



THE ADVENTURES OF KAYLA GRACE

by AlanG420

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1

Kayla Grace approached the office building with confidence. After all, being a reporter for the Hazeldale Tribune was a big deal. If there was a major story in town that broke, it was because of them. Kayla was just getting started, but she was determined to climb the ranks and end up on some of the top reporting teams at the Tribune.

Not only would it be a huge accomplishment for her as an individual, but given her Asian American heritage it would be a huge win for that community as well! For right now though, she was working smaller stories. Either way, she was going to give it her all no matter what.

Stepping into the building Kayla was met with a massive lobby, mostly empty, with a reception desk at the back end of it placed in front of the hallway that lead to the elevators. Kayla strode up to the desk, the heels of her white boots clicking on the marble floor of the lobby. She approached the counter and reaching into her purse presented her reporting credentials to the security guard behind the counter.

"Welcome, miss Grace. Please, Mr. Peirce's office is upstairs on the 29th floor."

Thanking the lady, Kayla headed toward the elevator and up to the 29th floor. Taking a deep breath in Kayla held

it for a second before breathing out her mouth as she psyched herself up.

"You got this," she said to herself as she checked her reflection in the mirrored back wall of the elevator.

Reaching up she made sure the braids in her hair were symmetrical and staying put. She often wore her hair this way. What she would do is braid a little bit of her hair on either side of her face, and then pull it around her head before tying the rest of it off in a ponytail which joined the rest of her thick black hair that hung down past her shoulders.

Kayla was very much a fan of all things fashion, and being a reporter was a great job for a person like that! She was able to wear all kinds of cute outfits and accessories, and the best part was it was all totally welcomed and encouraged. Obviously, the Tribune wanted their reporters to look professional and sharp, and so look the part Kayla did!

For her visit with Peirce she had opted for a loose fitting frilly black dress with floral patterns. To keep her legs warm against the cold March air, she wore a pair of tights, but it really didn't matter what time of year it was to Kayla, tights were practically a year round accessory for her.

She was a little embarrassed at the sheer number (all the puns intended) of tights she had collected over the years. Completing her outfit of course was her white ankle boots that yes, she cleaned regularly to keep them nice and shiny as if she had just bought them the day before.

Taking in her appearance from every angle, Kayla made sure that nothing was out of place and that she was ready

to go and meet with Mr. Peirce. Giving herself her own nod of approval, she pushed her glasses up on her nose, and took one last deep breath in and out before facing the elevator doors again.

Upon reaching the 29th floor, the elevator let out a small ding as the doors slid open. She found herself in another lobby type area, but this one was much smaller than the main lobby downstairs. In lieu of a security guard behind the reception counter, there was sat an actual receptionist who smiled kindly at Kayla.

"Hello," she said, "how may I help you?"

"I'm here to meet with Mr. Peirce."

"Yes, you must be Kayla Grace from the Tribune. I'll go ahead and let him know you're here."

"Ah, Lily, that won't be necessary!"

Kayla turned to see a tall man dressed in a smart black suit coming through the glass doors that lead to the main office area. He had to be at least 6 feet tall, and his suit practically glistened in the dull office lighting. She could tell it probably cost him a fortune. The material looked top of the line. His hair was also immaculately kept and well styled even for a being a man in his late fifties.

"Mr. Peirce," Kayla said as she held out her hand to him, "thank you for meeting with me."

"Of course! Come, we can speak in my office."

Kayla followed Mr. Peirce through the office past rows and rows of desks and sometimes cubicles. Apart from the white noise of the conversations being had on the phone, vigorous typing on a keyboard, and other office sounds, Kayla could also make out the very distinct sound of

attempted whispering. She could feel the eyes of the workers there following her and Mr. Peirce as they walked to his office, and she could tell that they all had something to say about it, just not to her of course, but to each other in hushed tones.

Kayla wasn't surprised by this at all. She was a reporter from the Tribune after all. It's not like she was there for a friendly afternoon chat over drinks! Mr. Peirce was the CEO of Peirce Enterprises, a well known real estate company that not only owned a lot of property throughout the city, but also many of the buildings too.

The problem was small businesses were struggling to compete with the speed at which Peirce Enterprises was able to acquire property. From apartment complexes, to business buildings, Peirce Enterprises was taking over properties left and right. While most might not think anything of it owing it to the fact that Peirce was just a powerful man with lots of money and influence, Kayla had a hunch something fishy was up. The numbers didn't make sense.

Most of the landlords and other business people she talked to had to wait months at the very least to get approved on certain properties, but Peirce was snatching things up in record time over and over again. Now, while Kayla didn't have any proof yet, she was hoping to see if her hunch was right.

Entering Peirce's office, he walked toward his desk and took a seat. Motioning with his hand he offered Kayla the chair opposite his desk. Sitting down she pulled her notebook and pen out of her purse, and crossing nylon

clad legs she placed the pad on her lap and clicked the pen open ready to take some notes.

"So, Mr. Peirce, I wanted to ask you about some of the properties you've acquired over the last couple of months. You and your team here have been incredibly busy. It's impressive!"

Mr. Peirce chuckled as he leaned back in his chair placing his arms on the side rests.

"What can I say," he said, "we've got the best folks in the business working right here."

"It seems like it! We wanted to do a piece in the Tribune about how successful you've been, and so to do that I wanted to ask you about some specific properties you've acquired that really stand out to me."

"Sure, go ahead!"

"So, the apartment complex down off of 13th. Can you tell me about that one?"

Mr. Peirce leaned forward now in his chair, straightening his tie as he did so.

"Well, it's simple really. They placed it on the market at a great price, we came in, purchased the property, and are looking forward to turning that lot into something really nice! The city has plenty of apartments after all. We're thinking a multiple story business building is just what that space needs!"

"Hm, well do you mind elaborating a little bit on how your business with the city has been? Most folks have to wait quite a while to get approved for construction permits, and even then the amount of red tape that has to be crossed is just incredible. You seem to be getting your

projects approved very quickly! It's impressive, and I would love to include that process in our story!"

"Well now, I can't go out and give away all our secrets now can I?"

"Secrets," Kayla thought to herself, "now that's an interesting way to phrase things now isn't it..."

"Listen," Mr. Peirce said, "I'm flattered that you'd like to write a piece on us, I really am. However, I'm afraid there's nothing really all that spectacular going on here. I mean what can I say, we've got a great team of people working day in and day out to secure these properties as well as secure permits from the city. That's really all there is to it."

"I see, well do you mind if I ask about--"

RING RING RING

My speech was cut off as Mr. Peirce's phone rang. Holding up a finger to me, he answered the phone and after a brief conversation hung up and turned back to me.

"I'm terribly sorry, Miss Grace, but I'm afraid something has come up. Can you give me just a moment while I go take care of something? We can wrap up our interview when I get back."

Stepping outside of his office he closed the door behind him as his footsteps trailed down the hall. Kayla looked behind her and noticed that the shades to the office were drawn. As long as she could act fast, this was her chance to do some snooping to see if she could find some dirt on Peirce and get one step ahead of him. She quickly hopped out of her chair and started rummaging through the files on his desk. There was nothing of interest

she could find. It was all just a bunch of random business documents and stuff like that.

Hearing the sound of footsteps approaching the office again, Kayla rushed back to her chair, sat down, and pulled out her phone and pretended to scroll. Moments later the door opened as Mr. Peirce entered the room again.

"My apologies for that," he said, "I asked Lily to keep the phone lines off for me, but it seems she forgot. Anyway, where were we? Oh yes, that's right, you were rifling through my desk trying to find something weren't you?"

Kayla froze.

"How could he..."

Holding his phone toward her, Kayla saw what was a security camera recording of the very office they were sitting in. Glancing up to the top left corner of the room she noticed a small camera tucked into the ceiling. She hadn't thought to check for anything like that!

Peirce tucked his phone back into his pocket as he clicked his tongue and shook his head before standing up.

"You just had to go and stick your nose where it didn't belong, didn't you?" he said as he took off his jacket and rolled up his sleeves.

Kayla knew she was in trouble now! She had pepper spray in her purse though. If she could just reach in there and grab it before...

But it was too late. Peirce was quicker than Kayla was, and as she reached toward her purse he sprung at her and yanked her out of the chair.

"Hey let me gommmpmph!"

Kayla's speech was cut off as he shoved his now removed necktie partially into her mouth.

