

LIVE LIKE THIS

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One week after Good Intentions

They caught a tour of the condominium amid a break in overcast skies. Late afternoon light spilled through broad windows all along the far end of a spacious living room. A narrow balcony on the other side of the windows looked over downtown. Only a black marble top island counter separated the living room from the spacious kitchen area to the right of the little foyer. Alex looked on the open space and the office towers with wide eyes. “Oh wow.”

“That’s what we like to hear,” said the realtor. Victoria walked a couple steps behind Alex and Lorelei, heels clicking on the white tile spreading from the foyer to the kitchen. “This is the widest floor plan in the building. You don’t get the corner view but you do get more space.”

He only half listened as he wandered in. Alex didn’t know high-rise living could involve fireplaces. He didn’t know it would involve a homeowner’s association until the realtor had mentioned it in the elevator.

He didn’t know a lot of things. Today felt like a reminder of that.

“Fuck yeah,” declared another feminine voice behind him. “I like this!”

Alex caught Rachel’s reflection in the sliding glass balcony door. She swept straight through Victoria like a ghost, arms and wings spread wide as she twirled across the living room to catch up to him. “It’s so roomy. I can stretch all the way out!”

“Furniture will fill it up a bit,” Lorelei said, subtly covering her response to Rachel as if she was only musing out loud.

“You can do that without spoiling the space, right?” asked Rachel.

“That always happens,” Victoria answered, completely oblivious to the angel’s presence. “It is a little easier to maintain a happy balance than you might think, though. I’ve seen a couple of the other units after move-in.”

She walked with a tablet computer cradled against her blazer. Long legs descending from her black skirt suit and platinum hair cascading down her shoulders kept Alex looking her way. Each

time, she made eye contact with Alex and grinned. Each time, he averted his gaze so she wouldn't think he was staring.

This time his eyes averted straight to Lorelei, alluring as always in a short, dark dress and heels. Amid the safety of her casual glamour, Alex noted her sly, approving smile. She knew. Of course she knew. "I take it you like the view, love?"

"How'd you guess?" he replied.

"Feel free to open up if you want a better look," said Victoria. She meant the balcony. Alex knew that. Obviously.

The door opened with a tug and a brief rush of air. Alex stepped out onto the small space to take in the view of the street below. Tall buildings lined this side and the opposite, but few of the others had any balcony areas. Balconies to the left and right wrapped around the corners of the building. The condo already seemed extravagant, but at least greater extravagance wasn't too far to provide perspective.

Rachel arrived at his side, fading straight through the floor-to-ceiling window. Her hand slid affectionately down from his shoulder all the way to his ass. Naturally, it stayed there. "Kinda hoping we'd find someplace roomy like this."

"Wait. Roomy?" He glanced back over his shoulder to ensure Victoria wouldn't see him talking to himself. "You can walk through walls. You can be partly intangible and partly solid."

"Uh-huh," she followed.

"I've seen it. I've *felt* it. Lorelei does it with her wings and her tail, but you can do it with all of your body."

"It's fuckin' hot, huh? You can admit it. I won't brag to anyone else."

"What—okay, yes, but..." He sighed. Her grin did things to him. So did her touch. "How does space matter for you if you can do that?"

"Oh I can still feel when I pass through things. It's not restrictive, but there's still a sensation. Kinda like wearing clothes. You can ignore the feeling but it's there." Her grin widened. "I'd rather feel fuck-naked."

"Isn't it 'buck' naked?" Alex glanced at her, then away. "Or not."

"You fucking love me and you love every second of this," she said, shamelessly smug. "You don't want me to stop."

“I want to get through this without creeping out Victoria,” he muttered. “Or embarrassing myself.”

Rachel leaned back against the balcony rails and looked inside. Victoria showed Lorelei around the living room space. “You know you can get it, right? She’s interested.”

“Whoa, what?”

“You’ve got the hots for her. It’s mutual. You already knew that, too, but you’re trying to ignore it because you’re with us. It’s not like we’ve got a problem with it. We’re both down.” As Victoria glanced their way, Rachel added, “She’s not into women, though, so you’d have to fly solo on this one. And maybe not today. But it’s all there. You wouldn’t even be her first client hook-up, but I bet you’d be the best.”

“Wow. Pretty sure that’s wildly unethical.”

“And yet it’s never affected her business. Sometimes a girl just wants to get laid.” The angel looked back at him with a raised eyebrow. “It would make her happy, you happy...us happy...”

“I’m still waiting for the other shoe to drop in all this.”

“Alex.” Rachel cozied up to him, knowing he couldn’t reciprocate without looking strange to witnesses. “It’s joy. Dirty, nasty joy sometimes, but that’s fun. I am all for it.”

“It’s also kinda the opposite of everything I’ve ever been taught about love and sex.”

“Yeah, because you grew up in a society that teaches men it’s okay to be fucking dumpsters of shit and abuse and way too many yell ‘fuck yeah’ and dive right in with a lit match.” Rachel tugged at his collar. “I know you understand because I read it in your paper for your sex class. Maybe you used nicer words than me.”

