

## A Note from the Author

### Danger's Come A-Knocking....

Someone's been watching Tana closely, but he's a lot closer than she realizes. From intimate moments to lazy afternoons on the couch, he's secretly seen it all - and fallen for her along the way. The problem is that someone else is watching too, and his obsession with Tana is a lot more dangerous.

When a man claiming to be her front door enters her dreams to warn her about an imminent threat to her life, Tana initially chalks it up to her weird late-night snacks. But she rethinks things when her earnest visitor insists he's also ready to protect her - in exchange for one hell of a favor.

When Tana trades her best line of defense for an unlikely supernatural ally, the threat lurking beyond her apartment hallway starts getting desperate as the law closes in. Can her inhuman companion save her from the worst of humanity, or is it too late for both of them?

**Content Considerations:** Unhinged is a paranormal romance story that involves a human woman getting it on with her front door, which later turns into a guy. This story contains door knob insertion, voyeur (MC to FMC), voyeur (bad guy against FMC), allusion to man-on-woman violence (off page), woman killed after luring (off page prior to story starting, non-explicit), covert breaking and entering (via master key against FMC by bad guy), secret underwear theft (against FMC by bad guy), deliberate food drugging, alcohol use, harassment via text (bad guy against FMC), allusions to an orgy with unprotected sex (non-main character, off page), gun violence (on page), shooting "death" (on page), wood putty use, sex toy use, condom use, working with police, talking with police, erotic humiliation (very light), fetishistic enjoyment of commands, lubricant use, female domination (with aftercare), male submission (aftercare is supplied).

If I've missed mentioning any content considerations you feel should be in this list, please let me know! The safety and comfort of my readers always takes precedence.

## Chapter 1

As a door, I didn't know when I fell in love with Tana, only that I most assuredly was. It might have been the first time she'd laid her soft fingertips on the cool brass of my knob, the day she first toured the apartment I faithfully guarded. I'd watched, fascinated by the play of light against her cheek, as she'd signed the papers on the chipped formica counter of the tiny kitchen just beyond my threshold.

It may have been when I noticed the care she always took sliding the key into my lock. In the six months she'd spent safely tucked behind my back at night, she'd never jiggled her key uncomfortably, or twisted the knob too hard. No, not Tana. She always made sure the lock had unlocked before she tried to enter, and never tried to force her way beyond a sticky catch in the deadbolt.

She wasn't like my previous tenants, a gruff pair of male roommates that shouldered me too hard, and let me slam even when they didn't have to. No, they hadn't been civilized enough to lay out a beautiful welcome mat like Tana did, or sweep the pitted concrete square that faced the thickly-wooded forest beyond my front.

Oh, the bliss I felt when she'd press her cheek to my painted surface, peering through the peephole to ensure her food delivery person was actually who they claimed to be. In those fleeting moments, I could perceive her perfume, the warmth of her breath and body, sometimes even the side of her silky lips as her head shifted away.

Once, I got carried away by the press of her breasts as she rose on tiptoe to look through the peephole, her t-shirt whispering against my flat back. Try as I might, I couldn't hold back my deadbolt, which slid free with excitement at the touch of her soft cheek. Tana, my sweet, puzzled little Tana, gently twisted the bolt back into place, opening the unlocked door to nervously chuckle with the waiting delivery man on the other side. I listened to her murmur about the building settling oddly, the summer humidity surely swelling the wood of the door frame.

Truth be told, I loved the humidity, even if Tana had a point about my swelling. The apartment complex's air conditioning units were ancient, and offered little relief from the early summer heat. That meant that she dressed appropriately once I was securely latched, which meant she was hardly dressed at all. In barely-there tank tops and tiny shorts, she pranced around the apartment, doing little dances to music on the radio as she vacuumed or worked at her computer job.

One particularly sweltering day, one I'd never forget, we were pressed together for long, sweaty moments. Tana had gotten a store-brand cherry twin pop from the freezer to cool off. After peeling off the sticky paper packaging and tossing it away, she leaned heavily against my back, sliding down until she was sitting on the floor. The sheer, magnetic attraction of prolonged contact shuddered through me from lintel to doorstep, making me realize I definitely had feelings for her.

In fact, my desire for Tana grew greater by the day as I watched her, filled with pleasure from every brush of her fingertips along my knob, every gentle grip along my edge as she returned home in the evenings. I was torn between wanting her to stay with me and wanting to usher her somewhere better, safer than these rundown apartments on the edge of the woods. Not

that I could, regrettably silent sentry that I was.

Terrible things lurked here, only a building away. Shortly before Tana had moved in, I'd watched Tana's overly-friendly superintendent, Randall, vanish one night into woods beyond the complex. The girl he'd tugged alongside him had been staggering unsteadily, and looked uncomfortably like Tana. For a moment on the day she'd signed the papers, I was almost sure it was the same woman I'd seen that night. But no, my Tana held herself a little taller, and had reading glasses perched on the edge of her adorably upturned nose. Her skin was a darker shade, too, something closer to my own painted-over oak than the pale woman that had never returned from the woods.

Every time Randall oozed by, all oily charm, to "check" something at Tana's apartment, I barely held myself back from slamming across the creep's spindly fingers. I had few instincts beyond protecting Tana, but the idea of blatantly revealing myself as sentient filled me with a horrific sense of sourceless cosmic dread: a warning from whatever force had given me life, surely. Still, I didn't like the way Randall's eyes devoured my precious charge when her back was turned, getting the requested papers, or tools, or something else that inevitably required her to bend over. To my relief, Tana seemed to pick up the predatory aura of the man, and always kept a stiff, polite distance between them, bending at the knees rather than the waist when something was requested.

And every time she managed to successfully, albeit politely, shoo the super out of her apartment, she'd turn the lock, rest her back against mine, and breathe a sigh of relief. Even though I was, architecturally-speaking, obligated to support her, I still felt like I was actively providing her comfort. The thought of that warmed me down to my threshold.

I still saw, however, what Tana could not: the way Randall would savagely grip the edges of my exterior frame once I was closed, leaning in so close his foul breath ghosted off of my front. His fingertips would flex in frustration, a predator denied his prey, shoving off and away to stalk down the hallway, muttering. His body language had been more aggressive the last time Tana had ushered him out, claiming an appointment that I knew was a ruse.