"MMMMMMMMMMMPH!" Kayla tried to scream, but with a mouth full of tie it was nearly impossible.

She was pretty much helpless now as Peirce grabbed both of her arms and pulled them behind her back before shoving her upper body down on the desk. Kayla heard the sound of tape ripping and afterwards felt it being wrapped around her wrists.

"Fmmmmmmmph!"

She tried to dislodge the tie from her mouth, but Peirce had spared no expense in making sure as much as was shoved in her mouth as would fit. No matter how hard Kayla tried, there was no pushing it free.

"Gggggggggnmph!" She grunted as she thrashed around trying to pull herself free from Peirce's grip, but this too proved futile.

After taping her wrists together, he lifted her up and wrapped tape around her chest and behind her back so that her arms were now pinned to her side. With Kayla's back to the desk now, Peirce was able to shove her backwards so that she fell onto it. Now was Kayla's chance to act!

Using her free legs, she launched a kick toward Peirce which caught him right in the chest. He stumbled for a moment but quickly recovered.

"Why you little brat!" He breathed before roughly grabbing both of Kayla's legs by the ankles. Grabbing her white boots he promptly ripped them off her feet and threw them to the ground exposing the pair of cream

colored ankle socks Kayla wore over her tights to protect them. With Kayla's main "weapon" of attack neutralized, Peirce moved to taping her ankles as well as her thighs.

After this, in one swift motion, Peirce spun Kayla around on the desk so that her body was perpendicular to his, and then pushed her over onto her side first before pulling her whole body back toward him so that he could flip her one more time onto her stomach. After doing this, he pulled her legs up by the ankles and brought them toward her rear where he then used tape to connect her ankles and her hands together.

"Nmmmmmph!" Kayla winced through her stuffed mouth as her ankles were forced toward her wrists. It was not a comfortable position to be in at all. Add to that the fact that Kayla was wearing a dress of all things! In all the commotion it had risen up well past her behind practically exposing the tops of her tights! Thankfully they were tinted so you couldn't see her underwear really, but it was still just absolutely humiliating!

Peirce finally stopped wrapped Kayla's body with tape and stepped back for a moment before letting out a deep sigh.

"You foolish little girl," he said, "such a tragedy...I really hope this teaches you a lesson."

"Fmmmmmm ymmmmph!"

Kayla growled behind her makeshift gag.

"That reminds me," Peirce said, "I really can't risk you making any sort of noise in here. Let's make sure you're kept nice and quiet while I figure out what to do with you next, yeah?"

"Mmmmmmph," Kayla did not like the sound of that one bit, but she wasn't really in the place to argue with him.

Setting the roll of tape down on the desk, Peirce spun Kayla around so that her legs were closest to him. He then reached up and pulled off both of her ankle socks. Kayla, being new to this whole experience, was greatly perplexed by this. What on earth had possessed him to take off her socks like that?

Her question was answered when Peirce spun her back around so that she was now facing him. Sitting down in the chair, he reached up and pulled the tie from Kayla's mouth. There was no time for her to react whatsoever, for as soon as the tie was pulled free Peirce reached up and shoved both of Kayla's socks straight into her mouth.

"MMMMMMMMMMMPH!" She sputtered and roared as the cotton wad of socks was packed inside her mouth followed by Peirce's necktie which was tied around her mouth and between her lips before being knotted firmly behind her head.

"Much better," said Peirce giving Kayla a couple rough pats on the cheek.

"Nmmmmph mmmmmmmmmph!"

But unlike when it was just the necktie in her mouth, her new gag was much more effective. Not only were both socks more than enough to pack out her mouth, but the necktie holding them in place pushed them back just enough that they were practically locked in place. There was nothing she could do to either spit the wad of socks out or even shift them around in her mouth.

"Ggggggggggnpmh fffmmmmmmmmmmph!"

Kayla teetered around on the desk in her bindings grunting and groaning all the while. Peirce rolled his eyes at her as he pulled out his phone again.

"Hey...yeah it's Peirce. Listen, we've got a bit of a situation...a reporter from the Tribune was here snooping around...oh, yeah, don't worry, she's been taken care of, but it's only temporary. I can't keep her here. Do you think you can...okay, that's what I thought. Good. I'll leave her here then and you can pick her up later. Thanks."

"Nnnnnmmmmph mmmmmmmmph!" Kayla shot pleading eyes up at Peirce.

Sitting back down in his chair, Peirce spun Kayla around to face him.

"Listen, and I want to make this abundantly clear...I am not to be trifled with. Let this be a lesson to you and anyone else at the Tribune."

"Fmmmph!"

And with that, Peirce spun her back so that she was placed long ways across the desk, before getting up and leaving the office. Kayla noticed the click of the lock behind him.

"Gggggggggnmph mmmmmmmmmmmph!"

Kayla continued to moan and grumble through her sock stuffed mouth as she tried to get free of the tape that bound her. No matter how hard she flexed her joints, the tape held fast. It was starting to look like she was in a real pickle. What was Peirce planning to do with her? She figured she'd find out soon enough, but did she really want to know?

Well, hours passed with Kayla taped up and gagged on top of that desk, but finally she heard the lock click again and the door opened. In walked Peirce, but with him were two other brute looking men.

"Alright, boys," said Peirce, "here she is."

"What do you want us to do with her?"

"Take her to the docks by the abandoned warehouse...we'll stash her there for the meantime. I know of some great buyers that would love to purchase a nosy little snoop like this one!"

"Hmmmmmmph!? NNNNNMMMMPH! MMMMMMMMPH!"

Kayla shook her head as screamed as loud as the socks packed in her mouth would allow her. This did nothing to stop the men from rolling in a large black case which they place on the ground and opened up. It was the perfect size to fit someone into, and so lifting Kayla up they shoved her down into the case, still bound and gagged.

"Wait...wouldn't want to forget these."

Peirce picked up both of Kayla's white shoes and tossed them into the case beside her.

"Gee, thanks..." Kayla thought to herself.

After her shoes were tossed into the case, the lid to it was slammed shut as Kayla was submerged into darkness.

"Hmmmmm mmmmmmmgggggph!"

If both of her socks stuffed into her mouth wasn't enough to keep her quiet, being locked inside this box sure did! She couldn't really even make out the voices of the men talking to Peirce either. They sounded like faint whispers now. She listened to them exchange a few words,

and then was roughly jostled around as she felt the men pick the case up.

From here on out it was very bumpy ride as Kayla felt them take her downstairs, and load her into their car. After a fairly lengthy drive, she was once again retrieved and carried for a short distance before feeling the thump of the men dropping the case on the ground. The next sound Kayla heard was the case being unlocked before suddenly bright light came flooding in as the lid was flipped open.

It took her a while to adjust back to the light after being kept in darkness for so long, but when she finally did she found herself in the middle of a very large and empty warehouse. The men unloaded her from the case and dropped her back on the floor before latching the case back closed.

"So...we just leave her here then?"

"Yeah, I think that's what Peirce wanted."

"Hm, okay."

"I mean this warehouse is practically in the middle of nowhere. She'll be fine...we just leave her here until Peirce works out whatever he needs to work out with the buyer. Besides...who's going to find us out here?"

"FREEZE! PUT YOUR HANDS IN THE AIR RIGHT NOW AND DON'T MOVE!"

"Ggggmph?!"

Kayla turned to see an army of police officers storm into the warehouse. The thugs stood there frozen with their hands up as a few cops ran up to them and shoved them down onto the ground before handcuffing them and

dragging them away. A few more officers rushed to Kayla's side and began slowly getting her free from her binds.

It took them a good while, but she was finally set free and un-gagged. She left her socks there on the floor of the warehouse and opted to just slip back into her shoes in her nylons...the socks were drenched with saliva...there was no way she was putting those back on her feet!

The police officers were very kind to her as they escorted her from the warehouse and made sure she was okay, which she was, just a little sore. Other than that, Kayla really was okay. The only thing on her mind really was how in the hell had they managed to find her?

"Wow...you look like you've been through hell."

Leaning against one of the cop cars was one of her fellow reporters from the Tribune, Toby. She knew from day one that he had a crush on her, and while he was cute she definitely didn't want to just jump into things. So she flirted with him, and he flirted with her, but that was kind of all for now.

"How...I mean...what...I don't understand!"

