Emily Stevens, Sarah Washington and three other women,” Katie Couric said to him.

Andy knew he was in a dire pickle. If he asked them to turn the camera off, turn the microphone off, refused to answer the question, it would make him look far guiltier than he actually was. However, there was something about the way she phrased the question, and suddenly, he had an epiphany.

“Why don't you tell me what you know, or, more importantly, what you think you know, and maybe I can shed a little more light on the matter,” he said to her.

She was on a fishing expedition. It was the kind of question meant to catch him off guard, to make him think she knew a lot more than she actually did, and to prove it, he was going to need to force her hand a bit. She was bluffing, thinking her pair of aces was good enough to stare down someone holding a possible flush.

She hadn't mentioned who'd held the game. She hadn't mentioned who else had been playing there. She hadn't mentioned with other girls he'd won, other than the two big headliners. She'd thrown out a couple of pieces of information and implied she had the whole story, but if she had the whole story, she would've led with more. She was hoping to get him to spill more information.

“Isn't it true that you gambled with women's lives in order to win Emily Stevens and Sarah Washington?” Katie Couric said, trying to press again.

“I didn't know Emily or Sarah were going to be there.”

“So you gambled just hoping to win more women to your household?”

“No, I gambled because I was trying to save a couple of women on behalf of one of my existing partners,” he said with a sigh. “Look, I know you think this is some gotcha moment, and that you're going to expose me for being some kind of villain, but I'm going to tell you the entire story, and then you're going to have to decide what to do with that information, because depending on what you do with it, you could end up doing a lot of damage.”

“So why don't you start at the beginning?”

Over the next thirty minutes or so, Andy regaled her with the entire tale, how Covington had come to him to invite him to the poker game, how Niko had revealed that she knew both Dr. Varma and her daughter Asha were going to be in the pool for it, and that they were currently being shipped over to Covington, a man who Andy made no attempt to paint in a good light. Andy told her how the two women he'd had to use as collateral into the tournament, one of whom he barely knew and the other was his ex-girlfriend, whom he wasn't going to accept as a partner anyway.

As he told her the story, Katie Couric mostly let him talk, asking the occasional question – how had he known that Dr. Varma and Asha were going to be there, what did plan to do if he lost, etc. – before letting him continue.

Andy zipped through the actual poker tournament very quickly, although he did make a point not to name names of anyone else who was there, other than Covington, despite Katie asking twice. The rush of winning lasted very briefly, he told her, as almost right after, they met Piper.

When Andy described how they'd found her, in a near feral state, he spared no detail, making sure that Katie understood just how cruel Covington had been to the women he'd had under his household. He even paused to ask Katie what she thought a man like that would want both a mother and daughter for, and he watched the reporter visibly blanch at that.

“How did this game even get started?” she asked him.

He shrugged a little. “I don't know,” he said honestly. “Niko manipulated the situation into me getting an invite, and Emily herself contributed, trying to make sure that I would win, since she wanted

her and her partner Sarah to be assigned to me, since Sarah is such a huge fan of my writing.”

“How do you make that kind of decision? How do you decide to gamble with a woman's life in your hands?”

“Very, *very* carefully, and not without long consideration,” he sighed, sitting back in his chair.

“Like I was telling you earlier, sometimes bad people do good things, and sometimes good people have to do bad things for good reasons. Niko was very close friends with Dr. Charlotte Varma, and she'd met Mister Covington more than a couple of times. One of Covington's partners, Rachel, works at the base, and helps with the scheduling and directing of where people are going, so she's probably how Covington got the game started, when he realized he could manipulate the system. I mean, I'm sure other people on the base have to be in on it, but who that is, I certainly couldn't tell you.”

“People like Phil Marcos?”

Andy scowled at her, pointing a finger her direction. “You try and blame this on Phil and I will go to every single one of your competitors and tell them how you made that shit up to get ratings,” he said angrily. “Phil's a damn good man, one of the best, and while I'm sure he's aware of the game, I'm also fairly certain that he probably can't do anything to interfere with it.”

“I thought Mr. Marcos was the head of the project.”

“*Doctor* Marcos is high up on the team that's developing and implementing the process, but he's certainly not in charge. There's at least a handful of people above him, and besides, Phil's only working on the process itself, not the pairing and matching of individuals. I'm sure they must've mentioned there's two divisions on the base during your tour. Phil's half works on the biology. The other team works on the sociology and matchmaking, and while Phil can trade the occasional favor to get things done a certain way on that team, he'd never have gone along with this poker thing, or for people being used as chips. Shit, he damn near tore my head off after he heard I'd gone and played in the tournament even the once. Made me promise I'd never do it again. So yes, Ms. Couric, I can guarantee you that Phil has nothing to do with the poker tournament.”

“You mentioned one of Covington's partners, a woman you called Rachel, was on the coordinating team. Would that be Rachel DeMarco?”

“I don't know,” he said. “I've never met her. Niko would know. I could ask her. Why?”

“Well, Rachel DeMarco is the person who told me about your involvement in the tournament. She actually made it sound like you were running the event.”

“*Running* it?” he laughed, almost incredulous. “*Fuck off*. No, Ms. Couric, I was not running the tournament, nor have I played in it more than once. I went the one time as a favor to Niko, to try and keep her friends Dr. Varma and her daughter Asha safe.”

“So you won both Dr. Varma and her daughter Asha?”

“I did.”

“How come Dr. Varma isn't here as well? Asha was at our first group interview.”

“Dr. Varma isn't attracted to white men, so she asked if she could be paired up with Phil instead. I respected her wishes, obviously.”

“Wait, Dr. Varma is one of Dr. Marcos' partners?”

“When she arrived at the base, she was married, but her husband died very early in the initial stages of research into the DuoHalo Virus,” Andy said. “In fact, Phil said quite a lot of men died on the base due to whatever incident it was that happened in the early days. He couldn't get into details, but he seemed pretty frustrated by it. But after her husband died, she slowly started falling for Phil, a sort of second act if you will, so when I rescued her and her daughter from Covington, she asked if I thought she could be paired up with Phil. I called Phil up, and he agreed, so she's paired with him, and her daughter Asha is paired up with me. We all agreed that a mother and daughter being paired up with the same man just had an ick factor that none of us were comfortable with.”