Unfortunately, I feared Randall knew it was a ruse too.

## Chapter 2

The next day, I was startled into consciousness by the side of a fist. After the second round of firm knocks, I was honestly grateful I didn't seem to feel pain - the movements were blunt and heavy, and would have bruised me if I were made of flesh. I prepared to stick obstinately in my frame, imagining the knocker to be Randall, but was surprised to find a man in a dark blue uniform instead. The visitor was an *officer*, according to the television shows that Tana watched endlessly on weekends, though far less attractive than the ones on the shows.

A morning-disheveled - though still beautiful - Tana had pressed her face against my back, looking through the peephole at the officer outside. As she pulled the door open, the squawks and beeps of the officer's shoulder-mounted communicator echoed off the concrete hallway.

"Miss Vennt? I'm officer Holden with the-" I shifted my focus from the unexpected visitor to Tana, studying the curl of her fingers around my edge to the errant lock of hair she'd pushed behind an ear. She nodded as she listened to the officer, a speech I'd tuned out in favor of concentrating on the object of my affections. My attention snapped back to the officer, however, as he showed Tana a grainy photograph. With a start, I realized it was the same doomed woman that looked so much like my Tana, the one that had never returned from the woods with Randall. Failing to clock the same recognition I did, Tana only nodded softly, her brow creasing in concern, eyes flicking down the hallway to the dense copse of forest beyond, now choked with early spring growth as the officer gestured.

"-only moved here about six months ago, I'm so sorry I can't be more help. That poor girl!" Tana accepted a small white card from the officer with another nod as their conversation dwindled. "If I hear or see anything, I promise I'll call right away."

The officer touched the band of his uniform hat lightly in respect as he left, moving down the open hallway towards the woods as Tana turned to head back in. She frowned at the card as she pushed me closed with the luscious curve of her hip, moving to the refrigerator to pin the card under a brightly-colored smiley face magnet.

"Missing." She shuddered visibly, talking out loud to herself, as she often did. "True crime stuff is interesting but I don't like living in it. Hopefully she just went on a - a road trip, or something." Tana's voice had gone flat and sad; I got the impression she didn't believe her own optimism.

As Tana busied herself digging through the freezer for the toaster waffles she always treated herself to on the weekends, I listened and watched the exterior of the apartment. The officer was strolling back through the hallway corridor now, talking into his shoulder.

"That's the canvass of building B, chief. No hits, though there's pretty dense woods behind the building. We bringing out the canine units? Profiler was saying it could aggravate-"

A squawk of tinny, garbled speech from his shoulder cut him off, and he nodded absently. I wasn't sure how the officer could make out a word of the noise, it sounded like the chatter of a million birds in the trees.

A grunt of assertion followed the garbled voice dying down. "10-4 chief. Be right there." The officer's various pockets and belt loops jangled and thudded as he jogged down the hallway

and out to the parking lot.

Inside the apartment, the gentle clunk of a plate on Tana's coffee table signaled the beginning of her Saturday ritual: waffles drenched in syrup and a loud action movie. I settled my perception there to watch with her, deeply troubled. I knew from the shows Tana watched that *canines* often meant *bodies*. I also knew, from another show, that bad men like Randall often got worse if they were close to being discovered.

My Tana was in danger, and even as sturdy as I was, I'd never felt more helpless.

## Chapter 3

It was early evening when another knock, this time the clonk of bony, nicotine-stained knuckles, pulled my consciousness outward again.

*Randall.*

His booze-tainted breath curled offensively against my front as he leaned much too close, speaking into the doorjamb. “Tana? Hey, Tana! It’s Randall honey. I know you’re home, I saw your car in your parking space. Hey, did the cops talk to you today?”

I slid my perception around to see the defeated slump of Tana’s shoulders, the steadying sigh she allowed herself and the momentary pinch at the bridge of her nose as she called back. “Hey Randall, one second.”

She pulled a robe around herself, covering the delightfully braless tank top and sleep shorts she was still dressed in. If it wasn’t for the unwanted visitor at my front, I’d think it was a terrible waste to cover up her beauty. Considering who’d come to call, however, I wondered if additional layers would have been a better choice.

Tana tugged me slightly open, and I was glad she hadn’t opened me all the way. Better to keep more of myself between Tana and Randall, so I could at least try to keep the predator out of her safe sanctuary.

Behind Randall’s too-curious lean into the apartment, ominous thunder rumbled, clouds thick and heavy with a swiftly-moving stormfront. Tana cleared her throat softly. “Yes, Randall, the police were here. They asked if I’d heard or seen anything suspicious lately. I told them no.”

*Smart girl, Tana.* She couldn’t have known what I did, of course: that Randall was exactly the man they’d been searching for, and that he likely killed the girl they were looking for. Even so, Tana’s choice to gloss over the few details she’d been given put me at ease - the less Randall knew about the police hunting him, the better.

“Did you - uhm, need anything else?” Tana raised an eyebrow, her fingers pointedly resting on my edge, ready to close and lock me soon as the lingering super was out of earshot.

But right now Randall was looking at Tana too hard, a beat too long, sizing her up like a meal rather than a tenant.

“That’s all for now, honey. Just trying to keep an eye on the complex, you know? I’d hate to think there was a dangerous man out here that could hurt one of my *favorite* tenants.” He winked salaciously as he straightened, patting my door frame with a firm, possessive palm as he left.

I strained at my hinges, wishing I could fly out in the wrong direction and break the man’s nose.

## Chapter 4

Hours later, Tana was safely in bed, but I couldn't shake my unease. Lighting sizzled across the sky, the boom of thunder echoing up and down the open hallway to the woods beyond. The storm drove hard, pelting rain into the vestibule, where it pooled on the cracked grey concrete, darkening the edges of the thin welcome mat.

As the wan sodium yellow of the ancient floodlights winked out in a power outage, a strangely-dressed man entered the hallway from the darkness, his silhouette impressively tall and broad. Draped in white swaths of robes, he wore a golden circlet on his creased brow, and his odd garments parted at his shins to reveal a pair of leather sandals. Somehow, not a drop of rain had marred his clothing, silver-shot hair and beard, or deeply tanned skin. The only illumination in the dark corridor came from the man himself, glowing from within like a firefly.