"Please," Toby said as he crossed his arms, "I know your schedule, Kayla, you were supposed to return from your meeting with Peirce a long time ago. When I went to check up on you, I noticed those two guys carrying that case down to their car. So, I called the cops, trailed the car, and bingo...here we are."

"Wow, you saw two guys carrying a large case and got suspicious? That's quite the leap..."

"I wasn't wrong was I?"

"No, it's just annoying how spot on you were..."

"You're supposed to be thanking me you know."

Kayla smiled as she playfully punched his arm.

"Whatever," she said as she smiled.

"Okay, that about does it," said one of the officers as he approached Kayla and Toby, "we'll bring those two down to the station and see what we can find out. In the meantime, I had a unit raid Peirce's office. Looks like he left before my guys got there. Don't worry though, we'll track him down."

"Let's hope so," Kayla said as she and Toby thanked the officer.

"You think they're actually gonna get him?" Toby asked.

"Doubt it," said Kayla, "Peirce is big time...if he needs to get off the grid, I'm sure he'll find a way to do so. I get the feeling this is far from over..."

"Well what about Peirce Enterprises?"

"Oh, yeah, I'm sure that's toast. And it'll make for a great story too. I just hate the fact that Peirce gets away in the end, you know?"

"Yeah, well, a job well done anyway."

"Do you really think so?"

"Yeah!"

"Cool, then you're buying drinks."

"Wait, what?"

"You said so yourself, it was a job well done. Don't you think I'm owed a drink after all I went through today? Oh, come on, Toby, it's the least you could do!"

Kayla batted her eyelashes and pretended to pout as Toby rolled his eyes at her.

"Fine, but don't count on me saving your ass next time!"

And so together they set off to go and unwind over drinks. Kayla was a bit worn out from her big day, but in the end she published her story and was the talk of the town for a while. Peirce was a big name, and so to expose him like this was a big deal. He wasn't gone for good though. Kayla had a sinking suspicion that the two would cross paths again some day, but for now it was a job well done and a case closed for Kayla Grace.

2

"Wait, so he had you taped up in his office like that? Jesus, what a creep! And he gagged you with your...wow...I don't know how you put up with that."

"I mean I didn't," Kayla said as she chuckled, "I protested and fought the whole way...but you know, I can only do so much."

She was out to coffee with her absolute best friend in the whole world, Madelyn. The two had met in college as roommates and had been inseparable ever since. While Kayla had majored in journalism and landed a job as a reporter, Madelyn had gone a different route majoring in art and landing a job as a model. The girl looked like a model too!

She had this gorgeous blonde hair that came down just past her shoulders, a similar length to Kayla's in fact. No matter where they were or what kind of lighting they found themselves in, her bright blue eyes seemed to shimmer and sparkle regardless.

What had really brought the two girls close together was their absolute love for all things fashion. Their styles were fairly similar as well. Today, Madelyn had shown up to coffee wearing a nude colored turtleneck tucked into a pair of leather shorts. Adding to her ensemble was this large red coat she wore that came down and touched the back

of her thighs. Speaking of her legs, on them she wore a pair of patterned tights tucked into a pair of black ankle boots.

Kayla had opted for a much simpler, but just as stylish look consisting of a black turtleneck tucked into a tartan skirt that she wore over a pair of dark pantyhose and loafer style black shoes. Together the two girls were quite the fashionable pair, but of course their friendship went much deeper than the clothes they chose to wear. Conversation flowed naturally between the two of them, and over the course of their many years of friendship there was hardly ever a dull moment.

"Well I'm so sorry you had to go through that," Madelyn said.

"It's alright, it wouldn't be the first time believe it or not."

"Shut up...this has happened before?!"

"Yeah, just one other time."

"When?!"

"Well, it's kind of embarrassing really. I was trying to put together this story about a string of dognappings...you know, a bunch of folks had reported their super expensive dogs go missing. Anyway, I traced a common thread back to this local dog walking company that had given almost each of the dogs walks at some point. Well, when I went to talk to them they got nervous, tied me up with a bunch of dog leashes, and ditched."

"Did you ever catch them?"

"Nope...yeah it was a real bummer of a story."

"So that's the only other time then?"

"So far at least."

"Well, it certainly has never happened to me."

"You're joking right," Kayla said as she stared at Madelyn who paused for a second before realizing that she had in fact been tied up and gagged before.

"Oh yeah, I forgot about that! It was for those stupid middle school kids I was supposed to babysit."

"There you go."

"They were so upset that their parents called me in to watch them for the night that they tied me up and locked me in a closet until their parents got home...those little shits, I had totally forgotten about that."

"Seems like trouble really follows the both of us around."

"Hey," said Madelyn as she furrowed her brows, "I don't go walking into trouble, okay. You need to be more careful, Kayla! What happened to me was just a couple of boys being little stinkers. You could have actually gotten hurt."

"Yeah I know, well whatever, we didn't come to just talk about me. I want to hear what you've been up to! Tell me about your gig last week!"

"Oh my god, it was great. The folks there are such professionals and they make the cutest clothes! So I'll be doing a few more shoots for their Spring catalogue, but yeah I hope it turns into a long term thing. We seemed to really all hit it off, so yeah!"

"That's great!"

All of the sudden Kayla's phone rang. She hated taking phone calls on her day off or when she was with friends,

but it was coming from the Tribune and so against her better judgment she decided to take it.

"Hey, it's Kayla."

"Yeah, listen, I hate to have to call you on your day off, but someone left a message for you here. They said they've got a big lead on the Peirce case and that it's time sensitive."

"Oh, okay wow, that's big news. Thanks for letting me know. Just go ahead and text me the details and I can go check it out."

"Sure thing!"

Kayla hung up the phone as excitement bubbled up within her. It had been about a week since the events at Peirce Enterprises, and so far there hadn't been any new leads. This was big, but Kayla felt bad abandoning Madelyn out of the blue.

"Hey so..."

"I heard," Madelyn said with a glimmer in her eye and a smile starting to form at the corner of her mouth. Kayla wondered what she was up to.

"And your reaction means that you're..."

"Coming with you of course!"

"Wait, but Madelyn..."

"No buts about it. Look, things could have ended up a lot different for you last time if you didn't have someone watching your back. Let me come with you on this one. I'll just tag along and sit there. You won't even notice I'm there!"

"Are you sure you want to do this?"

"Are you kidding me? Tagging along with the infamous Kayla Grace is the opportunity of a lifetime!"

"Okay, well, let's not get ahead of ourselves," Kayla said as she chuckled. It was nice to have a friend like Madelyn. After all, trouble did seem to follow Kayla around, so maybe bringing some backup wasn't such a bad idea.

"It's settled then. I'll be your sidekick for the day!"

"Right, well, we should get going then. They just sent me the info and...oh wait, I know who this is!"

"You do?"

"Yeah," Kayla said as she browsed through the information on her phone. "She was the receptionist at Peirce Enterprises when I walked in. Her name is Lily. We only talked for like a few seconds, but if she's the informant then we might be onto something good. If Peirce's receptionist is willing to talk...this could be a big lead."

"Well then what are we waiting for? Let's get a move on!"

Grabbing her things, Kayla followed after Madelyn who was already bounding out of the coffee shop. She was usually like this. Always excited about life and ready for adventure! Provided it was the kind of adventure that was free of bad guys and being tied up of course!

The meeting was to be had at Lily's apartment. It was a 2 bedroom flat located high up in one of the apartment buildings downtown. It didn't take too long for Kayla and Madelyn to get there, and within no time they found themselves standing outside Lily's door ready to knock and start the interview.

"Okay," said Kayla, "just let me handle all the questions and stuff, yeah? I know you tend to get a little carried away with your excitement, but just let me do my thing."

Madelyn smiled and nodded as she gave Kayla a playful nudge in the shoulder.

"I'll be on my best behavior," she said.

Kayla smiled, took one last deep breath, and then knocked at the door. Within seconds the bolt was unlocked and the door swung open as Lily stood to greet them on the other side.

"Hey," she said, "thank you so much for coming at such short notice. I didn't know who else to call...I mean besides the police but...look, you should probably just come inside. I can explain everything to you."

Stepping into the apartment, Kayla and Madelyn watched as Lily closed the door and bolted it shut. She looked to be about their age, if not maybe a few years older, and had this gorgeous long blonde hair that tumbled down her shoulders. She was dressed very casually wearing a loose fitting sweater, black leggings, and white ankle socks.

