

Chapter 1:

My nipples could cut glass

This was a mistake.

How could this not be a mistake? I just slept with my boss. Correction: I just had sex with my boss.

Sin was staring at me with a smirk that was far too cheeky.

Dammit, he did look good naked.

I was still coming down from the high he had given me. My body was fatigued yet exhilarated at the same time. I'm not sure if he was waiting for me to be the first to say something but I held my tongue.

He clicked his tongue on the roof of his mouth once. "Well that was... interesting."

I widened my eyes. "Interesting? That's all you have to say?"

He stared at the ceiling in thought. "Alright sweetheart... you look even better naked than I thought."

"Sin!" I couldn't stand it anymore. Was I supposed to have pillow talk with him? How could I have pillow talk with him? I rolled out of bed aggressively and was hyper-aware of my naked body as I stood up.

"See? I could pop a quarter off that thing," Sin pointed to my backside as I bent down to retrieve my clothes, except my clothes weren't there. Scrambling around the bed, I found my pants, but my sweater must still be in the kitchen. Where he took it off me.

Where I practically begged him to have his way with me... how humiliating.

He was faster than me. He jumped out of bed, too comfortable in his naked form, and blocked my path out of the bedroom.

"Sin." I clutched my pants to my chest. "What are you doing?" I asked timidly.

"Wait a second! We should probably shower. You know, get that explosion smell off of us," he winked. I tried to sneak past him but he placed his palm on the door frame, his defined bicep cutting me off. Did he mean the actual explosion at the house or did he mean his own... explosion...

I shuddered and rolled my eyes. "You want me to shower with you? What we just did wasn't... enough?"

He smiled sweetly and my heart fluttered in the exact way I didn't want it to. "Hey, I'm more than satisfied, if that's what you're worried about."

"I wasn't worried about-"

"But," he placed a finger over my lips and continued, "it's been a rough night. For both of us. So can you postpone your annoyingly responsible tendencies just a little while longer? Please?"

Now that I focused on his face, he appeared genuinely exhausted. His eyes were slightly bloodshot, his cheek was still swollen, and the yellow bruises on his ribs looked painful. But it was his ruffled hair and small smile that wore down my defenses and I relaxed slightly, exhaling.

“Maybe I can... oh!” My head snapped down to see the liquid running down my thigh. Sin followed my gaze, his mouth open slightly.

“Is that my-”

“Yeah,” I breathed, half annoyed, half surprised.

“That’s fucking hot,” he said in a low voice and I was off my feet before I could object. Sin’s hands were gripping my thighs and my legs wrapped around his waist. A strange squealing noise escaped my throat as he manipulated my body onto his, but he was already walking toward the bathroom and all I could do was hang on for the ride.

Even though we just had sex, which is technically the epitome of human intimacy, it was strange feeling him pick me up when we were both naked. How was he this comfortable naked? His body was strong and I felt small, really small, as if he could throw me around like a ragdoll if he wanted to.

He set me down on the cold tile floor and I shivered once, the temperature shocking my feet, still gripping my pants in my hand.

“You don’t need these,” he teased and ripped them out of my hand.

I opened my mouth to object but suddenly his soft lips were on mine and he was kissing me forcefully, blocking my other senses and any rational thoughts. His warm chest was pressed flush against me and I had to admit, it felt pretty nice.

His tongue was moving in mesmerizing motions against mine and when his lips left, I was surprisingly disappointed. He tugged the scrunchie out of my hair, which resembled a bird's nest now, and set it on the edge of the sink.

His manhood was hard again. “You bounce back fast,” I muttered as he pushed me gently toward the shower door.

“Must be that super secret agent juice,” he grinned and I laughed. He reached into the glass shower and turned on the water while still keeping one hand on my waist. “And you won’t need these in there.”

His fingers plucked my glasses off my face in one swift motion and the world was fuzzy.