“The woman who died. Where did you say you met her?”

“I didn't, and I know you know that. But I met her at Covington's home. She was originally

scheduled to be the dealer for the poker game that night, but I made a point about never trusting a house dealer, so she was relieved of the job, and the participants all took turns acting as dealer, so no one player could sway the game that much. I suspected Covington might have been using the dealer being a member of his house to fix the game, and the last thing I wanted was a cheat.”

“Who else was playing?”

“Where are you *going* with this, Ms. Couric?”

“Look, Mr. Rook, you seem like a good man, a decent man, but this kind of thing, it can't be allowed to continue, a handful of men trading women like cattle. We're better than that as a country, and I believe you when you say that you were only doing it to help some people. But think about all the women who don't have someone like you looking out for them.”

“Right, but in giving you this list of names, I'm painting a huge target on my back here in New Eden. Are you planning on running a story just on what I tell you? Because that's a sure fire way to only make things worse.”

“Of course not, Mr. Rook,” she said with a sigh. “But I can talk with the White House, or the Senate, and expose some of this, and get it shut down.”

“Well, I'm glad you believe that, Ms. Couric, but I can't say that *I* do. Still, I hope you succeed.”

“So who else was there?”

“You had myself and Covington. The Mayor of New Eden, James Haunton. Financial investor Gregor Vikovic. And Jake Jacobson, owner of the AllStore group.”

“That's it?”

Andy considered for a moment, and decided that he should let Nathaniel Watkins name slip his mind for a moment. “There was one other person there, but I don't remember who it was. Nobody I immediately recognized, and I was very focused on the game, and making sure that I didn't screw up.” Andy wasn't entirely sure why he decided to conceal Watkins identity, but suspected it was because Nathaniel was the only person who'd treated him as a human being, and the fact that he'd given Andy a few hundred mil didn't hurt either. But for the most part, Watkins had seemed like a good enough person that Andy felt like giving him a pass. In the short period of time he'd talked to him, it had almost seemed like Watkins' presence at the poker game was for the same reasons he was there – to try and protect people caught up in the mess.

“And you said it's Covington who's running the event?”

“Yes,” Andy said. “It's always at his house, and they've apparently run it a few times before. I expect having the Mayor in his pocket certainly helped him set the whole thing up and keep it quiet, but I expect he's also got someone over at the base helping him, someone in the logistics and organizational team, but who that is, I couldn't tell you. Niko said she's been trying to find out, but that the scientists on that half of the team tend to be a bit rude to women, including those working in the security detail.”

“Wait a moment. You said Veronica DeLaCruz, the women who died a few days ago, she was originally supposed to be the dealer at the poker tournament?”

“That's right.”

Katie Couric paled a moment, before she looked at Andy. “Do you think her death is at all connected to her not being able to fix the poker tournament in Mr. Covington's favor?”

“Oh shit,” Andy said, a little shook by the suggestion. “I hadn't even thought about that, but it's certainly possible. Believe me when I tell you that Arthur Covington strikes me as the kind of man who's capable of just about anything. And I did mention that Emily was attempting to convince Veronica to cheat on her behalf, to ensure that she and Sarah could guarantee coming to our family and not anyone else's, so it's also possible that he somehow found out about that.”

“Who knew about that?”

“As far as I know, just Emily and myself, although I've mentioned it to a couple of the girls here, all of whom I obviously trust with my life,” he said. “But it's not impossible that somehow Veronica told someone else, or that she was so frustrated with Covington that she just wanted a way

out. As I said, I didn't really know her at all, so I can't say. But if you're asking me if I think it's possible Covington had her murdered, either for failing to rig the game in his favor or planning to rig the game against him and failing in that, I think it absolutely something the man is capable of."

"If I informed the President's office about all of this, do you think you would manage to stay safe of repercussions, or would you be at risk?"

"Don't worry about us, Ms. Couric," Andy said. "If you think you can make sure these bastards aren't trading the lives of women with no regard for their wants or desires, you absolutely should do everything you can to put a stop to it. If that means Covington wants to take a run at me because of it, well, I'll handle that when it comes up. He's exceptionally rich, but he's not invincible."

"Not to remind you of things you already know, Mr. Rook," she answered, "but you were just saying a few hours ago how your health is now responsible for the well-being of over a dozen women. Do you think they would all be okay with you being so cavalier with their safety?"

"If it meant that hundreds if not thousands of women would get to fairly choose their partners instead of being saddled up with people they can't stand, I'm sure they would." He sighed, leaning back in his chair a little. "So how do you want to play all of this?"

"It won't be part of the main story, but I'll threaten to run it if the President doesn't do something to ensure that a stop comes to this kind of thing," she said. "I just got word this morning the Presidential election's being delayed again this morning, and that'll be another thing they're going to include in the announcements. The special election will be in February, and the new President will be instated in office in March, as well as Representatives and Senators to replace all those who've been killed by the DuoHalo Virus. The Republican Party apparently wanted time to have a mini-primary for the new Presidential election, so they won't know their candidate for a month, and plans to have the election in December have been scrapped. So President Pelosi will remain in power until March, and that should give her a little bit of time to try and get this mess sorted out. Because if it's happening here, I imagine it's happening in other places, and that kind of damage could scar our country for centuries."

"Forgive me for asking, but you know a lot more about this than any of us do," he said. "How many centers like the base in New Eden are out there?"

"They started mass production about a month or so ago, and the goal is to have every man paired with at least a couple of women before January 1<sup>st</sup>, because the casualty rates for men are so insanely high. The hope is the news story will light a fire under those who have been afraid to get vaccinated, when they hear just how many people have died because the DuoHalo virus. But there are still enclaves of men who insist they aren't going to pair up with women, because the treatment will install 5G microchips in their penises, or some such nonsense."