"Oh, so sorry, but if you wouldn't mind doing no shoes in the house. I know...I just, like to try and keep things clean."

"Totally understand," Kayla said as she slipped off her loafers, "my family is the same way."

Madelyn followed suit, although taking a little longer since she had boots to untie, but soon her shoes were removed too and together she and Kayla followed Lily into the living room area and took a seat on the couch. Lily sat

opposite them in an armchair. Right away Kayla could tell that Lily was a bit on edge. She could just see it in her eyes.

"Can I get you guys anything to drink?"

"Oh, no thank you," Kayla said, "we just came getting coffee actually."

"Ah, well if you don't mind I'm going to throw some tea on for myself."

"Sure thing...and hey, not to rush you or anything, but while you're at it, you can go ahead and start filling us in on what you know whenever you're ready."

"Okay, yeah, well...as you know I was the receptionist for Peirce. Now, I had no idea at the time that he was up to shady things. He hid it all very well. It wasn't until that day that I pieced everything together and realized that he had been up to all of this right under my nose the whole time!"

"And by up to this you're talking about..."

"Making crooked deals with the city," Lily had returned from the kitchen by now and sat back down in the armchair.

"Crooked deals?"

"Yeah, he had someone on the inside, I don't know who and I don't know how, but that's what was going on."

"And how do you know this?"

"Well, I don't mean to sound prideful or anything, but I put the pieces together myself. It all started when I began to arrange this meetings for Peirce with a woman who I knew worked in the city. I didn't think anything of it at first, but then when you came out with that story I put the two together. She and Peirce were working together in some

capacity. She was getting him special favors and stuff with the city I'm sure of it."

"Wow...that's quite the discovery. But wait, just so we're clear, you don't have any solid proof of this, it's just a hunch, right?"

"Sort of...I mean, I have a name and some emails I can show you. I know I'm not a reporter or a detective or whatever...but I was getting some real shady vibes from this woman and Peirce. I was the only one who ever knew they were meeting. He never put it on his schedule that he was meeting with her, just that he was in a meeting. She never came by the office, and as far as I'm aware I don't think they ever met with anyone other than just the two of them. I never heard him bring her up in conversations with anyone, even though I knew the two were meeting quite regularly. It could be an affair, but that just seems like a convenient coincidence."

"You're right," Kayla said as she made sure to write this all down, "well I'd say that this is some pretty good detective work you've done! You don't always have to have a hard lead on things. A hunch is good enough to get you started!"

"Well thanks."

knock knock knock

Lily craned her neck toward the door where the gentle knock had come from.

"Sorry," she said, "I'm expecting a package today. I'll be right back."

As Lily hopped up to go answer the door, Madelyn leaned in and nudged Kayla.

"Not bad," she whispered, "this sounds like you've got a really good lead on this whole Peirce story!"

Kayla smiled. Things were going well. Lily was giving her a ton of information to work with. This new lead about the woman working for the city was huge. She was one step closer to taking down Peirce.

But you know what they say...one step forward and three steps back?

"Hey what the helmmmmph!"

Kayla and Madelyn whipped around to look toward the front door as a group of men dressed all in black wearing balaclavas on their head stormed into the apartment. Two of the men were holding Lily tight as they dragged her inside and kicked the door closed. One of them was holding her from behind pinning her arms to her side and clamping his hand over her mouth.

"Nmmmmmph!" She yelled at Kayla and Madelyn from behind the meaty hand gag. Her eyes wide with fear.

She was carried away toward one of the bedrooms as the other men advanced on Kayla and Madelyn.

Kayla's fight or flight instincts kicked in as she tried to react, but with four burly men rushing toward her and Madelyn, there wasn't much the two of them could do. Besides, they didn't really have any time to react before the men were already bearing down on them. Two of the men scooped Madelyn up off the couch as the other two yanked Kayla off the couch.

"Hey let me gommph!"

Madelyn's protests were promptly curtailed as a hand was slapped over her mouth. The other man circled around

in front of her and scooped her nylon clad legs up before carting her off to the bedroom. Kayla of course was carried over in a similar fashion with a man behind her clasping a thick hand over her mouth while a second one carried her legs.

As she trailed behind Madelyn, she watched her friend put up the fight of her life trying to break free, but of course there was no use in even trying at this point. Whatever was going to happen to them was going to happen whether they wanted it to or not...

Kayla was brought into the room where the other two men had already made short work of Lily. She was lying down on the bed on her stomach with her arms pulled behind her back and looped together with copious amounts of rope at her wrists and elbows. Her wrists were also now connected to her ankles which were pulled up behind her and tied together as well. She arched her sock clad feet in her restricting tie as she rolled around on the bed shouting through her already gagged mouth.

Kayla noticed a colorful and fluffy mass packed into Lily's mouth held in place by what looked to be a couple pairs of nylons.

"GGGGGMMMPH MMMMMMPH!"

The poor girl flexed and rocked back and forth, but even though the men had tied her up speedily they had tied her very securely and she wasn't going anywhere! Of course, for Kayla and Madelyn, they were about to find themselves in a very similar straight.

Kayla's captors ushered her over to a chair near the bed and plopped her down into it. Madelyn was wrestled to the

ground and placed face first down onto the floor. From here, Kayla watched as the men grabbed what could only be described as miles worth of rope from their black duffel bags. She wondered if any of this was even remotely necessary...

As she watched Madelyn's arms and legs become enveloped in ropes, she too had her own limbs secured down to the chair with rope as well. Her arms were fashioned to the sides of the chair backing as they hung straight down on either side. More rope was then wound around the back of the chair and below and above her chest so as to pin her back to the chair in addition to pinning her arms firmly to her sides. They wrapped more rope around her stomach too just above her hips.

Adding insult to injury, the men decided to tie her legs in the most revealing of fashions. Her nylon clad legs were spread out and tied down to the front two legs of the chair respectively. This of course caused her skirt to ride up giving everyone in the room a very plain view of her underwear underneath her tights.

Thankfully it was pretty hidden underneath her tights, but her face was already blushing bright red at the thought of any of those pervy goons checking her out...still, there was nothing she could say or do about it. The goon behind her still had his hand clasped firmly across her mouth, and her arms and legs had just been incapacitated...so she really just had to sit there and watch as her skirt crept higher and higher...

"Mmmph," she grunted trying to fidget around in the chair to readjust her skirt. It was really only making things

worse, so instead she just had to sit there and bear it while she watched the men finishing tying Madelyn up.

Unlike Kayla, who had quietly sat there and accepted the fact that this was their fate, Madelyn was still really putting up a fight! She wriggled and flopped around on the floor as the men held her down and tied her up with rope. Little by little her struggling was subdued as her body was further held in place by the ropes.

Kayla wondered if the men used more rope on her due to her struggling, because she felt like poor Madelyn was being bound much more thoroughly than either her or Lily! There was rope circling her arms and legs at numerous points, and plenty of rope tied around her chest as well. They also took the liberty of placing her in a hogtie as well bringing her nylon clad feet up toward her wrists before connecting them with rope. Madelyn was fuming by this point, still shouting through the hand that gagged her.

With both Kayla and Madelyn now tied up, there was but one thing left to do to complete their predicament. Kayla knew it was coming of course, but she wondered if Madelyn was at all prepared. The poor girl was still struggling with all her might. Kayla guessed it would be easier if she just relaxed a bit, but Madelyn never knew when to quit! Only this time it was to her detriment.

Kayla watched as one of the men opened Lily's dresser and fished out a handful of socks and tights. She was up first as the man tossed some over to the goons by Kayla. It happened in the blink of an eye really. The hand was taken away from her mouth, and just before she had the chance to gasp for air or say something, her cheeks were pinched

forcing her mouth slightly open and in went a handful of Lily's ankle socks.

"Ggggggnnmph!" Kayla grunted as the man shoved the socks in deep into her mouth before wrapping a few of Lily's pantyhose around Kayla's head to complete the gag. If she had to guess it felt like they'd shoved at least 2-3 socks in her mouth...either way, her speech was completely cut off now.

Madelyn was up next, and boy was she not going down without a fight. The intruders had to hold her down, one of them straddling her body and holding her head while another took a pair of thick crew socks and balled them up.

"Don't you darmmmmmmph!"

Her mouth was stuffed with the socks as Madelyn gagged and coughed into them.

"Lllllmmmph gggggggnnnnmph!"