I watched warily as the man approached with the firm clap of sandal-soles, ready to stick fast in my frame to prevent Tana from being disturbed. Instead, the visitor merely cleared his throat and stared straight at me, addressing me directly.

“So. Hera has told me I must make some...amends...for my affairs. Personally, I think she's being oversensitive, but *women*, right? You fuck *one* girl as a weather event, or a bird, or her own husband and all of a sudden *you're the bad guy*.” He rolled his eyes and waved his huge hands dramatically as if I could possibly respond. If I *could* have responded, I'd offer that this Hera seemed to have reasonable complaints, if the two of them had been committed to one another at the time.

The man sighed and raised a massive palm as if he was cutting me off, mid-nonexistent-sentence. “Anyway. Here's the thing, I can't just say a couple of words and change reality, tends to get the mortals in a tizzy, especially these days. Part of Hera's whole *thing* is consent, which she says I need to learn.” The man made condescending air quotes with his fingers, leaving me with hefty doubts the man was actually contrite. “So, hey, good news on that front, though: I'm giving you the chance to convince your lady love in there to set you free.”

I still couldn't respond, hope and confusion still filled me from lintel to threshold. *Tana*.

The man waited a long, awkward beat for an answer before he clucked his tongue and snapped his fingers. “Right. Sorry. You can't talk, I forgot. You're probably wondering what all this is about, your existence and everything. Uh, the thing is, you're made of solid oak, that's one of my sacred trees. I'm told that apparently an acorn from my grove across the ocean made it here, grew up into a big strong oak, and was felled to use for-” the man wrinkled his nose and gestured dismissively at me, “well, this. Congrats, you're at least half dryad, my boy.”

The man looked uncomfortable and swung his eyes up to the concrete ceiling of the vestibule, sighing as he continued, speaking a little faster. “And...well, there's a *pretty decent* chance you may be, you know, my son. Of sorts. See, a *lot* of things happened in that grove and there was this perfectly-positioned knothole on this really sexy tree and the mead was flowing freely-” he gestured in a rolling circle with his hand. “You get the point.”

I did not, in fact, get the point, but was very curious about the insinuation I could be with Tana.

“Anyway, tonight, by Hera’s grace, you can enter your girl’s dreams. You’ll need to make your case and convince her to - well, to do what I did with that knothole.” The man cleared his throat awkwardly. “The catch is, however, that it needs to happen while you’re in *this* form to set you free. But I have faith in you, son. You’ve got your old man’s charm, after all.” The man patted a big palm gently against my front and turned to walk away.

Halfway down the hallway, he turned and looked back over a robed shoulder, raising his voice to be heard. “And I’d seal the deal quickly, if I were you. My brother Hades mentioned that the skinny twit I’ve seen lurking around your girl sent a woman to the underworld recently.”

I rested for long moments after the visitor faded back into the storm, perception lingering on a blank wall across the vestibule. The news the strange man - potentially my father? - had given me weighed heavily on my mind. Tana was in danger, and I was *more than a door*. It had never occurred to me that there was a time before I was a door, or that other doors might not be aware of themselves. Was I really a dryad, then? *A god?*

No, I decided. Gods did not have to suffer the indignities of Mrs. Scrimshaw’s chihuahua lifting a leg on them. I was something lesser, then, but still more than human. The larger question was *how could I use this new revelation to keep Tana safe?*

I spent the next few hours thinking of every command that could send me into Tana’s dreams, all to no avail. After trying all night, I finally let defeat settle into my timbers and faded back from consciousness, sadly, mourning the loss of a promised chance to change my fate.



## Chapter 5

No sooner had I given up than I found myself in a strange, open space without form or borders, in the unfamiliar body of a man. As I turned to get my bearings, I stumbled forward and backward as if I had no structure at all, like a broken sapling in high winds: *how did humans keep themselves upright?* With great effort, I managed to stay standing, mimicking the posture I'd observed in humans, albeit precariously. It was uncomfortable, and it felt wildly unstable compared to my hinges, but it worked. Besides, the unique novelty of hands, feet, clothing, and shoes far outweighed the floppy disorientation of my now-human spine.

The edges of the wide space around me were dim and foggy. As I concentrated, however, a classroom seemed to abruptly mushroom into existence at the center. A confusing tangle of adults and children were seated at the desks, intensely concentrating on pieces of paper while a teacher looked on with a comically-oversized stopwatch, audibly ticking away.

In the center of the group, Tana sat, hopelessly trying to cover her naked body with a single thin sheet of paper from her desk. She looked mortified, a deep blush coloring her cheeks and chest as her gaze flicked back and forth to her classmates, all of whom were rapidly becoming aware of her undressed state. I'd seen Tana nude often inside her apartment, but here in front of me, she stirred even more powerful longings.

What started as a quiet giggle soon grew to fill the area as everyone looked up from their tests to point and laugh at Tana's nudity, the sound rising to a jeering roar. Pulled from my erotic musings, I bristled at her discomfort, immediately compelled to save her. As I moved closer, I discovered I was dressed identically to the hero from a movie Tana had recently watched. Shrugging off the rugged flannel overshirt, I quickly hurried over and draped it around her shoulders, dropping to a knee to button the front.

Well, I tried to kneel, anyway. In reality, as soon as I got the shirt around her shoulders, the shift of balance to my knee was too much for my new, uncoordinated body to manage. I promptly fell over in a heap against the desk beside Tana's with a clattering and screeching of metal legs sliding across the formica. Immediately, the surrounding crowd burst into mocking laughter, fingers jabbing in my direction instead of Tana's.

Tana's look of mortification smoothed from her brow, a tiny wrinkle of concern forming instead as she used one hand to hold the flannel closed and reached the other down to me. The sheer, incandescent bliss of finally getting to touch Tana, to hold her, tuned the jeering laughter around us to silence as our eyes met. As she helped me to my awkward, newfound feet, I marveled at the way I seemed to tower over her, my door-height translating to a larger-than-life human in this strange dream world. I reached over to gently adjust the collar of Tana's borrowed shirt, indulging in the luxury of my new hands to comfort her.