"If we've got problems like this poker game here at the source, I imagine there's this sort of thing starting up in a number of the other pairing centers around the country, so I don't mind you showing this conversation to the President, or the Joint Chiefs of Staff, if it means ensuring that women get to decide who they get paired up with."

"It's very noble of you to say that, Mr. Rook, but you know as well as I do that some men are unlikely to get paired up with women they would like. I was a little leery of the Level system when I heard about it, men being classified in terms of priority from level 1 to level 5, but I suppose it's the least worst option out of all the ones we have," she sighed. "And you assure me if I talk to any of the women here in your house individually, without you around, they will all tell me they chose to be here, in your company?"

"Well, no," he admitted, "but I think they will all tell you they are happy here. But Piper, and to some extent Niko I suppose, they weren't really in their right minds when they arrived."

"What do you mean by that?"

"Did they not cover this when they were talking about the process with you at the base?"

"No, they most assuredly did not."

Andy let out another deep sigh. "Okay, so after women are administered the treatment at the

base, they're kept there for 24 hours observation, to make sure there aren't any unusual reactions to the process, which is normal. Then they're delivered to their male partners whom they're going to be imprinted to.”

“Yes, they told us all this.”

“So, the longer a woman goes without imprinting, the more the chemicals start to affect her ability to think clearly. That's how Piper got into the state she was in when Niko and I first met her. She couldn't think, couldn't speak. She's thanked me, repeatedly, that we rescued her from Covington, and she's told me again and again that she's happy with us, here in our family, but the ability to make that decision was taken away from her by Covington. There is a limited window after a woman receives the initial treatment where her cognitive functions are full, and the longer she goes before imprinting, the more compromised those functions are, albeit temporarily, at least I hope.”

“Have you heard of women being made to wait longer before imprinting?”

“Hell, I haven't heard of anything like what happened to Piper *anywhere* and if I had, I'd be kicking up a fucking storm,” he said angrily. “I was so livid that I wanted to go and beat the shit out of Covington myself right then and there, but I also needed to make sure I got everyone out of their situations first. We were still at his home, and I'm sure he has some sort of security. What he did to Piper wasn't just unforgivable, it was criminal, or at least it should be, but we're in uncharted waters here, Ms. Couric. There's going to be an entire new wing of legislature and legal decisions spiraling out of this for decades. And nobody knows how any of it's going to turn out, because all the signposts people used to use to predict these sorts of things have been tossed in the woodchipper. I don't know how many people in Congress died, but I imagine you do.”

“Around 60% of the Representatives and about 70% of the Senators, as well as five of the Supreme Court Justices, although Ruth Bader Ginsberg died from cancer complications, not the DuoHalo Virus. It's an almost incomprehensible strain of the system.”

“I'm sure some of those people who will be elected to Congress to fill those vacancies will be men, but the overwhelming majority of them are going to be women. And that's going to change a lot about how the country operates. Not as much as I'd like, I'm sure, but a lot.”

“Why do you say not as much as you like?” she asked him.

“I was very lucky to get level 5 status, but you know who else got level 5 status, Katie? The billionaires of America. Jeff Bezos. Bill Gates. Elon Musk. Warren Buffet. And you know the most fascinating thing about it, that I hope you focus on in your story? You know how many of those people refused treatment?”

“Very few?”

“Absolutely none,” he said. “In fact, what I have heard is that the ultrarich were bumped to the highest possible priority, and were the very first in line to get paired up with people. Now, what level of scrutiny did those people go through in their pairing process? Not a whole lot, I imagine. In fact, I'm willing to bet that on the other side of this, when we start to see what the new world looks like, you're going to see those men with impossibly beautiful women, celebrities, athletes, women who probably wouldn't have given these men the time of day even with all their money. They did it because it ensured their survival. I know the fatality rate for women with the DuoHalo Virus is only a fraction of what it is for men, but it's still a risk. And I'm worried that those people who have insane amounts of money are going to continue to do what they've always done – spend that money to ensure they keep making money at the expense of those without it. They will attempt to buy their way into power once again, and will simply adapt so they don't get knocked off their pedestals.”

“Are *you* considering running for office, Mr. Rook?”

Andy laughed a bit at that, shaking his head. “*Fuck* no,” he said. “But if one of the women of my household wanted to run for office, I would absolutely encourage them to do so. Despite how political I know I'm coming off right now, Ms. Couric, I would not consider myself a political activist. But I want women and men to have equal rights under the eyes of the law, the same for the rich and the

poor. And this country is going to see a shakeup the likes of which it has never seen before over the coming few years, as it tries to decide and define what the new normal is, such as it is. We're in danger of having our own little French Revolution here, guillotines and all."

"So let's get back on track and get back to things I can likely use when we air the special," she said with a laugh. "Has it been complicated, navigating this many relationships with this many women at all once?"

"I'm not going to lie to you and say no, Katie," he chuckled. "Of course it has. But some of the decisions I made early on have helped that a lot, and thankfully, I have an amazing collection of women who have chosen to spend their lives with me."

"What kinds of decisions did you make early on that you would say helped?"

"Some of it is stuff that seems obvious in retrospect. No kink shaming, for example. No body shaming. No shame in general, I suppose. That was a big start. But there were also things like making sure nobody got too possessive of anyone's time."

"You mean managing the amount time the women could spend with you."

"Well, yes and no. I mean, obviously, yes, there's only so much of me to go around, but I also made sure that everyone made time to get to know one another in the family, even with all of our busy lives. And we do our best to try and keep arguments from getting out of hand. It helps that there's always someone else around to try and play neutral observer. Not going to bed angry is a big deal around here, and that hasn't always been easy."

"How so?"