Just like Kayla they were sealed inside with a pair of tights, the mass still clearly visible behind her pouting lips. The intruders work had been done. All three girls were now bound and gagged, but as Kayla chewed on the socks stuffed in her mouth she wondered what was it all for? Who were these goons and why had they bothered with all of this?

They didn't say anything either. After they finished stuffing Madelyn's mouth and making sure her hogtie was nice and snug, they made their leave. That was it. Kayla was greatly perplexed by it all.

"Nnnnnnnnmph!"

Poor Madelyn writhed around on the floor straining in her hogtie. Kayla truly felt bad for her friend. If only she

hadn't been so adamant on coming with she wouldn't be in this mess with Kayla! As it was, there she lay on the ground, trussed up with rope. It would be a good long while that the three of them sat there bound and gagged, but thankfully, Lily didn't live alone. A few hours later her roommate came home and hearing them cry out from the bedroom she rushed in and helped set them free.

"Bleh," remarked Madelyn as she spat the large socks, now soaked in her saliva, from her mouth, "good lord...Kayla, are you okay?"

Lily's roommate was just getting around to unwinding the tights around Kayla's mouth who then proceeded to spit the numerous socks from her own mouth before answering Madelyn.

"Yeah...I'm good."

"Who the hell were those guys?"

"No idea," said Kayla, "but I'd have to think they're connected to Peirce in some way...how they found us I have no idea."

"I'm so sorry," said Lily now sitting up on the bed, her friend hard at work cutting her loose from the ropes, "this is all my fault."

"What do you mean," asked Kayla.

"Asking you guys to come meet me here...I just...I should have kept my mouth shut."

"Don't let them get to you. It's okay. This is fairly standard unfortunately...I mean these kind of intimidation tactics."

"Really? You've been through this before?"

"Sadly, it comes with the job...but hey, chin up, you gave me some great information to work with."

"Well, I'm glad I could be of some help."

Thanks to Lily's roommate, the three girls were finally free. Kayla and Madelyn were about to bid her farewell when they discovered a note left for them in the kitchen. Turns out the intruders hadn't left without a word after all.

"Consider this a warning. Drop the story, or else."

That was all that it said.

"Believe it or not," said Kayla, "this is good. This potentially ties Peirce to all of this. Granted it is circumstantial, but anything helps at this stage. I'll hold onto this for now. Who knows, maybe it'll come in use later."

"I hope so," Lily said, "and again, I really am sorry for all of this. I can't help but feel slightly responsible."

"Don't worry...it's okay. Trust me, we don't blame you in the slightest. You did the right thing in reaching out to me. I'd like to say we'll be in touch, but it's probably best to keep our distance for now."

"Well, thanks again...and good luck. I hope you're able to take Peirce down."

"Same. Take it easy, Lily!"

Grabbing their shoes, Kayla and Madelyn slipped back into them and headed off. It had been a riot of a day, and Kayla was exhausted. She was worried about Madelyn too.

"You good?" She asked her friend as they descended in the elevator.

"Yeah!" Madelyn responded surprisingly cheery, "I'm just glad I was there for you...I mean it wasn't fun, but

friends stick together, right? Besides, I'm a lot stronger than I look! I'm okay, really. I just...I get the feeling this won't be the last time this happens to us, yeah?"

"Probably not," said Kayla.

"Hm, well...bring it on!"

Kayla smiled. It was good to have a friend like Madelyn.

3

After a busy last few weeks of working long hours, Kayla was excited for her day off. She had no intentions of leaving the house whatsoever, and she'd turned her phone and computer to "do not disturb." She was ready for a relaxing day to just chill out, maybe read a little, and most importantly, just rest.

She was dressed the part too wearing a cozy sweater dress. She hated walking around the house in her bare feet, and so to protect them against the frigid hardwood floors she pulled on a pair of white over the knee socks in an effort to not only keep her feet warm but also her legs too.

Kayla had started her day off right with a hearty breakfast, and then proceeded to plop down onto her living room couch and dive into the book she was currently reading. Warm autumn light spilled in from her window as she curled up on the couch. She treasured these days off. It was so nice to take a break from the crazy reporter life and to just rest for a bit. She'd be back at it soon enough as she really did love her job, but these breaks were very much needed.

Tap Tap Tap

Kayla looked up from her book, adjusting her glasses as she did so. Someone had knocked at the front door to her apartment. She was very perplexed by this, and as she sat

there part of her hoped whoever it was would just go away. But that was not the case as another set of knocks rang out following the first. Kayla sighed, and setting down her book she walked over to the front door.

Upon opening it, she was greeted by a young woman, probably in her mid 30's, dressed smartly in a button up shirt, pencil skirt, and dark tights with a pair of ankle boots. She smiled warmly at Kayla, and the name tag on her chest read: "Cassie." She was holding a clipboard, and had a briefcase set down behind her.

"Hi there," Kayla said trying to hide her disinterest. This wasn't the first time solicitors had showed up trying to sell something to her, and until she put up a sign she reckoned it wouldn't be the last.

"Hello," the girl said with a bright and bubbly voice, "as you can see, my name is Cassie."

She did a cute little curtsy as she pointed to her name tag. Kayla did everything in her power not to roll her eyes.

"Hi, Cassie," she said, "um listen I'm not really interested in buying anything right now."

The smile slowly faded from the girls face as her shoulders dropped. She was crushed.

"Oh...very well then."

Kayla was way too much of a sucker to let the girl leave on these conditions, so she decided to at least hear her out.

"Or...well, I'm sorry...let me at least hear your pitch," she said, "I can't make any promises, but why don't you go ahead and tell me what it is you're here for."

The girl perked back up again.

"Oh well, like I said, my name is Cassie, and I work for a company that makes super durable tights!"

Cassie kicked her leg out a bit showing off her semi sheer nylons. They did look very sturdy, and Kayla was an avid tights wearer. Perhaps she had judged this girl too soon...maybe she would end up buying something after all.

"Very cool," Kayla said, "I go through way too many pairs."

"Don't we all? Well, not anymore! Our company makes tights that are made to last! Say goodbye to runs, rips, and tears, because these tights are crazy strong!"

"Do you have different colors and patterns?"

"We've got it all! From opaque to sheer, nude to an array of colors, shades, and patterns, we have got your legs covered!"

Kayla smiled. The girl was trained well, and was really selling Kayla on these tights. That's the thing about door to door sales. If the person selling the product is good, they can rake in tons of sales. Before, Kayla was ready to shut the door on this girl and go back to her book, but now she was really considering buying a pair of tights just to see. It was an interesting turn of events to be sure.

"How much for a pair?"

"That is a great question! Prices do tend to vary, but not by much. I have a full price sheet you can look at if you'd like."

Cassie turned around and bent down over her briefcase, unlatching it she opened it up and started to rifle through it.

"Ah yes, here it is..."

She stood up fast and spun back around toward Kayla. She was holding something her hand, but it clearly wasn't the price sheet! It was some kind of spray bottle.

Pssssssssssssssshhhh!

Aiming it right in Kayla's face, Cassie sprayed her with some kind of sweet smelling fume causing Kayla's vision to instantly turn blurry. The whole world felt like it was spinning faster and faster as Kayla started to feel weaker and weaker. The last thing she remembered before collapsing on the ground was Cassie standing over her, hands planted on her hips and a devious smile on her face.

"Night, night," she said as Kayla's vision completely faded and everything went dark.

.

"Mmmmmm."

Kayla was slowly starting to regain consciousness, as her eyes fluttered open. At first, she couldn't make anything out other than bright light and some shapes, but slowly and surely her vision returned to her. Sitting at the kitchen table was Cassie, her booted feet propped up on Kayla's table as she scrolled on her phone. When she noticed Kayla beginning to stir she set her phone down and sat up.

"There we are," she said with a big smile on her face, "look who decided to finally wake up!"

Kayla had in fact fully come to, and she had awoken to find herself in a rather uncomfortable position. Cassie had lifted her up onto the kitchen island and hogtied her there. Her arms were pulled so far back toward her sock clad feet, that her back was arching and her chest lifted up off the

counter slightly. Kayla flexed her wrist in the soft, silky material that was currently wrapped around them.

Tights.