She blushed - my Tana *blushed* - and smiled gratefully up at me as I led her away from the makeshift classroom, which promptly melted into the floor like decaying fungus behind us. She turned to face me fully, her fingers lightly ghosting along my cheek as they had my door-edge so many times before. "Why do you seem so familiar? Who are you?"

I threw caution to the wind, clasping her soft hand against my cheek and turning my head to kiss her palm. "I have no name but *yours*, Tana. I am your faithful guardian and protector, nothing more, nothing less. I am your door, and I love you."

“My...door? I don’t understand. Is that like a metaph-” She frowned, brow knitting in confusion again.

“Your door. To your apartment.” I smiled brightly, proud and happy to finally have a voice to tell Tana I’d been watching over her. My teeth felt odd, the air and space in my mouth so different from the flat, solid planes of my door-self. I was grateful Tana had left the television on so often: it let me study movements and expressions, the ones I hoped I was currently mimicking enough to pass as mostly-human.

“Whoa - I’m not eating those popsicles before bed anymore. This is the weirdest dream I’ve ever had.” She laughed loudly, patting me on the chest. “Katie will get a kick out of this when I tell her though. My *door* - ha!”

Crestfallen, I gently cupped Tana’s shoulders to drive home my urgency. “Tana, please. I was told I only had tonight to - to talk to you. To ask you for a favor. Please, this is very serious, you’re in danger and I can’t protect you here.”

She wore a lopsided grin, clearly not taking me seriously. “A favor, huh? So, what, do you want me to oil your hinges?”

It was my turn to blush at the obvious flirtation in her tone, a highly unusual sensation. It felt like the afternoon sun on my painted front, only concentrated in my now-human cheeks. “In a manner of speaking. The man that offered me this-” I pointed back and forth between us, “-said that we must be together. In the way you are with your shivering blue stick.”

Tana frowned, silently mouthing my words as she mulled them over, realization suddenly dawning on her as she jabbed a finger into my pectoral muscle. “And just what the hell do you know about my *shivering blue stick*, buddy? That’s none of your goddamn business!”

I scrubbed the back of my neck with a palm, uncomfortable with Tana’s sudden shift in mood. Why was she so unhappy? She always seemed to be in a *very* good mood when she used her shivering blue stick.

“You leave your bedroom door open, I didn’t think you wanted privacy. You close the smaller room, with the shower, in the mornings and evenings. If you wish to be alone with your blue stick, why do you leave your door open?”

“Because I didn’t realize my goddamn *front door* was a *voyeur*, dude!” She widened her eyes and threw her arms up, gesturing with irritation at me. “You can bet your ass I’ll be closing it from now on.” She squinted suspiciously. “Wait, is my *bedroom* door watching me too? Are you *all* freaky pressboard pervs?”

I straightened with indignation, even though my comparatively-bendy spine still felt odd compared to my normal wooden state. “I am made of solid oak, not *pressboard*, and none of your other doors are like I am. I am your protector-”

She waved a dismissive hand. “Yeah, yeah, and you *love* me, we’ve covered that. No more watching me with my vibrator, weirdo. You’re hot, I’ll give you that, but this is my dream and I call the shots, bud.”

Sighing with frustration, desperation crept into my tone. “Please, Tana. Randall is a murderer. He killed that girl and he’s going to kill you next. I can help you stop him, but only if-” I held out my hands in indication, splaying my fingers. “I can protect you if I can move, if I can fight him and hold him off, but I can’t do that as a door alone. He will let himself into your apartment. He’s done it before.”

Tana grasped my forearm and flicked an angry gaze upwards. “Wait wait *wait*. Randall’s a *murderer*? I thought he was just, you know, a creepy loser. And wait - what do you mean he’s *done it before*? He’s been in my apartment when I wasn’t there?”

I laid a gentle hand over hers on my arm. “Yes, while you were at the supermarket, several weeks ago. He watched you leave, then used some sort of strange key in my lock. He came in and took your pink underwear, the ones you’ve been looking for since last month. He went through your drawers and put everything back, but he took those with him. I wanted to slam on his fingers, believe me I did. I’m so sorry, Tana.”

Her eyes wide and wild, Tana shoved her fingers into her own hair, spinning out of my gentle grasp. “Holy shit! That fucking pervert! I can’t-” She sucked in a sharp, tearful breath, turning back to me with a panicked expression. “Oh my god, what am I saying, fuck my underwear, he could have killed me in my *sleep*.”

With a piteous sound of horror at her earlier realization, Tana suddenly flung herself at my chest, her cheek pressed against this new, strange form. My arms drifted around her instinctually, happily mimicking the embraces that I’d seen in the movies Tana watched.

As her fearful words registered, I frowned and shook my head resolutely, the gesture unfamiliar enough to leave me a little dizzy. Running a gentle hand down Tana’s hair to soothe her, I did my best to sound reassuring. “No, never, Tana. I- I would have...I’d have figured out something.”

Despite my bravado, my voice trailed off miserably, ashamed I couldn’t be a more confident protector. After all, one strange key had removed all my defenses in moments, even my deadbolt, and I’d be just as vulnerable once Tana woke up. The liminal space around us wavered and grew unsteady, and fear pooled in my dream-form’s stomach.

“Tana. Tana, listen, we don’t have much time. I think - I think you’re about to wake up. Please, think about what I’ve asked.” My cheeks heated again as I imagined enjoying more of Tana than the occasional brush or grasp.

She leaned back from my chest, scrubbing under a tearful eye with the heel of her hand, her expression questioning as she sniffled. “What do you- do you mean you want me to...I mean, how would that even...”

The space around us flickered unsteadily again, leaching color from my borrowed shirt and Tana’s skin. Her lips began moving with no sound as she steadily faded from view, eventually vanishing with a soft *pop*. The fog roiling at the edges of the darkness tumbled in, pulling my perception back until I was once again a sturdy rectangle of painted oak standing

guard in front of Tana's apartment.

In her bedroom down the hall, Tana woke with an audible gasp.

## Chapter 6

I was tense, at least as much as a slab of wood could be. I'd waited all morning for Tana to recognize me, to acknowledge the conversation we'd had in her dream. Aside from a few pensive, darting glances at my back, she'd studiously ignored me and moved around the apartment more quietly than usual this morning.