"Well, when Taylor showed up, Lauren was furious. They weren't currently together before they both came here. In fact, Lauren originally wanted me to turn Taylor away, to get her out of the house, because the breakup had gone so badly. But I sat Lauren down and talked it over with her, made sure she had time to think it all out and make a decision with a clear head, rather than out of anger, which is what she would've done if I'd taken her first opinion. At the end of the day, they've repaired that relationship, but it wasn't easy going at first."

"Do you ever feel like you're going to upset one of the girls by spending too much time with another, or that you have to do or say something to keep the peace between some of them?"

"My relationship with each of these women is a unique thing, and they're all very different from one another. Also, they all have relationships with each other, so when I'm not around, they have their own preferred cliques and groups."

"Anyone left out?"

"Not that I know of. I certainly hope not. I've tried to make sure that everyone in the house has at least a few people other than me that they feel they can go and hang out with, talk with, spend time with, so if I'm busy, which happens from time to time, there's always someone else just as important to them to talk out whatever's going on."

"Can you tell me a little bit about those groups?"

"Well, some are based on existing relationships. Lauren and Taylor, obviously. The same for Emily and Sarah. Aisling and Niko have been with me the longest, and have had the most time to get to know one another, so there's another group there. But Emily and Sarah also connect with Sheridan and Tala, because they all share a love of performing. Lauren and Piper connect on their athletic backgrounds, but Sheridan's an acrobat, so she can fall into that group as well. That's just the start, though. Everyone here, I think, falls into multiple groups, so nobody's limited."

"And how do you determine how you distribute your sexual time evenly?"

"Again, I don't know that *evenly* is the right word, but I suppose *fairly* would be a better one, because some women want more sexual time than others. Some of my partners are content just having one sexual encounter every ten days or so, but others like to make sure they're having intimate time every day or two," he said. "We actually have a chart, in one of the hallways, where we make sure every woman updates each time she's had an encounter with me that's resulted in dosing, so we don't let

anyone go too long without one, because we know what happens when they do.”

“The people at the base were a little vague about that,” she said.

“I’ll bet they were,” he said, rolling his eyes slightly. “The longer someone goes without pairing with their imprinted partner, the more intense the need to do so gets. After around ten or eleven days, the craving can get so bad that rational thought becomes almost impossible, and the woman becomes overly sexually aggressive, to the point of basically just taking what she needs from her partner. It’s something we take great strides to avoid around here. You can ask Lauren about it; she’s the one who decided to test how long she could last.”

“And did she become overly sexually aggressive at the end of it?”

“Very much so,” he said, trying to hide a slight laugh of amusement. “She basically cornered me and had her way with me, not that I was complaining all that much, but still. It’s a thing all women should be informed of, and I was given the impression they were telling women that when they received their treatment.”

“Sarah said you have four fiancées currently?”

“That’s right – Aisling, Niko, Emily and Sarah.”

“Are you going to have more wives than that?”

“I mean…” he said, trailing off. “Even that feels greedy, but I also know we’re being *encouraged* to do this kind of thing, because of the huge amount of fatalities America’s endured in the past eight months. So we’ll play it by ear. Most of the women here are very new to me still, and that means there’s lots to learn about each other in terms of how we integrate. I wouldn’t have leaped in so fast with Sarah and Emily but they seemed so sure, and I clicked so well with them right from the start, so I decided to trust my instinct on the matter.”

“I have to ask you, Andy – do you have a type? I feel like other than a few minor exceptions, all the women in your family are quite different from one another.”

“Physically, yeah, they’re pretty different, but mentally? They’re all smart, independent, capable, free spirited women. I mean, I guess I’ve gotten pretty lucky in that I haven’t run the risk of pairing up with anyone who would be a bad fit for me. Except, I guess, my ex, but I wasn’t going to let that happen.”

“How *did* that happen, anyway?”

Andy shrugged. “I’m guessing that she still fell into my general type, and since she requested to be paired with me, they sent her to me, assuming I could just refuse to pair with her and send her back to the base if I had a real problem with her.”

“You said you found another solution for her?”

“Well, she was chosen by someone else in the poker game, but the man who took her, the guy who’s name I can’t remember, he seemed like a good enough man, and my ex seemed happy enough to take the match, so I’m assuming they worked it out between them.”

“Why do I have the feeling you know the man’s name but are protecting him?”

“Even if I was, which I’m not saying that I am, it would be for the right reasons and not the wrong ones. I got the impression that the man was doing his best to try and get women away from men they didn’t want to be with. I can’t prove that, obviously, but I’ve learned to trust my instinct on these things, and I wouldn’t want to get him in the soup for trying to do the right thing.”

“Well, we’ll edit that part out for the show. Were there any of your partners who initially gave you concern?”

“I won’t lie – I was a little nervous about both Asha and Hannah, simply because of the age gap. I mean, I’m basically their age put together, but as both women have insisted to me, they are of legal age, capable of making their own decisions, and are happy with having me as their partner. So if the age gap doesn’t bother them, who am I to let it bother me? It’s just taking some getting used to.”

“Are you ever overwhelmed with the amount of sex you’re having?”

He laughed at that, then started to say something, then started laughing again before finally

being able to speak. "It's almost insane to say, but there are days where it can feel like a bit much, mostly because I'm trying to make everyone happy, and I don't always remember who likes what, at least not yet. I'm sure a few years down the line it'll all be second nature, but right now, I still have to ask people what they do and don't like, even when we've already had sex a dozen times, just because I want to please them, and that goes a long way."

"You said you weren't kink shaming anyone. Were you kink shamed before all of this?"

"Oh sure," he said. "I have a love of dirty talk, and not everyone's into that kind of thing, and I get it. Different strokes for different folks. But we do our best and try and lean into everyone's kink at least a little bit. Some just take more getting used to than others."

"Who would you say has been the hardest to adjust to?"

"Nicolette, hands down," he laughed. "It's not that I'm incapable of being a dominant person; it's just not something that comes naturally to me. When we first met, and she insisted on calling me Master, that just felt *odd* for a while, but the last time she and I had a session together, she seemed incredibly satisfied that I'd gotten my groove with what she wanted from me. And her friend Whitney, who we inducted into the family yesterday, has similar tastes, so the two can work together to make sure I'm satisfying both of them."