“Wait!” I tried to argue but it was too late. My voice was too shaky and I wrapped my arms across my chest defensively. Why was I so nervous? I’ve been in this bathroom several times before. I’ve even been in his shower before. But never in such a helpless state, naked and semi-blind, overwhelmingly vulnerable.

Sin was behind me, his raw manhood pressing against my skin and I placed my hand on the door of the open shower, debating my next move. Should I turn and leave? Insist on going home?

His firm hands gripped my hips, his fingers pressing into my skin and I held my breath. “You need to feel your way, El.”

His mouth was against my ear and his warm lips sent shivers down my spine as the shower rained down on the floor. Steam had begun to warm the bathroom.

I tucked my chin away from his face but stepped into the shower cautiously, feeling the glass walls with my palms. The last thing I wanted to do was fall and look like an idiot in here.

“You’re enjoying this too much,” I commented as he closed the door. It wasn’t until that moment that I felt suddenly cornered.

We were alone in here and even though it was nerve wracking, I didn't want to escape anymore. I wanted him to corner me the way I always imagined, the way I always wanted to be. Pressed against the bathroom wall with his hand around my throat, forcing his tongue down my...

"Am I?" he asked as he handed me a bottle of bodywash and began soaping himself down. It took me a second to remember what I said before. "And what's wrong with that?" he asked cheekily.

"So many things," I muttered but couldn't help blushing at his soapy, foggy form in front of me. The stream of water was falling between our chests and we both washed ourselves in silence. It was a surprisingly comfortable silence, a silence we've had many times before but never in this position.

Usually, this silence happened in his office while he worked at his desk and I worked on the couch. Originally this silence happened while he was away in Russia and we would stay on the phone for hours at a time, sometimes falling asleep before hanging up. But as soon as I became aware of the silence, my instincts wanted to break it.

"Will Sobby be okay? Like... you can fix him and everything?" Turning around, I ran my fingers through my tangled hair hastily and let the shower soak it. My sore arm pulsed painfully but I ignored it. It was somewhat a relief not to face Sin right now. Especially knowing what we just did.

What I just did with him. Or did he do it to me? No... definitely a mutual effort.

At least I can admit it to myself. But I would never be admitting it to anyone else.

"I should be able to fix him up," Sin answered easily but my heart was heavy at the thought.

I sighed. "He saved our lives, you know. I don't think we would have made it without him."

"You're telling me," Sin agreed mightily. "I owe him some really good coat polish."

I laughed then thought about the two men Sin had to fight. "Who do you think those two guys were? At the house?"

"I haven't figured that out yet," he grunted and I could tell he was splashing water on his face. The spray of the rainfall shower was large enough for both of us however I couldn't tell if his arm brushed my back accidentally or on purpose. "But they didn't know each other, that's for sure. One of them could be from *Span*, one of them could be from *Pikcheur*. Or they could be from another organization for all I know, it's hard to tell."

Shutting my eyes, I revisited the basement of the house that resembled a creepy research setup, with the *Pikcheur* Nanoticks and the blueprints lining the walls. The visual suddenly became blurry, something that rarely happens with my photographic memory, and I was back in the closet.

Hiding in that closet, trapped, too scared to leave and too terrified to stay. The same closet I hid in when my grandma was killed... no, wait, it's not the same closet. It's not the same one. It's different...

My vision blurred again and my eyes shot open, my breathing increasing momentarily. I forced myself to calm down, to remember where I was, and I wiped the water off my face hastily and turned back to Sin.

His toned back was toward me and he was humming. He hadn't noticed my momentary mental departure from the present moment and I was grateful. But his humming distracted me enough to relax my nerves.

I couldn't hold back my smile. "Do my ears deceive me? Does Agent Sin sing in the shower?" He swiped his palms over his soaking hair, which stuck out in multiple directions, and spun around.

“You’ve caught me,” he declared sarcastically with his hand on his chest. “I am a closeted shower singer. But I do sign autographs if you’re interested.” He stuck out his finger and began tracing it along my chest in swishy motions.

“Ugh!” I groaned and slapped his hand away, but he caught my fingers at the last second.