Of course, Cassie had used her state of the art tights to tie Kayla up. She really hadn't been kidding. The tights were no joke, and even though Kayla tried to flex her way free, they had been pulled so taught that she wasn't going to just wriggle her way free. Honestly, it was just as good of a tying material as rope or duct tape. Any kind of rope-like material in the right hands could be used to subdue someone, and clearly this wasn't Cassie's first time doing this.

"So...was it all just a scam? Are you really selling tights, or is that just your cover story."

"I mean, those are very high quality tights. And the best thing is they're on the house! You're more than welcome to keep any of the ones I used on you! Consider it a little gift from me to you."

Kayla rolled her eyes.

"Gee, thanks."

Cassie smiled.

"So what now," Kayla asked, "are you just going to sit there and watch me? Why'd you come here?"

"Just for fun."

"Just for fun?"

"Yeah, a girl like me has got it rough out there. The goons for hire business is all a bunch of lunks. Here I was, bright eyed and full of ambition, ready to offer my rope skills to anyone who needed them. Sadly, I'm not the type of 'thug' folks are looking for. I've been laughed at,

mocked, told to give up, hell, I've even had some folks leave me tied up and gagged a couple times! So, here we are, I'm merely resigned to house calls like this where I can work on my skills until maybe one day they're recognized..."

Kayla sat there for a second, stunned by Cassie's lengthy monologue. It was so out of the ordinary, but Kayla had come to expect out of the ordinary events by this point.

"So...you really are here just for fun?"

"Didn't you listen to anything I just said?"

"You don't even plan to rob me or anything?"

Cassie looked around for a bit, "I don't know...I might snag a few things if they catch my eye."

"Well can you just hurry it up please."

"My, you're no fun. Alright, if you insist, I'll be on my way then."

Standing up, Cassie walked past Kayla, not before giving her a playful tap on the rear of course. She was gone for a minute, but returned promptly, humming as she did so.

"Where did you go?"

"Wouldn't you like to know? Don't worry...you'll see."

Kayla didn't like the sound of that...

"Now," said Cassie, "are we going to be a good sport and play along?"

"Play along? What are you talking about?"

"Let me put it this way...open wide."

"Open wide what are yoummmmmph!"

It was clear to Kayla now what Cassie was talking about, and what she had been away doing. Kayla should have seen this coming really, but unfortunately she hadn't though that it was even remotely necessary. Perhaps she'd need to adjust her expectations...

"Mmmmmmmmmph!"

Cassie worked in one of Kayla's long crew socks into her open mouth, but as she packed it in Kayla could feel her pushing it into her mouth in such a way so as to make room for another one!

"Nmmmmmmph gggnnmmph!"

"My, you have such a big mouth! Such a fun template to work with."

"Fffffmmmmmmph!"

After Cassie worked the first sock all the way in, she picked up another and started packing it in as well. Both of the socks fit snugly into Kayla's mouth, with one sort of pushed in to each cheek. Kayla's toes curled inside her long socks, and she clenched her fists while Cassie stuffed both of the socks in her mouth. She was getting more and more used to this whole process, but it was never easy...

"Nnnnnmmmmmmmmph!"

"Look at you! You know, most of the folks I work with couldn't manage such a gag, but you...wow, you're really talented!"

"Fffmmmmph!"

"Right, yes, thanks for reminding me. Don't want those socks to slip out now do we!"

"Hmmmmmmmmmmph!"

Taking what Kayla could only guess was a pair of Cassie's extra strength tights, her gag was topped as the tights were wound around her head and between her lips at least a few times.

"And ta-da! Wow, you should see yourself. You're such a cutie!"

"Gggnnnmph mmmmmph fffmmmmph!"

Kayla was more than irritated with Cassie. It was so obnoxious having to listen to this bubbly girl talk her head off while Kayla was hogtied and gagged with no way to stop her. She literally just had to sit there and endure it.

"Well, you know, I have had lots of fun, but all good things must come to an end, yes? I'm afraid I must be off now."

"Fmmmmph?! Wrrmmmmph! Gggggggnnmph!"

"Don't worry, you'll find a way out of there. I tied those knots tight, but they're not impossible to get out of! I'd say...probably a few hours worth of work and you'll be good to go!"

"Mmmmmmmmmph!"

"Oh, and you're welcome for the tights again. Please, feel free to help yourself! They're super high quality, but I don't have to tell you that. I'm sure you're able to tell."

"Gggnnnnmmmmph!"

"Well, it really has been loads of fun, but I'm afraid I must be off. I have another house call to make."

"Wrrmmmmph?"

"Don't worry, I'm sure they'll be just as gracious of a host as you were. Toodles!"

"Ffmmmmph mmmmmmmph mmmmmmmmmmmmmmmph!"

But just like that, Cassie skipped away shutting the door behind her. As uncomfortable as Kayla was, hogtied on the counter and chewing on a pair of socks, she felt bad for whoever else it was that was going to end up like this too. She assumed that's what Cassie had meant by another house call, but obviously Kayla was in no place to try and stop things before it was too late.

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tap tap tap

Cassie stood outside the door waiting patiently for her target to answer. By now, she had done enough of these that there really wasn't anything to stress about. Still, she always got a few butterflies in her stomach each time after she knocked.

Hearing the lock be undone, Cassie straightened her posture and readied herself. As the door swung open, she was greeted by a gorgeous blonde haired girl wearing a red polo shirt dress over a pair of sheer tights with black polka dots.

Cassie stood there for a second, stunned by the girls beauty before snapping back to reality and remembering why she was there.

"Hello," she said in her most cheerful voice, "my name is Cassie and I wanted to know if you'd be interested in purchasing some ultra durable tights today!"

"Oh, yes, I'd be really interested in that! I mean, as you can see, I am a big fan of tights after all. You said these are super durable though?"

"They sure are! I can walk you through all the science of them if you'd like!"

"That sounds great! Would you like to come inside?"

Bingo.

"Yes, I would love to come inside."

"Perfect! Come on in!"

And those were the last words Madelyn remembered saying before strangely passing out. When she finally came to, she found herself laying down on her kitchen table, arms pulled behind her back and tied together at her wrists. They were joined to her nylon clad ankles as well. In front of her, sat the girl she had let in...Cassie? She wasn't quite sure anymore, but Cassie seemed right. Apparently, she was no tights saleswoman after all!

"Welcome back! Did you have a good little nap?"

"What...what the hell!? Why'd you do this!?"

Cassie shrugged, "just for fun really. It's kind of a neat little hobby of mine."

"Like hell it is! Untie me right now!"

"Aw, sweetie, that's not how this works."

"Let me out right now I swear to god!"

"Okay, looks like someone needs a little help quieting down. I'll be right back."

Madelyn continued shouting expletives at Cassie as she disappeared for a moment only to return with something in her hands. It was a pair of socks from Madelyn's drawer. She only hoped they were at least clean.

"Don't you dare! If you think I'm just going to sit here and let yommmmmmmph!"

Cassie chuckled as she jammed the first sock into Madelyn's mouth. It was one of her longer crew socks she wore with boots, and the first one alone was enough to fill

her mouth. But of course Cassie didn't stop with just one. Working the first sock in as far as it would go, she pushed it to the side a bit to make room for the second one.

Madelyn's gag reflex was triggered as she coughed and wretched into the socks now filling her mouth to the brim.

"Gggggnnnnnmph mmmmmmmmmmp!"

"Atta girl! Just like that!"

"Hnnnnnnngph!"

To top it all off, Cassie wrapped a pair of tights around Madelyn's head and pulled it tight pressing the socks even deeper into her mouth. Madelyn closed her eyes and concentrated on her breathing. She'd be okay as long as she sat there quietly.

"Wow, and here I thought you wouldn't be this submissive! You're really quite the catch you know that?"

"Fffffmmmmph yyymmmmp!"

"Love you too, girlie. Okay, now listen, I know we're just having the time of our lives right now, but I really must be going. The tights are on me by the way. You can keep them and use them to your hearts content!"

"Wrrrrmmmmmp!"

"You've been such a gracious host, but I really must be going now. Thanks for all the fun! Toodles!"

And so just like she had done to Kayla, Cassie skipped away leaving Madelyn bound and gagged on her own table. To their dismay, it seemed like neither Kayla nor Madelyn were going to be able to enjoy their day off...