As late afternoon began to dim the sky, Tana grabbed her keys and purse, hesitating only a moment when she grabbed the door's inner knob to let herself out.

"Stop being dumb. Weird dreams happen." Tana gave herself a side order of aggrieved sighing with the theoretical pep talk, slipping out into the vestibule and engaging my lock behind her. It was Thursday, I realized, grocery shopping day. A pang of sorrow coursed through me at the idea Tana was avoiding me, at least as much as someone could "avoid" their own front door.

A few minutes later, the annoyingly shrill bark of Mrs. Scrimshaw's chihuahua, Christopher-Thomas, echoed off the concrete walls of the vestibule. The incontinent little demon was blind, half deaf, and mostly bald, but unfortunately he could bark *endlessly*. A murmur of voices grew louder as the speakers moved closer to Tana's apartment.

"Thank you so much Randall - oop! Oh, I'm sorry, Christopher-Thomas can't seem to get enough of your...erm...company!" Mrs. Scrimshaw jiggled the leash in her hand, one attached to the collar of the furiously-humping chihuahua making frantic love to Randall's ankle. Randall scowled, lifting his leg and shaking it to dislodge the dedicated hellhound. I was pleased to see a small spot of urine darkening Randall's vacated pant leg.

"Yeah, yeah, it's fine Mrs. Scrimshaw. It was just a spare lightbulb, I've got plenty. I gotta get going though, I have to fix Ms. Ventt's oven. Have a good night!" Randall quickly closed the distance to me, brandishing that same strange key with a furtive look at the parking lot beyond. He waited long moments for Mrs. Scrimshaw to vanish around the corner before he twisted my outer knob with savage force, shouldering his way into Tana's empty apartment.

Randall's movements were jerky and tense as he slammed me closed in his wake and rooted in his pockets, coming up with a dirty pill bottle clutched in his hand. He yanked open Tana's refrigerator with the same amount of unnecessary force he'd used on me, grabbing Tana's favorite expensive orange juice. As I watched in horror, Randall emptied the entire pill bottle into the juice, recapping it and giving it a vigorous shake before setting it back in the fridge.

The slimy son of a bitch was poisoning Tana, and there wasn't anything I could do about it.

Torn between wanting Tana to come home early and fearing what would happen if she did, I watched silently, radiating rage, as Randall scooped another pair of panties from Tana's hamper. Excitedly rubbing the purple satin between his fingers, Randall quickly shoved his stolen bounty into a coat pocket, swiping a dirty sleeve across his nose and sniffing loudly as he yanked me open again. Moments after my disrupted lock tumblers settled back into place, Tana rounded the vestibule corner, thumbs tapping away at her phone, arm laden with grocery bags.

Randall gave a quick, panicked look around before striding resolutely in her direction, his shoulder accidentally-on-purpose bumping hers, sending one of her bags crashing to the ground. “Oh! Tana, I’m so sorry. I was on my way back from Mrs. Scrimshaw’s and I wasn’t watching where I was going. Her oven was broken again.” He chuckled humorlessly, picking up the fallen bag and handing it back over.

It was all I could do not to vibrate with rage in my frame. I didn’t want Randall close to Tana - not handing her things, not talking to her, not even *looking* at her. Tana, at least, seemed more hesitant than usual with Randall, accepting the bag from him but taking a step backwards, her smile forced. Maybe she’d listened to me after all.

“No harm done! Thanks for the help, and good luck with the oven. I have a - uh - friend coming over soon, gotta get dinner started!” She brushed past the superintendent, uncharacteristically fumbling with her keys and closing me with more force than she usually did.

Dropping the bags on the counter, Tana closed her eyes, muttering to herself before finally dragging over a stool from her breakfast bar and tilting it under my interior knob. While I would much rather have had her soft hands - or more - on my knob, I was relieved she seemed to be taking my warnings seriously.

As she moved back to the kitchen area, her foot slid lightly on something crumpled on the carpet. *Her underwear*. The slip of purple satin must have slid out of Randall’s pocket on his hasty exit. I’d been so busy watching the outer hallway that I hadn’t noticed it, but Tana’s wide-eyed shock told me she certainly had. She gripped the fabric tightly, eyes darting down the hallway to her distant bedroom hamper, then back to me, then down to the lock plate beneath my knob, secured with the tilted stool.

She growled with frustration, stomping to the bedroom and tossing the underwear back in the hamper, heading to the kitchen to pour herself a glass of wine. With a huff, she stormed over to the couch and plunked down, sipping her wine sullenly. Even furious, Tana was beautiful, and I couldn’t miss the way her tongue darted out to catch a few sloshed drops of wine off her hand. If I hadn’t already been made of wood, I’d be stiff as a board at the sight.

When the large glass had been drained a half hour later, she sighed audibly, pushing up off the couch and gathering her robe around herself. “I can’t believe I’m even considering this. I’ve gotta be out of my fucking mind.” Her eyes drifted down the hall again, lingering on the edge of her hamper. “But, I mean, it can’t *hurt* anything, right? I mean, women fuck cucumbers and bedposts and balloons and shit. This isn’t *that* weird, right?”

Setting down her wine glass on the coffee table, she rolled her shoulders, bit her lips, and nodded once, firmly, before heading to the kitchen and flinging open the under-sink cabinets. When she popped back into view with a clean rag and a bottle of disinfectant spray cleaner, I could hardly believe my luck.

*Was she really going to...?*

## Chapter 7

Tana let out a shuddering breath, her eyes settling on me cautiously. “Okay, well, I’m just gonna...I’m just going to clean and we’ll see what hap- *jesus christ am I seriously talking to a door?* Girl, you do *not* explain yourself to inanimate objects. This is insane. You’re officially nuts.” At her own declaration, she burst into a fit of wine-tinged giggles, laughing until her cheeks bloomed pink and she gasped for breath, sliding the stool away.

Surprising me, she lurched forward and squeezed the trigger on the bottle, suddenly dousing my knob in a mist of cool, tingling liquid that made me groan inwardly with pleasure at the sensation. Wrapping my round brass protrusion in a soft cloth and a firm grip, she started polishing my knob with slow, smooth strokes that stirred something deep in my wood. Her features were soft and sensual as she concentrated on her work, her thumb slipping over my raised lock ridge through the thin barrier of the cloth, almost teasingly. I watched as her lips parted softly, her forearm muscles flexing as she twisted her grip slowly, methodically, an erotic echo of what I’d wanted her to do in the dream.