I gasped as he pulled me through the water and I instinctively shut my eyes against the droplets flooding my eyelashes. I was pressed tightly against his warm chest, which was vibrating with laughter, and I blinked my eyes open.

Staring up at him, I had a clear image of his face this close, and was surprised to find him watching me. My face was almost touching his chin and I bit my lip nervously as he leaned closer, his eyes teasing me. I leaned away slightly, involuntarily, but his grip around my waist was firm.

He grinned sheepishly and for a split second he was just a cute guy instead of my boss.

“I’m surprised we don’t smell like smoke,” he said and he touched his nose to mine playfully.

“Yeah,” I agreed but something about what he said made my mind wander. He was right, but why was he right? I thought about the explosion as we escaped the house and the debris that landed on us, the smoke cloud rising into the air, and the burning smell. But after we left, I couldn’t remember smelling it again, even faintly.

“Wait,” I began hastily as his lips came closer to mine. He paused. “Why don’t we smell like smoke?”

One of his eyebrows quirked. “Well... we’re in the shower so... it’s probably washed off.” He looked at me in amusement and leaned toward my lips again, but I couldn’t let it go.

“I understand how showers work,” I snapped back and stepped away. He dropped his arms, but I was too engrossed in my thoughts to feel bad.

Why didn’t we smell like smoke? Obviously, we wouldn’t now but before, when we were in the car and in the bed, Sin didn’t smell like smoke. Our hair didn’t smell like smoke.

“El, what’s wrong? You’re freaking me out,” he said in his usual tone. The lovey-dovey playful attitude from before had vanished.

“I just...” I was thinking hard about the explosion. “We never smelled like smoke. Did we? Did I?” I searched his slightly fuzzy outline and concentrated on his face.

He shook his head and shut off the water. “I don’t think so. I don’t remember specifically. I was a bit distracted.”

My curiosity mixed with a twinge of panic in my gut sent me flying from the shower. Shoving open the glass door hastily, I stepped onto the cold tile and nearly slipped as I floundered across the bathroom.

“Jesus!” Sin exclaimed as he caught my good arm in his grip to steady me. “El, what the fuck are you-”

“Just a minute!” I shouted as I fumbled with my glasses at the sink, shoved them onto my wet face, and scrambled through the door.

I jogged across the bedroom with purpose. It was cold out here, the humid heat of the shower gone as my warm skin was engulfed in the regular apartment temperature and the beads of water still clinging to my body made me shiver.

Crossing my arms protectively over my chest, I ran to the kitchen and found my sweater lying in a lumpy heap on the floor where Sin had tossed it. I snatched it off the floor and pressed the fabric to my nose before inhaling deeply.

No smell.

I tried again, moving the sweater away and putting another part to my nose.

Sin jogged into the kitchen clutching two folded towels in front of his manhood, his chest muscles flexing and beads of water gliding down his forehead from his wet hair.

“Shit, my nipples could cut glass,” he complained and set one of the towels on the counter, obviously meant for me. He wiped his chest down with the other towel and rubbed his hair in it before wrapping it around his waist.

I was still smelling the sweater like a maniac.

“Should I hide my weed? You’re like a drug detection dog.”

I didn’t answer. I shut my eyes and concentrated before taking one last long sniff.

Sin hated being kept out of the loop and prodded me again for info. “What the hell are you-”

“Here,” I cut him off and shoved the sweater into his face. He flinched and stepped back, his eyebrows shooting up in surprise, but he clutched the sweater in his hands.

I yanked my towel off the counter and wrapped it around myself, the shivering finally setting in.

Sin stared at me questioningly. “You want me to have this? Or are you trying to teach me how to knit?”

“No!” I was drying myself hastily. “Smell it! What does it smell like?”

“Um...” Sin sniffed the sweater hesitantly as if it were poisonous. “Is this a trick question? It smells good. It smells like... you. What should it smell like?”

“Exactly!” I pointed at him triumphantly but he was observing me like a mental patient.