4

It was that time of year. The leaves were falling, the air was chilly, and pumpkin spice lattes were back. Kayla loved the fall season. It really was one of her favorite times of the year. In addition to all the fun fall things like sweaters, cozy socks, and sitting in a cafe safe and dry from a rainy day, Kayla especially looked forward to the annual Harvest Party thrown by the city. Reporters were invited as were city council members, and all kinds of other important folks. It was a fun celebration of the season, and Kayla looked forward to it every year.

However, this year she was looking forward to it with more vigor than she ever had in the past. That was because she now had the name of the councilwoman who was aiding and abetting Peirce in his criminal schemes: Sasha Perkins. Lily had been kind enough to provide her with a name and description, and Kayla had determined that at the party she'd confront Sasha and see if she could make her squirm a bit.

"Do you really have to snoop around at the Harvest Party?" Madelyn asked with pouting lips.

"Yes," Kayla said, "I have to start putting pressure on her. Our run-in with Lily proves they're watching us, and I need to stay a step ahead of them. I don't know what Sasha knows yet, and so I have to try and strike before she does."

"Well, can I at least have fun?"

Kayla laughed, "yes, of course. I'll do all the snooping. You can drink and have a good time."

"Yes!"

Everyone invited as allowed a plus one, and Madelyn of course was always Kayla's invite. They always had a blast going together, and what was even more fun sometimes was the after parties you'd get invited to. Madelyn was way better at being in the know than Kayla was, and every year she'd scope out the best party to be at. Kayla was sure that this year would be no exception.

"Okay...how do I look?"

Kayla stepped out of the bathroom and presented herself to Madelyn who was doing her makeup at the desk by her bed. She looked Kayla up and down, her eyes wide with adoration.

"You look great! You're super cute!"

One of the other fun elements of the Harvest Party was that everyone was invited to dress up. As such, Kayla had decided to throw something together, even if the idea of dressing up was a little intimidating for her. She and Madelyn had made the choice of going as Daphne and Velma, a little cliché, but it made Kayla happy. It was between that and Nancy Drew and Bess, and Madelyn was much more apt to go as the Scooby Doo duo.

Kayla, was dressed as Velma, and Madelyn was going as Daphne. It didn't take them long at all to decide who would go as who. Madelyn was much more bubbly and flirty, and so Daphne was a proper fit for her. Kayla, while not as dorky as Velma, still related a lot with her practical way of

processing things. That, and she wore glasses, so she had that part going for her already.

"Here, don't forget these!"

Madelyn tossed Kayla a pair of orange knee high socks, an essential part of Velma's classic look . Walking over to the bed, Kayla sat down and slipped the socks over her nude colored nylons. She wore these mainly to protect her legs against the cold, it was rather chilly at night after all. Plus, the nylons gave her legs a gorgeous shine.

The only thing left for Kayla do to was to grab her pair of low heeled mary-jane's and slip them onto her feet. Madelyn was nearly ready too. She had finally finished her makeup, and so leaping out of her chair she twirled around letting her her short purple dress float around her body.

"Great costume ideas," she said adjusting her soft pink tights, "these turned out so nice!"

"Agreed. Hey, are you pretty much ready to go?"

"You betcha!"

"K, then let's head out. I'd hate to be late."

"Psh, people run late to these kinds of things all the time! It's good to be fashionably late after all."

"Madelyn..." Kayla called out as she headed for the door.

"Right, coming!"

Thankfully due to Kayla's type A personality, the girls arrived to the Harvest Party on time! It was already fairly packed even. Kayla spotted dozens of people she'd come to know over the last couple years as a reporter, but she kept her eyes peeled for Sasha. As much as she was looking forward to making idle chit chat all evening (spoiler

alert, she wasn't), Kayla had to stay focused on her mission. She'd corner Sasha, pressure her about Peirce, and let her know she's not going to back down.

"Wow! Kayla, you look great!"

It was Toby. He was dressed as a vampire with fake blood dripping from the corner of his mouth. His face was white and his hair was slicked back. Kayla was mildly impressed.

"Looking good, Toby," she said, "didn't know you knew how to use makeup."

"I don't," he whispered, "I had my sister help me out. I have no idea how I'm going to take all this off."

Kayla snickered, "you'll figure it out I'm sure."

"How do you girls do it," he said clearly being facetious, "I feel so heavy with all this makeup on."

"You're lucky it's plastered on so thick, otherwise I'd sock you in the nose right now."

"Hey, that's rude! Oh hey...by the way...I heard you're looking for Sasha Perkins, yeah?"

Kayla nodded.

"Well I haven't seen her yet, but if I do, I'll let you know!"

Kayla rolled her eyes, "gee, thanks."

Madelyn returned with two drinks in hand.

"Snagged these for us," she said before shooting a scowl at Toby.

He cleared his throat.

"Hey, Madelyn."

"Get lost, Edward."

Toby scoffed and turning around he trotted away.

"God, you're so petty," Kayla said as she grabbed the drink from Madelyn.

Madelyn had never liked Toby. She knew he had a crush on Kayla, and for whatever reason Madelyn strongly disproved of him. It was very irrational. She was never cruel, but she definitely let it be known that she was not a fan of his. It was more comedic than anything. Kayla didn't mind, and at the end of the day she gathered that Toby thought it was rather funny too. Madelyn of course saw no humor in it, or at least so she said.

"You ready to go in?"

"Yeah," Kayla said, "let's do this."

Together, arm in arm, the girls moved on from the hotel lobby and into the main convention hall where the Harvest Party was taking place. Classic Halloween music was playing through the overhead speakers, and it was quite nosy inside with everyone exchanging conversations with one another. Kayla and Madelyn moved through the crowd, occasionally stopping to chat with someone or two.

"You're the reporter that's working on the Peirce story! Well, kudos to you, that sounds like a tough one."

"God...and he had you tied up like that? What a creep! I'm glad you're working on that story...we need someone to hold him accountable."

"I can't believe he got away with it for so long...well congrats to you for pushing on. We need more rookie reporters like you!"

It was nice to be recognized for her work. Kayla felt a genuine sense of intrigue as she told people about the Peirce story, and the encouragement she received in return

really inspired her to keep going no matter what. If there was any way you could "make it" as a reporter, Kayla felt like this was it.

"Hey," Madelyn said, "if you don't mind I'm going to go grab us some snacks. I'll be right back."

"Sounds good!"

Finding a seat at a nearby table, Kayla sat down for a second. Despite the numerous interactions she had already had, through each one Kayla kept her eyes focused on the crowds around her. She wasn't going to let an opportunity like this pass her by. She had to locate Sasha. The crowd wasn't that dense after all. Surely she'd be able to spot her. The only thing really making it difficult were the damn costumes. Had nobody been dressed up it would have been a piece of cake. Trying to pick Sasha out from a crowd of people all wearing costumes was a different challenge all together.

bzzzzzz

Kayla pulled out her phone. It was a text from Madelyn.

"Hey...someone spilled punch on my dress. I'm in the bathroom trying to clean up. Wanna come give me a hand?"

Kayla couldn't help but chuckle. This wasn't the first time something like this had happened at a party or an event. Madelyn was a bit careless after all.

Kayla stepped out from the convention hall and headed toward the bathrooms. Entering the restroom she found a few other girls adjusting their costumes and fixing their makeup. It was a rather large restroom with two different sink areas. Kayla didn't spot Madelyn at the first area and

so she headed for the other side of the restroom. Strangely enough, Madelyn wasn't there either. Kayla gathered she was at the wrong restroom, although she was pretty sure this is where Madelyn told her to meet.

Kayla pulled out her phone and shot her a quick text. In the meantime, she figured she'd go see if there were any other potential restrooms Madelyn could be at. Exiting the restroom, now empty as everyone had finished touching up and cleared out, Kayla stepped out into the hall. Standing in front of her were two tall looking men clad in all black with black cat masks over their faces. One of them held a small rucksack and some rope while the other had something wadded up in their hand. Kayla knew she was in trouble, but tried to see if maybe there was a way she could get away.

"Evening, gentlemen," she said, "I do believe the men's restroom is the other way...although, I wouldn't want to make any assumptions of course. I do believe in being free to be who you want to b-ow! Heymmmmph!"

The men saw no humor in Kayla's attempt to lower their guard and instead took to action by grabbing her and pulling her arms behind her back. She felt a few loops of rope circle her wrists thanks to the rope one of the thugs was carrying. In the meantime, the other thug had positioned himself in front of Kayla and was busy making sure she wouldn't call for help.

Taking whatever it was scrunched in his hand, he grabbed her face and held her head steady.