Long moments later, Tana leaned back to survey her work. Taking another step back, her gaze trailed up from my threshold with a frown. “Okay. Well. If I’m gonna do something crazy and stupid, I’d rather keep it between us and not bring the ER into things.”

Tana stared at me for a long, pensive moment, then spun around, making her way to the bedroom. When she reemerged, she was fully, gloriously nude. I was so transfixed at the sight, it took me a moment to notice she was clutching a few things in her hands. She nibbled at her bottom lip, eyes shyly avoiding me as she laid the items carefully down on the small entryway table.

A bottle of some kind of clear liquid.

A small, shiny gold square with perforated edges.

Her shivering blue st- er, *vibrator*, which currently lay still.

“Right. Okay. Well, I’m either about to get more kinky than I ever thought I could, or I’m kissing not-a-frog with not-my-lips and breaking some kinda weird curse.” She took a shaky breath, grabbing the shiny square and bringing it to her mouth, tearing it open with her teeth while her eyes stayed fixed on my knob.

“It feels weird to be talking to you, but I mean, I’d rather you know what’s up. I’m taking your cameo in my recurring nightmare as consent, but if I’m wrong...I dunno, like, jiggle in your frame or something.” She snorted a laugh, pinching the bridge of her nose with her free hand under her glasses and staring up at the ceiling. “I’ve definitely fucking lost it. Oh well, it’ll make a good story in group therapy when they toss me in an asylum.”

I was stunned and unbelievably excited. While I could occasionally make very small movements in moments of heightened emotion, I took care not to “jiggle” in my frame, as it would have sent the wrong message. I wanted this. I *definitely* wanted this.

The shiny square fluttered to the floor and some sort of long, slippery-looking translucent sock hung in Tana's fingertips. She stooped down, a look of concentration on her face as she gathered up the length as I'd seen her gather up hosiery while getting dressed, slipping it over my knob with gentle, easy tugs. "It's not that I think you're gonna knock me up with little, uh, trapdoors, or something, it's that I only trust lysol so much and doorknobs are kinda germ magnets. No offense. Hopefully that doesn't fuck with the mojo but I don't need to explain a UTI from *this*."

Once she'd encased me, she stood in her glorious nudity, hands on her hips, examining her handiwork on my knob. Her brow furrowed as she took in the height, eyes drifting up and down several times. "Right. Well. Hm."

Moments later, she'd hauled the soft oversized ottoman over from the couch area, shoving it up against my base with a cushioned thud. She nodded with a smug expression, reaching over for the small bottle she'd brought from the bedroom, opening the top with a click. Cool, dripping moisture cascaded down my knob, the strange covering still allowing the temperature to bleed through. Once again, Tana's hand enfolded my prominent sphere, twisting around without engaging the lock. It felt incredibly pleasurable, so much better than the fleeting turns of entering or exiting.

Tana climbed atop the large rectangular ottoman, stretching out on her back and bracing her bare feet against my back as she twisted the bottom of her vibrator. She began to slide the tapered tip of the toy into herself, watching me with a half-lidded, sultry expression as I watched back in hungry fascination. Flashing a grin as if she knew she was being observed, she ran the silky sole of her foot down the edge of my frame as more of the blue length glided into her. "You know...ooh...maybe there's something to this. It's kind of nice calling *all* the shots."

The soft hum of the toy grew louder, then softer, as she worked up a slow rhythm, her eyes sliding closed with a groan. "Why is this hot? Mmm. This really - *uhmm* - shouldn't be hot..." Her ass raised a few inches off the cushion, chasing sensation with a soft gasp. She sat up abruptly, leaving the vibrator to hum and shiver on the ottoman's surface as she smoothly flipped to rest on all fours, her ass now facing me - and my glistening, waiting knob.

Dropping her chest and cheek down to rest on the soft fabric, she tensed at the first cold kiss of my lubricated, wrapped doorknob against her hot cunt. Digging her fingers into the edge of the ottoman for leverage, Tana held her breath, rocking back to slowly impale herself on her front door. "Oh...god, it's so big. I...I don't know if I can..."

She fumbled, patting under her for the still-humming vibrator, resting on a shoulder to bring it up to her clit with a groan. Her body relaxed at the additional sensation, knee shifting to press her fully onto my knob, giving a startled gasp as it popped fully into her. "Ohh! Holy shit, that's weird. *Big* too. Nice, but...mm...okay...oh *god*, yes...YES!" Her hips tilted at just the right angle, sending the rounded edge of my thick knob bumping up against something sensitive inside her. She gushed around me with a keening cry, tightening and fluttering in a hard orgasm that left lube and arousal coursing down her thighs in rivulets.

Tana choked a scream of pleasure into the upholstery below her, darkened with salivalike the wells around her knees already were with her pleasure. After long moments, she clumsily rose up on her hands, leaning away from me with a slight wince over her shoulder as she slid



away. A lurid, wet *pop* of a sound accompanied our parting, and she rolled onto her back to smile lazily up at me, her voice husky with satisfaction.

“Well, looks like I’m just kinky, you’re still a door. Damn, I am *way* more kinky than I thought I was. God that was good, though. Screw it, I’m going to eat *more* of those fuckin popsicles before bed.” She snickered, sliding off the ottoman and stumbling down the hall with a blissful expression.

Halfway to the small room with the shower, she spun around and made her way back to me, pressing a kiss below my peep hole. “Sorry, don’t mean to uh, bang and run. Hope that was good for you too. Now I need a shower.” She laughed loudly at herself, patting my frame and heading back down the hallway.

## Chapter 8

I watched Tana's beautiful naked ass sway as she walked away and closed the smaller door behind her, confused by her demeanor. She'd treated what we'd done like a - a *joke*. Could she not feel me? Didn't my - well, the *visitor* - tell me that all we needed to do what we'd just done in order to-

Oh.