"Who would you say came most naturally?"

"Ash, easily. We clicked immediately, and she was that perfect blend of aggressive and coy that hit all my triggers right away. All four of my fiancées, though, I have incredibly strong rapports with, so don't let me imply that I'm selling any of them short."

"I don't really have time to interview them all today, so who do you think I should do one-on-ones with?"

"Well, you should definitely interview Sarah and Emily together, as they want to make sure people understand they chose this, but also that they were a couple before any of this even started, and I know Emily wants to drive home the point that just because a woman is imprinted to a man doesn't mean she's giving up her independence or her identity, and that she certainly doesn't have to be submissive to a man if she doesn't want to."

"Yes, I'd planned to talk to both of them together. I probably have time for two or three others before we do the final group interview and before you get the footage of Tala being imprinted. Thank you again for that. The base said we would obviously need to get someone's permission to show that kind of thing."

"You should definitely take some time and talk with Ash, since she's certainly got the most experience at watching all of this out of anyone. She's been imprinted the longest of anyone you're likely to meet, so she has a very unique perspective on it all. It might help if you had Niko in that room as well, just because the two of them bounce off one another very well, and would help fill in some gaps for each other. And that would probably make a good link to your footage of Niko from the base."

"Excellent, excellent. And one more."

"I would say either take Hannah and Asha together as the last interview, or maybe interview Tala, although she's likely to be a little fidgety for the interview."

"Oh? Why's that?"

Andy smirked a little bit. "Well, we don't kink shame in this house, so... Tala's personal kink is to feel that sort intense sexual need someone gets from edging before getting their dosage. So she actually started the priming process for imprinting yesterday, but hasn't been imprinted yet. That's something it's not recommended you do, but it hasn't hit her too hard. We had an accident with that before, where Nicolette gave Sheridan a bit of my cum that she had stored, hoping it would take the edge off, and didn't realize it started the priming process. It was on a very chaotic day, so we found Sheridan in her room several hours later, her whole body burning up with need, having masturbated unsuccessfully for at least a few hours. It wasn't a smart thing to do, but Nicolette didn't know better and was just trying to help Sheridan. She's fine now, obviously, but it was a scary day, where Sheridan



felt like her body was betraying her. Tala went into it knowing how it was going to feel, and is managing it better than Sheridan was, but I think that's because Tala wanted it to be."

"Do you mind if I show the footage I'm not going to air to the President and the Joint Chiefs?"

"To the President, no, but I would prefer you not show it to the Joint Chiefs, simply because that offers me at least a little anonymity. While I want to help, I also don't want to needlessly risk the lives of my family. Is that acceptable to you?"

"I can agree to that, I suppose," she said. "Is there anything else I should know before we wrap up our interview?"

"Did the base cover the changes that men encounter as a result of the treatment?"

"Not extensively?"

He grinned. "Well, I do think it's important that someone tell you that the longer men are exposed to the treatment, the more short their refractory period becomes and the more semen their testicles generate, so men shouldn't be worried about not being able to keep up. Their bodies will adapt. Just be open and transparent about what does and doesn't turn you on, and people should do fine. I mean, I have my suspicions that the brain post treatment is generating more mood stabilizing hormones, but I can't prove that for certain. I know I've certainly felt better than I have for years, but that could also just be the result of all the exercise I'm getting from all the sex I'm having, so... hard to say, but that's my theory anyway."

"What's the biggest fight you've had with a partner since this all started?"

He sighed, shrugging a little. "It all tends to blend together. I was pretty angry when Niko volunteered me for the poker game, but after I found out why, I understood, even if I still wasn't thrilled with the whole thing. But at some point, you have to learn to accept there's going to be little hiccups along the way. What's that maxim? Don't sweat the small stuff, and it's almost all small stuff."

"I appreciate you being honest with me about the whole poker game, Mr. Rook," she said to him. "If I'm honest, I was expecting you to try and dodge the question."

"What Covington's doing is horrible, and the only reason I went into that game at all was to try and save one of my partner's friends. I'm just more surprised you knew about it, since I would've figured Covington would have wanted to keep it quiet."

"Maybe Rachel was acting on her own accord?"

"Then why try and paint me as the person organizing it?" He shook his head. "Not likely. Anyway, if you can do me the favor and leave at least a little of me talking about the Druid Gunslinger books in the segment, that'll make us even. My agent would kill me if I wasn't trying to push for it, at least a little."

"Sure, I'm okay making that exchange. Why don't I take ten to freshen up, then I'll meet Emily and Sarah in their office and start their interview?"

"Sounds good," he said, shaking her hand. "I'll see you again later this afternoon."

Andy took off the mic pack and then headed out of the room, moving upstairs to the master bedroom, where he expected to find most of the girls hanging out, which was where he found them.

"How did it go, love?" Emily said to him, as she and Sarah walked over to him.

"They know about the poker game." The girls' faces fell, and Emily looked panicked.

"What do you mean?"

For the next few minutes, Andy related to them what he'd just told Katie Couric, and how Ms. Couric had agreed to keep it all private between them, but was going to take it to the President, which put the two actresses at ease especially.

"Is she going to ask us about it?" Sarah asked him.

"I don't *think* so, but I can't be certain," he told her. "I think she's mostly going to focus on the relationship you two had before you got here, and how you decided to both come and join me, so however you want to spin that, I think she'll mostly go along with the story."

"So other than that, how was the play Mrs. Lincoln?" Niko joked. "How do you think it went?"

“Pretty well? I think?” He wasn't entirely sure. As he expected for a reporter of her caliber, she had a remarkable poker face, and he wasn't entirely certain how she was going to use what they'd talked about. “She seemed to get the impression that I was the one holding the poker game at first, but I dissuaded her of that notion quickly.”

“Who the hell gave her such a stupid idea?” Em asked.

“One of Covington's partners, Rachel.”