“You read my human sexuality paper?”

“Even Lorelei needs a little sleep sometimes. This city is dead at 3:00 am. Gotta keep myself entertained somehow. I was hoping for a college-level cunnilingus theory.” She grinned as Alex smothered his laughter. “You know what’s what. There’d be a lot more happy fucking in the world if people saw everyone else as equals. I’m happy to have you make up a little of the difference.”

A smile spread across his face no matter how hard he fought it. He let out a deep breath. “I’m trying to focus on the two of you.”

“You do plenty of that.” She tugged at the collar of his shirt and spoke against his neck. “You have a condition. We’re here to help. Even if it means *not* being the ones to...okay, that one is getting away from me. You know what I mean.”

“You’re aggravating my ‘condition’ right now,” Alex muttered.

“Feels good, doesn’t it?”

“Yes, but it makes the rest of being in public a little difficult.”

“You know Lorelei’s distracting Victoria so you can enjoy it, right?” Rachel whispered against his neck.

That made perfect sense. He let out a deep breath. “And then I’m more wound up.”

“We could fix that now,” she taunted playfully. “What if I...?” Then she gasped, spinning around against him to look across the city. “Oh fuck! Jumper!”

“What?” Alex blinked. Rachel leaped away from his arms, fading straight through the balcony rails. Her wings spread out over the street. In a single beat of broad white feathers, she was gone.

He shook himself. She held Dominion over the city. She had shit to do. Suicidal distress took priority over his heavy breath and raging hard-on. Without question. Totally agreed.

Damn it.

“It’s a little blustery this high up, isn’t it?” Lorelei asked as he returned. Her question came with a note of innocence, but he understood she was covering for him. She knew Rachel was playing with him on the balcony. She knew the angel abruptly stopped, too.

She always knew.

“Guess so.” His smile toward Victoria came naturally, though he hoped it didn’t come off as flirty—or worse. “Sorry if I held anything up. Got distracted.”

“No, it’s fine. I started showing Lorelei the kitchen but we got sidetracked on the décor. This set-up is the most open of the three-bedroom units. Plenty of room for entertaining a dinner party or something casual. I know some of the neighbors have active social lives.”

“How well is the noise controlled?” asked Lorelei.

“You’d be surprised. These units are all well-insulated. You can be as loud as you want.” The realtor strode out from behind the island counter to resume the tour. Alex looked straight down at her legs. He rebuked himself in time to meet her blue eyes when she glanced back to him. “Are you the party animal types?”

“Privately,” said Alex. She grinned and continued on. He blinked in surprise at the sudden cool confidence in his voice, only to note a wry smirk from Lorelei.

Victoria didn’t go far, having more to say about the living room before moving on. “All the hard wood is real, obviously. Plenty of jacks for cable or internet and plenty of plugs.” She turned back around unexpectedly. They didn’t bump into each other, but they came close together. Sudden eye contact interrupted her flow. “If you ever...need extra outlets.”

“If you want it enough, you can always make something fit,” said Alex.

“Good,” she replied. Gently clearing her throat, Victoria continued on. “Let me show you the bedrooms. You’re gonna love them.”

With her back turned, Alex winced at his phrasing. “Wow,” he mouthed silently, only to find Lorelei by his side with a knowing grin. Her hand slipped into his as they followed their guide.

“You’re good at this,” she murmured.

“I don’t see how.”

“You have warmth and charm. Empathy and intuition will beat practiced lines every time. Rachel left?”

“Yeah.”

“Also: hallway closets on the way to the bedrooms,” Victoria went on. “Love those. Both of the bedroom suites have their own bathrooms, with another in the hallway and a half-bath right here outside the spare bedroom—or office or whatever you want to do with it.”

“Wait, what?” Alex mumbled. Victoria continued on with the tour as if she didn’t hear. She gestured to the rooms on either side of the hallway, talking about space and air flow or energy or whatever. He didn’t hear. He was still stuck on the math.

Three bedrooms. *Four* bathrooms. All in one condo, all with one floor. Hell, there were even six units on this floor and apparently the corner condos were bigger somehow. He didn’t realize the building was that big when looking at it from the outside.

They were in the bathroom attached to the master bedroom by the time he caught up with the conversation. Of course the ‘main’ bedroom suite was big. Its bathroom was bigger than his bedroom at home. And the tub... “What.”

“I’m sorry?” Victoria asked, turning back to him.

Alex shook it off. “Sorry, what were you saying? My mind wandered.”

“Oh, only that it’s a tankless water heater. Never runs out.”

“Right,” said Alex. Naturally. How awful if one had to live with such deprivation as finite hot water. The mere thought of it could make someone drop their monocle.

“Is there anything else you’d like me to show you?” Victoria’s eyes held his all over again.

“Sure,” he answered, then blinked away his *other* all-consuming distraction. “I mean, if there’s more to see?” *God damn it that’s not better, Alex.*

“The rooftop patio is nice. There’s also a gym and a community center with a nice little theater room.” She said it as if she didn’t catch any hidden meaning to his question, except her grin confirmed that yes, she absolutely did.