Pressure eased away from the edges of my perception as my field of vision sank without conscious thought. All manner of sensations I'd easily ignored before demanded my attention at once - light that stung my eyes, the wisp of breeze at my back, an odd feeling of being too cold. I drew myself up, immediately recognizing the strange, unsteady support from my shared dream with Tana. A glance down confirmed it - human hands turned back and forth under my curious new eyes. I widened my fingers in wonder and wiggled bare toes on the carpet below, raising a brow at the fleshy, though still very thick, tube of flesh that replaced my knob. A cough of alarm and rapid scuttling behind caused me to glance over my now-human shoulder.

"Oh! My *goodness gracious*. Come here, Christopher-Thomas - I don't know what on earth possessed that girl to-to-" A quick look confirmed that a floral dress-decked Mrs. Scrimshaw had gathered up her mangy little chihuahua. I smirked as she scurried away as fast as her orthopedic sneakers could take her, tutting and scandalized.

The doorway around me was entirely empty now, my new form apparently taking shape in place of my old, sturdy wooden self. I dug my new fingers into the feathery brown mop at the top of my head, an instinctual gesture of frustration mimicked from what I'd watched in movies and shows. How could I possibly protect Tana now? Despite my hopes my change of form would make me a better protector, I felt so...fragile. I'd barely touched the door frame with an unexpected touch of wistfulness when a startled shriek snapped my attention back to the apartment's interior hallway. A towel-wrapped Tana stared at me with a slack jawed expression and - *was that a spatula?* - clutched in her hand like a weapon.

"YOU! Get- Get OUT of here! I'll call the fucking cops!" Both Tana and I glanced at where her cell lay on the coffee table, well outside her reach, before meeting again in our mid-apartment standoff. She huffed in annoyance and brandished the spatula threateningly at me again. "Also, where the *fuck* is my DOOR?"

"I'm-" I coughed, clearing my throat as the scratchy syllables seemed to tumble out reluctantly. My voice sounded strange and deep to my newly-formed ears. All of this was going to take a lot of getting used to - everything was just so...fleshy. "I'm right here, Tana."

She pointed with the spatula, her eyes darting between my body and the open rectangle of space behind me. "What? No. *No*. That's impossible. Is this some kind of prank? Because it's not fun-" Her gaze dropped to my waist and the spatula clattered to the hallway floor as she clapped a hand over her mouth. I followed her gaze down to find the strange sock from earlier hanging off of the thick, protruding rod of flesh between my thighs. I gently tugged the covering off of myself, raising the slick, translucent length up to eye level and squinting at it curiously.

Tana's expression changed to alarm as she looked anxiously past me to the empty

vestibule exterior corridor at his back. “Dude! I- listen, you need to get in here and - I don’t - oh my god. Oh my *god*. We need to cover the doorway and get you some clothes and *oh my god* I don’t even know how-” Tana’s voice had picked up speed and pitch and her eyes had gone wide, her breath coming in short huffs. I’d liked those gasps when my knob was inside of her, but found that they distressed me now.

“Tana, it will be okay. I can protect you now. Remember? I told you in your dream, and you did exactly what I asked of you.” I smiled, getting used to the sensation of baring my teeth now, the act feeling far less awkward than it had in Tana’s dream.

She cautiously moved towards me, clutching her towel tightly around her body while pulling the twisted one holding her hair off her head, thrusting it at me, all while looking pointedly in another direction. “Here - go uh, go sit on the couch. Put that under you. Over you, whatever. I’ll...see if I have some sweatpants or something.” I took the still-damp towel and walked, a little woodenly, over to the couch. Movement was certainly convenient, but the upright unsteadiness was off-putting. Humans certainly had good balance.

Tana was still looking at me like I might bite, so I sat down immediately, hoping to put her at ease. A shaky sigh sounded down the hallway, followed by the gentle taps of her bare feet headed down to her bedroom. A few minutes later, a length of cloth gently landed on my shoulder and chest from behind me - elastic-ended pant cuffs in a soft grey fabric.

“Put those on, please. If we’re going to talk I don’t want to do it staring at your cock. I think these will fit, my ex left them at my last place.” Tana’s voice was still strained; my chest ached to fix it. After I’d tugged on the sweats and unknotted the cord to fit them around my waist, I turned to her over the back of the couch.

“Tana, I’m sorry if I frightened you, I was surprised as well, but I hope you don’t regret what brought me here. You must understand, my only concern is protecting you.”

She swallowed audibly, retreating to the kitchen as she answered. “I don’t - I didn’t believe in...whatever the hell you are, but uh, clearly I need to start.” The clink of glass and metal, followed by a sharp *pop* echoed over the counter. “Today is definitely a mimosa day. I’m going to need like, *two* to even start dealing with this.”

“Tana NO!” I vaulted over the back of the couch, nearly getting tangled in my new human legs and borrowed sweatpants in the process. I rushed to the kitchen, banging a hip on the counter in my hurry to knock the orange juice container out of her hand.

She gasped, juice sloshing all over the counter and her fresh clothes, pinning me with an irritated glare. “What the fuck, dude! I’m sorry if you don’t approve of alcohol or something but I’m off work and who are you to jud-”

Panting with the effort of sprinting and dealing with my own terrified, hammering heart, I grabbed the sides of Tana’s arms too firmly, adjusting my grip when she winced. “I’m sorry, I’m sorry. I’m still getting used to...hands. Randall poisoned your juice, Tana. I genuinely don’t care what you drink, but please don’t drink that.”

“Poisoned? You’re crazy, I just bought this like two days ago, and the only time I’ve left my apartment was to go to the grocery-” She gasped, clapping a hand to her mouth for the second

time that morning. “Oh my *god* that *fucker*. Mrs. Scrimshaw’s oven wasn’t broken, was it?” Her features went from irritated to furious as I shook my head.

She righted the clear plastic juice container from where it had fallen on the counter, holding it up to the kitchen light and scowling at some strange sediment at the bottom. “I swear to god, I’m going to murder him *first*.”

But as I watched, Tana’s look of fury melted into terror, her nose scrunching as she fought back tears. “I could have *died* if you didn’t stop me.” Again, she huffed those short little breaths that tugged at me like someone was trying to pry me open with my lock engaged. I held open his arms gingerly and, to my relief, Tana took the obvious invitation to comfort. She nuzzled her cheek against my bare chest, her fingers scrabbling around my lower back to hold herself close. I clutched her tightly, burying my nose in her damp hair, taking deep breaths of her soft floral shampoo scent.