“Oh that bitch,” Niko fumed. “I knew I shouldn't have trusted her.”

“She was probably doing it on Covington's explicit orders,” Andy said. “One of the things that Ms. Couric suggested is that maybe Veronica's death wasn't an accident, and that maybe Covington had a hand in it. I hadn't even considered it before she said it, but it made total sense after she did.”

One of the producers knocked on the door and then peeked her head into the bedroom. “Ms. Stevens? Ms. Washington? We're ready for you down in your office.”

“We will be down in just a moment,” Emily said. “Thank you.”

The producer ducked back out, as Emily and Sarah moved to share a hug with Andy.

“You're certain we will be alright, Andrew?”

“If you aren't, Katie Couric'll answer to me,” he laughed. “Now go get'em.”

Emily and Sarah released him, took each others' hand, then headed out of the bedroom towards the stairs to take them to their office on the floor below.

Ash moved over to give him a long hug, snuggling her face into his shoulder for a moment before looking up at him. “Should we be worried about Covington?”

“Not any more now than usually, so yes?” he grumbled. “Tala, how are you feeling? Regretting taking that early lick yesterday?”

“Not regretting it at all, babe,” she said with a laugh, “although if I said I wasn't feeling it, I'd definitely be lying. I feel like I've had too much sugar or caffeine, this sort of jittery buzz that makes it hard to sit still.”

“An itch?” Sheridan said with a laugh.

“Exactly, babe, and you know just where,” Tala replied, winking. “Not too much longer before you're imprinting me, yeah?”

“Couple of hours, give or take.”

“Fab,” she said, “I should be just about fully marinated by then.”

For the next hour or so, Andy kept himself busy and tried to ignore the crews, although they mostly kept within Emily and Sarah's office. As tempted as he was to go and peep on their interview, he respected the two women far too much for that, and decided to just let them be.

About an hour later, Sarah came to find him in his office, where he'd been doing some initial edits on the most recent draft of 'The Fatal Solstice,' and took his laptop from his lap, setting it aside. After that, before she'd even said a word to him, she slid down into his lap, wrapped her arms around him and kissed him tenderly. “You totally don't need to worry, Andy,” she said to him. “It went very smoothly, and I'm sure we made you look like a champ.”

He leaned his head against hers a bit, letting out a relieved sigh. “Who're they talking to next?”

“Ash and Niko. Katie thought it would be best to get a woman's perspective who's been imprinted since the first week the program was rolled out.”

“Holy shit,” he said, “I didn't realize she was that early in the queue.”

“Seems like. We agreed to let them use our little studio for that interview as well, but they said to make sure and get everyone together again for the pick up group interview. They said they only have a couple of questions, but want to get everyone together for it.” She took her hand and smoothed it over his shaved head affectionately. “You square?”

“Just a little taken aback by the poker game getting talked about. It isn't exactly something I was expecting to be brought up, but I guess it's okay that it's out to a few people if it means that can put a stop to them.”

She leaned down and kissed him again, wrapping her arms around his head before she slid off his lap and pulled him to his feet. "Let's just hope Covington doesn't do something stupid."

"Yeah, well, hope in one hand, shit in the other, see which fills up first."

"I thought you weren't into coprophilia," she teased.

"I'm not even going to ask why you know what the name of that philia is," he laughed. "But no, I'm most definitely not into that kind of thing."

The two spent most of the hour talking through her feedback on the new book, her offering minor suggestions in a way that not only was helpful, but felt insightful. No major changes, but tiny tweaks here and there that would really tighten everything up.

Before they knew it, Ash had come to find them to bring them down to the big room again, for their second group interview, which felt more like a formality, really, a chance for them to do some pick up shots, and follow up on the fact that Andy was officially engaged to four women, and that this was not only going to be legal, but encouraged under the new laws. He had expected a more in-depth series of second round questions, but mostly it was simple fill ins, and a few clarifying questions.

Within half an hour or so, they were done, and Katie Couric was thanking them all, Niko especially, for helping establish a single narrative thread they could follow through the entire process, as well as reiterating how brave she was, volunteering what her experiences had been like in the process of getting imprinted.

Andy found himself wondering a little bit what exactly Ash and Niko had said during their private interview with the journalist, but trusted they knew what they were doing.

"So all that's left is the footage of the imprinting actually happening," Katie said, as the producers were starting to pack up all the camera gear. "I understand Skip walked you through the camera set up, Ms. Stevens?"

"I think we're past 'Ms. Stevens' at this point, don't you think, Katie?" Emily said to her with a soft laugh. "And yes, Skip was very helpful in answering my questions about a few key differences, but it's not all that different than the camera we have in our office, except of course for the audio set up. He did walk me through it quite well, though."

"Great," she said. "I'll have them set it up in your bedroom, and you will have total control over framing, lighting, so on. I understand you've got your own editing bay here on site?"

"We have been getting prepared for auditions and the like in our little studio, so yes, if there's anything we need to cut out or prune off, we will do so before we pass the footage off to you in the morning. When should we expect someone to come by?"

"I was actually going to ask if we could pick up the footage and the camera later this evening," she said. "I know it's not what we originally agreed upon, but I want us to be heading back to the studio and starting to put all this together on the last flight out tonight, if at all possible."

"That's really up to Andy, I think," Em said.

"No, it's mostly up to Tala, let's be real," Andy said with a smirk.

"I'm ready *now* now," Tala said, a nervous titter of laughter rolling from her lips. "I know I was all Billy Badass about being able to wait, but it's getting pretty real, dude, and, like, the faster we get up to the bedroom, I think the better off I'm gonna be, obv."

"Then why don't I head upstairs with a Tala and Em and a couple of the others, and you can circle back in an hour or two for the footage," Andy told Katie. "Sound good?"

"Excellent Mr. Rook, thank you once again for being so charitable, and for being so transparent about the less savory aspects of the new world you've endured."