“Alex.” Lorelei stepped in closer, her hand in his again. A casual tilt of her head and the look in her eye carved intimacy out of nothing, even with someone else right there. He loved that about her. He wanted more. “What do you think?”

“About the place? It’s amazing. Obviously. They’ve all been amazing.” He’d been blown away by the other condos they toured, too.

“It still hasn’t sunk in yet,” Lorelei joked to Victoria, but she focused on him. “Alex. We can live here. Together. It’s more than a nice thought. Do you like this one better than the others?”

“Yeah. Do you?”

Her lips spread in a smile. He thought about drowning in those lips once. He still did. She looked back to Victoria. “We’ll take it.”

“Oh? Great. Do you need to call a lender or any other arrangements before we start the paperwork?”

“No lender. I’d prefer to do this in cash. Whenever you’re ready. Right now, if you like.”

Victoria’s face brightened at the opportunity. “We can get right on it, of course. I can call up the forms on my tablet. Give me a few minutes? I’ll be at the counter in the kitchen and we can go over everything.”

“Of course. Take your time,” said Lorelei.

Victoria strode out with purpose, leaving Alex and Lorelei alone in the otherwise empty master bedroom. “*Cash?*” he asked.

“Electronic, of course. Don’t ask me to do this twice. I don’t have *that* kind of money,” said Lorelei. “It’s not uncommon. Foreign investors operate this way. It’s one of the drivers behind everything awful in this market. Forgive me for adopting the same ruthless approach, love. At least we plan to actually live here.”

“You really want this? It’s not too sudden?” he asked.

Her face drew close to his. She stroked the back and side of his scalp with sensuous fingers. “We really want this,” she told him. “You know I sense your desires. All of them.”

“I’ve...been...distracted.” His hands were on her hips now. Magically. They just wound up there on their own.

“Yes. You have enjoyed most of it. So have I.” Her mouth came so close, her words falling like kisses slowly trailed across his face. “You know my feelings on all of this.”

“You’re not buying this place just because I like it, right?”

Her smile became playful. He could feel it against his skin. “Rachel likes it. The view helps her. And this is my happily ever after, too.” She pulled back, but her eyes had him as enthralled as her teasing lips. “That shower is big enough for all three of us to play.”

She was right, of course. He glanced at it again. His thoughts turned instantly from class and economic discomfort to much more seductive images. Lorelei’s touch only goaded him.

“Do you think our passion will slow once we share a home?” she laughed. “I plan to be naked here most of the time.”

It was too much to resist. Alex kissed her, pulling her close at the waist. Her tongue teased his until the kiss became a melding of hunger and need. He felt her balance shift once, then to the other side, but thought nothing of it until their lips parted. The taunting gleam in her eye made him wonder why she stopped until she lifted one hand to show the black lace that dangled from her fingers.

“We have time,” she whispered. “But only if we make it quick.”

He pushed her against the wall. Lorelei grinned at his sudden rough treatment, inviting more. Alex heard the jingle of his unfastened belt buckle as they moved. She’d already undone his jeans, literally before he knew it this time.

Her fingers hooked into his boxer briefs and pulled down. He kissed her neck, but she leaned in toward him and whispered, “No time for more foreplay. We both need this.”

She raised her thigh against his hip. The touch of her fingers against his hardened flesh was enough to catch his breath, but she guided his cock to greater pleasures. Spread legs and a warm and damp welcome beneath her skirt were all he really needed.

Alex speared Lorelei against the wall, forcing a voiceless breath of satisfaction from his lover. Her hands behind his neck and his back clutched at him like claws. He thrust hard again. A quiet whimper goaded him into more. He heeded Lorelei's plea.

"Yes. Yesss," she hissed.

"I love you," he breathed. "So much."

"Oh, Alex," she moaned. "You can be dirtier than that."

His eyes flared at her grin. He fucked her harder, pounding her against the wall. He didn't worry about Victoria hearing anything. Lorelei's magic could take care of that.

Or perhaps not.

"Sorry this is taking a minute," Victoria called from the hallway. Alex and Lorelei stopped, looking at one another with wide eyes. The click of her heels against the hardwood floor heralded her arrival. "It's a lot to download, but it's coming along."

Like being snapped from a daydream, Alex realized they were right beside the doorway. Even an interruption like this couldn't break him entirely from so much sensation. He was still buried within Lorelei, still hot, still wired. Lorelei's breath came out heavy, too. She didn't let go of his waist or his neck. Not now.

The simplest gestures and looks communicated everything.

His hands clutched at her ass. Her legs hooked around his waist. Alex carried her only a few steps to the edge of the doorway, thankful for her calves holding his completely unfastened slacks in place. He leaned only his head out past the doorframe and trusted Lorelei's magic to handle the rest. "No worries! Wrapped up in plans for the bedroom already. Obvious stuff."

Victoria grinned as if she saw nothing at all amiss. "Let me know if you want ideas."

She headed down the hall again. Alex turned his attention back to Lorelei and her look of unguarded, blissful arousal. "Satisfy, my love," she whispered. "Satisfy us both."