“You’re safe now, Tana. He can’t hurt you while I’m here.” I hesitantly ran a palm down Tana’s back in what I hoped was a soothing motion. She sniffled against my skin, standing on tiptoe to look over my shoulder. “But if you’re here... what am I going to do about my door?”

I followed her gaze to the brightly-lit rectangle where I’d previously spent my entire existence. Raising a brow, I nodded at the empty space. “Well, uh, is there a place where people...buy doors?”

## Chapter 9

Tana and I found out together that the same phone app that could be used to order food also worked at hardware stores. Unsure of how my transformative magic worked, Tana refused to leave my side, afraid I'd turn back into a slab of painted oak once she was out of sight. Shortly after, I was crouched holding one end of a tiny, hot-pink measuring tape as Tana meticulously measured my - well, *the* hole - to find the right replacement.

At one point, the too-small measuring tape slipped out of her fingers, retracting and whacking me in my new shin. She hissed, her warm hand closing over the front of my pant leg apologetically. "Sorry, sorry. Stupid pink tax. My friend gave me this expensive "women's" tool kit when I was moving and everything's so frigging *small*..."

I frowned at the garishly-pink plastic box she'd set up on the small table, a messy jumble of pink-handled things that looked more like children's toys than the sort of tools Randall carried. "But why are they made like that? Why should you pay more for smaller, flimsy things because you're a woman? That seems silly to me."

I was puzzled at the inequality of it, but the warm look Tana shot in my direction quickly lifted my mood. I wasn't sure why making such an obvious conclusion would earn me admiration, but I was no fool - I'd take it. Besides, I was glad to distract Tana with the project; we'd both quietly agreed to get a new door in place - one that couldn't be breached by Randall's *master key*, as Tana told me it was called - before anything else.

Even with my capable human presence in her living room, I could tell that Tana needed the psychological barrier of a locking door to feel *truly* safe. Finding out that Randall had breached her home only two days ago had given her a haunted look I was anxious to chase away. When I asked her how she wanted to proceed, she elected to get the empty door frame filled before calling the police. Eager to prove I was here to support her wishes and make her feel safe, I'd immediately agreed, ending up on the wrong side of a vicious, bloodthirsty length of pink measuring tape.

Hanging up a spare shower curtain over the door frame for momentary privacy, Tana finalized the home improvement store app order with a tap. The orange juice bottle still sat grimly on the counter, surrounded by sticky drops of juice from where I'd jostled it out of Tana's hands. *Evidence*. While I longed to clean it up and remove every trace of Randall from her apartment, I begrudgingly agreed to leave it alone until the police could be summoned.

The home improvement store delivery sent a text that they'd be an hour late, so Tana suggested we watch a movie while we waited. It was an activity familiar to both of us, for different reasons, but I was all too happy to repeat the experience. That said, I'd spent so long *wishing* I could be human for Tana that I wasn't sure what to do now that my wish had been granted. Human life was proving to be confusing and awkward, while being a door had been fairly straightforward.

Just as I was overthinking things, however, Tana leaned into me as the movie started, hiding an exhausted yawn as her cheek rested on my shoulder. I hesitantly draped an arm across the couch behind her, letting her curl in deeper with a barely-audible sigh of comfort. "So...what should I call you, then, door guy?"

*Yours*, I thought, before the question really sunk in. Right, a name. Humans had those. I didn't.

“I’m...not sure. I suppose you can’t really call me ‘door’ around others.” I glanced at the TV, where the opening credits for a superhero movie were flashing across the screen. She’d watched this one before, and I noticed she watched one of the actors with a sparkle in her eye, last time. She’d even giggled to a friend over the phone about how ‘hot’ he was. A magazine on the coffee table showed the same actor in all his bare-chested, mahogany brown glory, smoldering at the camera. The character had been a gatekeeper of sorts, and while I was a bit jealous he’d caught Tana’s eye, I could begrudgingly admire our shared purpose.

“How about - Drys?” I liked the sound of that. A little different than the actor - Idris - but still elegant-sounding, a sibilant whisper like my draft-catcher sliding across the carpet. Tana nodded sleepily, cuddling up even closer with a soft, pleased sound of assent. “Mm’ok. Drys it is.”

I gave into an impulse to stroke Tana’s hair soothingly again, and found I liked it so much I kept doing it. Soon, she was relaxed into deep sleep against me, and I took the rare opportunity to watch her doze up close. She was the most beautiful human I’d ever seen, and if I’d been in love with her before, I was entirely smitten now. I was admiring the way her delicate eyelashes curled against her cheek when a soft “Hello?” issued from behind the makeshift shower curtain door behind the couch.

Carefully sliding away from Tana and guiding her head to rest on a throw pillow, I made my way to the door, pulling the curtain back to reveal a deliveryman in a light blue uniform, brandishing a clipboard and pen. “Hello Sir, are you Mr. Ventt? I have a delivery here for a Tana Ventt.”

I nodded after a moment, setting aside the warm emotions at being mistaken for her husband. I reached for the offered pen and clipboard, subtly leaning on the door frame as I mentally struggled with staying upright. Humans were so...floppy. I’d really have to work on getting used to this. I scribbled lazily on the line the deliveryman pointed to, having learned from TV shows that performance and confidence meant far more than legibility when it came to signatures. Tapping the pen on the clipboard with a satisfied nod, the man used the pen to point over his own shoulder at a huge cardboard-wrapped rectangle resting on the opposite wall.

After the delivery man left, I considered the package with mixed feelings. No one wanted to be replaced, after all, and here I was staring right at my replacement - one that I’d encouraged, no less. I’d proudly been Tana’s door for a long time, but the time was right to transition into being something more. Her protector, her guardian, her - my mind wandered into lustful flashes of memory at the way her cunt had squeezed around my knob, the slick, stretched glide of impalement as she backed into me with a moan. In my borrowed sweats, my human cock jumped with interest, ready for a repeat performance. I gently squeezed it, willing it to calm down, determined to get things ready for Tana while she enjoyed a well-deserved rest.

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