Sarah bounded over with a stack of Andy's books, one of every book in the series, all of which he'd autographed earlier in the day, and handed them to Katie Couric. "It might not be your speed, but hey, give them a read and maybe you'll fall in love with the story as much as I have," she said to the reporter.

"*Just* the story, though," Katie said with a grin. "I already have a husband."

"I wouldn't share him with you anyway, girl," Sarah chuckled, leaning down to kiss Katie on the cheek. "I think you'll really like them though."

Katie scooped up the stack of books and smiled. "Thanks again, to all of you. My producer will be back in two hours to pick up the footage, the camera and the mic. I truly appreciate you being willing to share that moment with the world, Tala. It should put a lot of people's minds at ease."

"Hey, Imma have a more famous sex face than Linda Lovelace," Tala said with a wink. "I can learn to live with that."

"You should call your next band Sex Face, Tala," Niko said, nudging her.

"OMG, I should totally call my next band Sex Face!" Tala cackled. "Anyhoo, shoo. I've got a man to get bonded to." She grabbed Andy with one hand, Emily with the other, and started leading them out of the room, heading towards the stairwell.

"So who do you want around for this, Tala?" Andy said, as they started up the stairs.

"Well, you and Ems, totes obvs, but my Sherbear's gonna be around as well," Tala said.

"I never even asked you if you were into women as well as men," he said, a little embarrassed that he hadn't thought to bring it up before now.

"Mostly dudes, well, dude singular now I s'pose, but having a bit of playtime with the girls now and again can be fun, so I'll experiment from time to time, see what feels right."

"Don't forget, you're also going to imprint Jade after you're finished with Tala," Em told him.

"Oh, sure sure," Tala said, "she can come up to the room as well, and she can bring Lauren with her, since I know that'll make her feel more comfortable. Honestly, whoever wants to come and hang around for it can. I totes don't care that much."

"Well, too many people and it becomes harder to catch the audio of it," Em said.

"Most of the audio's gonna be unairable," Tala giggled, "but I'll clean up my mouth right before he and I pop." As they reached the top of the stairs, she stopped, turned and pulled Andy down for a soft kiss, looking up at him with eyes that showed the only sign of nervousness he'd seen from the brazen Persian woman so far. "In case it hasn't sunk through your thick skull, doll, I am *very* grateful that you took me in and are willing to take a chance on me. I know I'm a bit more thicc than the other girls in the house, but variety is the spice of life, and Imma love you like no other."

He smiled at her, his hand stroking her face a little. "As long as we make each other happy most of the time, Tala, that's all anyone can ask for."

"Imma be more happy once I get my Vitamin D, if you know what I'm sayin'," she giggled, turning to walk towards the bedroom again.

"She's a vixen that one," Emily whispered into his ear, nibbling on it a little. "Spicy. I like it."

They headed into the bedroom, and Emily moved over to the camera, which had already been set up by the newsteam before they'd left. Em made to sure test the lighting and the sound, however, while other people slowly filtered into the room, Lauren and Jade, as well as Sheridan and Ash.

"It's your first time, Tala," he said, "and I always want to make sure everyone's first time is exactly how they want it. So how do you want to do this?"

"Mmm... I mostly just want you to lay there," she said, kicking off her shoes. "Let me set the pace, let me control the tempo, let me have a ride." She pulled her shirt off, tossing it aside, leaving her in a sports bra and her jeans. "I'm both a top and a bottom, babe, but this time, we need to make sure my face is in shot for it, and as happy as I am for that to happen, I don't really feel like giving the world a peekaboo of my tits. That's just for fam." She unbuttoned her jeans and slowly unzipped them, shimmying them down over her hips.

Tala certainly was curvier than almost anyone else in the household, with a slightly paunchy belly, but she somehow made it look cute. The sports bra was certainly doing hard work, as the extra pounds had certainly enhanced both her bust and her ass.

"So that means doggie is out, and on my back gets a bit dicey as well," she said with a smirk. "But if I'm atop you, then Em can frame my face just right."

“We may need to have a couple of people hold you up at the very end,” Emily said, “so when you pass out, the camera can still have a few seconds of your face while you're beginning the imprinting process.”

“Good looking out,” Tala said as she pointed at Emily. “Sher, I know you got me on this, right?”

“You know it.”

“Jade? You want in for the other side?”

The blonde licked her lips a little bit, then nodded, saying nothing.

“A'ight then, c'mon girl.” Tala glanced over at Andy then cocked her head to one side quizzically. “You gonna make me beg for it, or are you gonna get undressed so we can get to this?”

He laughed a little, waving a hand as he sat down on the edge of the bed and unzipped his shoes, then slid them off. He had these tactical boots he loved to wear, and the fact that they had zippers on them meant they were always snug. After shucking those, he unbuttoned the shirt and tossed it over towards the incredibly large dirty clothes hamper the room had, standing up again to unbutton his jeans, unzipping them.

“Mm mm mmm...” Tala said. “I know I've seen it a couple of times already, but damn if you aren't a mighty fine lookin' man.” She pulled her sports bra up and over her head, as her mammoth breasts slipped free of it, giant mounds of soft flesh capped with almost chocolate colored nipples. “These puppies are gonna do some bouncing today,” she said, feeling one up, whether for her own gratification or to get Andy's engine revved up, it was hard to tell.

He slipped out of his boxers and then moved up to lay down on the bed. It seemed like all of his sexual activity today was apparently going to be done on his back, he thought to himself, between Fiona and Moira riding him earlier and Tala riding him now. He wondered if Jade would just want to keep him on his back for her turn afterwards, although he assumed he was going to take a shower in between. “Let me just get a couple of pillows lined up here,” he said, adjusting so that he was where he thought he needed to be for Tala to hit her mark.

“Excellent, love,” Emily said. “Now whenever our star is ready...”

Tala slipped off her thong, and Andy saw her completely naked for the first time, her pussy shaven clean except for a small rectangle of black pubes high above it, her hips sashaying as she strode over to the bed with as much confidence as he had expected.