“Listen sweetheart,” he began delicately while setting the sweater on the counter. “I think you’re in shock. We did go through a pretty traumatic experience and you did take my giant-”

“If you’re about to say what I think you’re about to say, stop right there,” I accused because I knew he was turning this conversation into something about his male parts.

“What?” he asked innocently but his smirk gave him away. “I’m just saying, I gave you a pretty good fucking and I wouldn’t blame you if I knocked a few screws loose up there.” He tapped my head knowingly as if this is something that usually happens with the women he sleeps with.

My mouth opened in disgust, which only made him smile wider, which irritated me. “I’ll knock *your* screws loose Coleman Alexander and if you think... hold on. Screws loose...” Threatening Sin gave me the possible answer I was looking for.

Grabbing his hand, I dragged him back down the hallway. “Back to the bathroom!”

“You really have lost your marbles,” Sin declared as we entered the steamy bathroom again. “Why was I smelling your sweater? Is this a test? Are you going to blindfold me in a room of girls and tell me to find you?”

“Could you be quiet for a second?” I said impatiently and wiped the steam off the mirror with my hand.

“Like a ‘Where’s Waldo’ except it’s called ‘Where’s El’ instead.”

“Listen!” His mouth snapped shut at my tone. I faced him determinedly. “It should smell like smoke. But it doesn’t. Why?”

Suddenly his face was serious. “I don’t know. And your hair should have smelled like smoke but-”

“It didn’t. Why don’t we smell any smoke?” I examined my hair in the mirror, flipping my parting this way and that.

Could it be there? But the more I looked and found nothing, the more disappointed I became.

Sin seemed to follow my train of thought and gripped the towel at his waist. “Because there was no smoke.”

I nodded but suddenly worried that I really was going crazy. “Maybe. It’s just a weird theory, I could be wrong.”

Maybe I was being stupid. Different things absorb different smells, right?

But Sin’s hands were gripping the sides of my head firmly and he was tilting and twisting it, examining the edges of my hairline with an intense expression.

“I’m probably paranoid. Maybe I have lost my marbles... but not because of your big... willy.” My cheeks flushed under his concentrated gaze searching me keenly and I thought about how tangled and crazy my wet hair was.

“Even though you just referred to it as a willy, like I’m a little boy or something, at least you admitted it’s big,” Sin mumbled with a straight face as he traced his fingers along my temple.

I was almost certain he was searching for the same thing I was. He continued searching through my hair with his fingers and the sensation was like a scalp massage, which sent guilty goosebumps fluttering down my scalp and neck.

“Those motherfuckers,” Sin cursed and stopped moving his fingers in my hair just above my ear. Tilting my head more, he moved in closer, and I felt his nail scraping along my scalp.

He withdrew his hand and we both stared at the tiny black bug in his palm.

“It’s a Nanotick! I knew it!” I cried in disbelief at the black lifeless technology.

Sin clicked his tongue on the roof of his mouth. “That fucker threw handfuls of them at us and one of them must have latched on. Did he do it on purpose? Here, check me.”

I knew he was talking about the second man to enter the basement, the one with the buzzcut and scars on his face. During the fighting he grabbed handfuls of the Nanoticks off the desks and threw them at each of us.

It took several minutes of poking through Sin’s hair while he sat on the closed toilet seat, but I finally found a Nanotick stuck to the top of his head and picked it off. We set both of them on the top of the toilet tank and watched them in silence.

They did nothing.

I couldn’t remember them ever moving like actual bugs, but they still gave me the creeps.

Sin broke the silence. “I have a bad feeling.”

“Don’t say that,” I groaned and rolled my eyes even though I felt the same way. “It sounds worse coming from you.”

“You know what I’m about to say. I think these little shits did some serious damage... to us. To our... recollection of events.” Sin stated factually.

I fiddled with the hem of the towel around my chest. “I know. Is it stupid to hope they were harmless this time?”

Sin sent me a hard look. “We have to go back to the house.”