“How's your head?” he asked her. “Still clear or is it getting harder t—”

She cut him off by leaning down and kissing him hard, her hand on his chest practically pinning him down on the bed, as she slowly brought one knee up, then the other, moving to crawl atop of him, her tongue not giving him a chance to finish that sentence for at least a minute, her calloused fingertips dragging down his chest with firm intent.

Tala pulled her lips back from his, as she smirked down at him. “Regretting this yet?”

“Not even a little,” he shot back. “You?”

“Nuh uh,” she replied. “I kinda wish I could've held out longer, but my cunt feels like I'm smuggling a space heater in it right now, and I think if I tried to hold out much longer, I wouldn't be able to say much.” Her hips were grinding against his, his cock not lined up yet, not inside of her, like she was trying to tease them both just a little bit longer.

“You don't have to say much if you don't want to, Tala.”

“Oh but I so very much want to, Andy,” she purred at him. “I talked a bit with Sher about what gets you off, and she told me you love a dirty mouth, so I am gonna be one swearsy slut for you.” She kissed his nose, almost like the look on his face amused her. “I'm gonna shove your dick so deep in my snatch that you're gonna wonder if you're tapping my lungs. Gonna smack my ass down on your thighs and bounce on this glorious cock so hard, we're gonna test if this bed's strong enough. And if I break it? Well, then I'll just have to build a new one for the room, one done properly, one built to handle the sort of good hard fuckings this family is always gonna be up to.”

He could feel her hand reaching down to grab his shaft, stroking it just a little, but mostly

guiding it to get into position.

“Normally I tell someone it's their last chance to back out right before they do this, but you started the priming yesterday, which means you couldn't back out now if you wanted to,” he said to her.

“Does *THIS*” she said, slamming her hips down onto his cock, impaling herself until he was hilt deep inside of her pussy, “feel like I want to back out? Fuck no. You feel so fucking good inside of me, I don't even want to fucking move.” She giggled a little bit, her eyes looking defocused for a second. “Oh that feels so fucking dope...”

Sheridan and Jade made their way over to the bed, but kept their distance just far enough that they weren't in eyeline most of the time, but were still close enough that they could spring into action when needed.

“I hope nobody ever told you that you had a little dick, Andy, because if they did, tell me who they were so I can beat the shit out of them for lying to you, because ooooooh fuck, I never want this cock to be anywhere but inside of me ever again.”

Because she'd gotten some of his precum earlier, she hadn't had the orgasm that typically accompanied the priming process, but it seemed like she was almost on the verge of one anyway, her head drifting from one side to the other, her dark hair a mess around her face, even while mostly still contained in the ponytail she'd put it into earlier.

“You like how that feels, don't you, you big dicked bastard?” she hissed at him. “That's good prime Persian pussy you're wrapped up in now. Nothin' like it anywhere else in the world.” She was trying to hold still it seemed, but suddenly she lifted her hips about half way up then slammed them down hard, eliciting a deep moan from her throat, her head leaning back. “Ffffffffuck that's too fucking good to be real!”

She seemed like she was trying to keep herself from going too quickly, but it seemed like that struggle was lost seconds later, as she started bucking her hips up and down on his shaft. Each time she thrust down, getting his dick balls deep inside of her, she was trying to hold still, trying to remain there for as long as she could, but always seemed to lose the struggle within just a second or so, repeating the motion again, each bounce making her tits jiggle above him, as she smoothed her hands against the sides of her head and back, her face contorted with delicious pleasure.

“I wanted it slow, I wanted it long and hard, but I just can't fucking stop,” she whimpered, “and I fucking need it right fucking now!”

Andy was mostly letting Tala set the tempo, but found himself having to hold onto her hips to keep her in place, as the slam-hold-slam rhythm was quickly replaced by fast and frenzied snaps of her hips, pulling herself up and nearly off his dick before grinding down again, pumping him like she was frantic and desperate.

“Fuck, Andy,” she groaned. “I was convinced I could take this, I could manage this, I could control this, but I'm outta my fuckin' mind here, boo, and I need it, I want it, I crave it, I gotta have that cum, gotta have that hot cream, gotta get my fix. We can cuddle and snuggle and canoodle and all that shit later, but right now, I think I'm gonna fuckin' lose it if you don't gimme that jizz. Do it. Do it to me, you hunk!”

He wanted to make the moment last, but Tala's tempo wasn't giving him space for that, so one of his hands lifted from Tala's hips, gesturing with flapping fingers that the girls should come and hold her up, as Emily zoomed the camera in.

Sheridan slipped in quickly, placing her hands on Tala's right shoulder, and Jade did the same on the other side, as Andy felt his body racing towards that release.

“Mmnnhh mmmnhhh nnnngghhh ngghhh gggfff nnnnhhrrrggghhh,” Tala groaned and moaned, trying to keep herself from using any words, even in her sex-crazed state doing her best to make sure the family was shown in a good light.

When Tala thrust down hard the next time, the show started.

He felt her clamp onto his cock, and his balls immediately threw open the floodgates, as he

started blasting ropes of hot spunk inside of her, and her head began to thrash about a little, a deranged smile on her face, as her ponytail whipped behind her head like an angry cat's tail until suddenly she went completely limp, the girls moving to angle her so her head leaned backward, her face completely exposed, while Emily continued to zoom in, and everyone in the room tried to fall as quiet as they could, leaving on the telltale word on repeat, Tala's voice murmuring with great delight, "imprinting," over and over and over again.

"Got it!" Emily said, turning the camera off. "As soon as we're done here, I'll give it a quick edit pass then will let Ms. Couric's people know it's ready."

Sheridan and Jade moved to slowly lower Tala to one side, sliding her off of Andy's cock with a wet pop, as they laid her down on the bed, her head on the pillow. Andy leaned over and gave her a soft kiss, making sure she was beneath the covers.

"Now, maybe I should get a shower first, Jade, before we get to you."

"Oh, I've got something else in mind, Andy," Jade said, a strange smile on her face.