"Helmmmmmmmph!"

Kayla's last ditch effort to call for help was swiftly denied as the man jammed in what Kayla could now feel was a soft sponge into her mouth. It instantly dried her mouth out as it slowly expanded filling Kayla's mouth completely.

"Fmmmmph mmmmmph!"

She was now incapable of making anything but muffled sounds, and added on top of that her vision was also taken away as the rucksack was stretched over her head plunging her into darkness. From here, she was scooped up into the air and dragged away. The sounds of the party slowly faded the further away she was carried. Soon, there was nothing but the loud footsteps of whoever was carrying her thumping into the carpeted floors.

"Lmmmmph mmmmmmm ggggnnnnmph!"

Kayla ferociously fought to try and get free from the men holding her, but they held on tight. Eventually, she relaxed her body and let them carry her away. The bag over her head wasn't easy to breathe through, especially with that damned sponge stuck in her mouth. She didn't want to waste her energy fighting a futile battle, and so instead she sat still and allowed the men to drag her down the hall. She had no idea what they were planning, only she could probably guess who was behind it...

She heard the men enter a stairwell and begin to climb a few flights of stairs. After exiting, they carried her for a little while longer before bursting into a room and setting Kayla onto the ground. They took the liberty of adding more ropes around Kayla's body looping them around her bust pinning her arms firmly in place.

Eventually, the bag over her head was yanked away as Kayla was now thankfully able to breathe freely again. Well, as freely as one could with a giant sponge stuffed in your mouth! Standing in front of her now was a pair of thugs, dressed in all black, and a slender woman dressed as catwoman standing between them. Kayla didn't need to play 20 questions to know who it was behind that mask...it was Sasha Perkins. It had to be. Her long dark hair cascaded down and around her shoulders. It was her alright, and Kayla was fuming knowing she'd been beaten to the punch.

It wasn't just Kayla that had been beaten to the punch, Madelyn had been nabbed first. She was sitting on the ground beside Kayla, much more tied up, with ropes all around her legs as well, and to keep her quiet the thugs had repurposed her green bandana she wore around her neck and used it as a cleave gag between her lips. She rolled around on her stomach, her arms pulled behind her back and connected to her ankles. Both of her purple heels had come off in her struggling, and her dress had risen up well past her rear.

"Fmmmmmmph!"

The bandana tied across her mouth did its work keeping most of her speech incoherent and her cries muted.

Sasha snapped her fingers, and on command one of the goons walked over to Kayla and to her surprise started working the sponge out of her mouth. It took me a little while to pry the soggy mass out, but once he did Kayla took a much needed deep breath. She knew it wouldn't be

long before it or something else was jammed into her mouth, but she figured her brief respite was to have a conversation with Sasha. Kayla decided she'd kick things off...

"What's your problem?" She asked not hiding her resentment in the slightest.

Sasha laughed, "I think you mean what is your problem. You're a silly little reporter. Why is it that you feel the need to stick your nose where it has no business being. Clearly, you haven't learned your lesson yet. But it's alright...you will in time."

"You won't get away with this. I will take both you and Peirce down!"

"Honey...don't make me laugh. Besides, I have no connections with Peirce."

She said this while giving Kayla a massive wink.

"You're so full of it. Sooner or later this is all going to catch up to you, just like it did with Peirce."

"Just keep telling yourself that. In the meantime, my men here are going to make sure that you and your friend keep to yourselves this evening. I have no idea what you were planning to do, but whatever it was...good luck trying to accomplish it now!"

Adding a flip of her hair, Sasha turned on her heels and strutted away.

"Hey! Get back here! I wasn't finished!"

"Oh, but you are," one of the thugs tutted as he shoved Kayla onto her back.

"Watch it!" She said as she fell onto her hands, her legs now able to come free.

But the goons knew Kayla was in now place to bargain with them. They did however grow tired of her complaints, and promptly set out to fix that once again. Clearly, the sponge they had used earlier wasn't good enough anymore. They were now opting for a different route...one that Kayla was not too thrilled about...

Grabbing her legs, her mary-janes were unstrapped and thrown aside followed of course by both of her long orange socks.

"Really you guys? Was the sponge not already good enough?"

With Kayla's socks both off, one of the men circled around behind her and propped her upright. He then proceeded to grab a large handful of Kayla's hair and tugged on it hard.

"Ow! You piece of shmmmmmmph!"

But Kayla's speech was once again cut off as her knee high sock was packed into her mouth. The man worked in as much of it as would fit before taking her other one and pulling it between her lips. This was an easy task considering Kayla's mouth was forced wide open by the first sock. Her makeshift gag was pulled tight as the sock was knotted firmly at the back of her head. The men then moved over to Madelyn as they reinforced her gag by making it a bit more effective. Undoing the green scarf gag she was currently chewing on, they then wadded it up and proceeded to shove the whole thing in her mouth.

"Gggggggnnnnnmph!"

Madelyn was very upset by this and shook her head vigorously trying to dislodge the scarf. To prevent this, the

men took a roll of tape and wrapped a couple layers around Madelyn's face sealing the scarf inside her mouth. The room was suddenly much quieter, with both girls hardly able to emit a sound.

"Fmmmmmmph mmmmmmmph!"

Kayla and Madelyn sputtered and moaned behind their gags as the men wrapped up their business. Before they left they made sure to place Kayla in a much more restrictive tie than she currently was in. Taking her legs, clad only in her nude nylons now, they folded them up so that her ankles were resting on her rear. Winding rope around each of her legs respectively, her legs were now stuck in that position. She was then pushed up and forced to sit up with her legs folded and tied beneath her.

From here, the men took a length of rope and connected it to the ropework around her wrists. Taking that rope they then looped it behind Kayla's back, under her butt (or more like right between it with how tight they were pulling the rope), and then looped it behind her neck before tying it off to the rope connected to her legs. Essentially, what this did was fold Kayla up into a ball, with her chest now firmly squished into her thighs. It was truly a very uncomfortable position to be in, and she could already feel her feet starting to go numb.

"Ffffmmmmmmph mmmmmmmph!"

Despite her ball-tied peril, Kayla was still fiery as ever spewing all kinds of insults behind her sock packed mouth. Madelyn joined in too, rocking back and forth in her hogtie wiggling her purple stocking clad feet as she tried to get free from her own bindings. The two made quite the pair,

wriggling on the floor with copious amounts of rope wound all about their bodies. It was something Kayla was becoming more and more used to sadly. It seemed like most of her endeavors involved her being nabbed and tied up. Perhaps one day she'd manage to finish a story without ending up like this. She wasn't holding her breath for it though...

With Kayla and Madelyn now more than trussed up, she figured the men's work was done and that they'd be on their way. Instead, they decided to have a bit of fun...

Kayla and Madelyn's now exposed Nylon clad feet were ripe targets for tickling, and so tickle them the men did.

"Fmmmmmmph mmmmmmmmmph!"

Kayla tried to shift her body away from the goon as he bent down and started tickling her feet, but of course the rope holding her body folded over was so tight she just had to sit there and take it. She caught a peek of Madelyn amidst the fray who was also having her stocking clad feet assaulted. Not only was the goon tickling her feet, but he'd also take breaks to lick them as well. Kayla was beyond humiliated at this point. What kind of creeps was Sasha working with anyway?

The men continued to tickle and suck on the girls feet for quite a while. Kayla and Madelyn were just puddles of tears and sweat now. Their heavy breathing filled the room alongside their occasional grunts and mews through their stuffed mouths. It was taking them so much time to recover from their tickling onslaught that they didn't even notice the men had left them. Once Kayla was able to catch her breath, so looked around and noticed they were gone.

"Mmmmmmph mmmmmph!"

She hollered at Madelyn trying to get her attention. She flopped her head over and acknowledge Kayla briefly. She hadn't recovered quite as fast and was still breathing hard. Her blonde hair matted to the sides of her face and her forehead glistening with sweat.

Not only had Kayla been bested by Sasha, but she'd been utterly humiliated by her too. To be stuck in such a position like this and to have Sasha's goons do...whatever it is that was...it was all just so embarrassing. As Kayla laid there, stuck in her excessively tight ball-tie, sweat dripping down the side of her face, she plotted her revenge. Perhaps Sasha had gotten the best of her this time around, but Kayla would wriggle free and she and Madelyn would expose Sasha for the criminal scum she was! Besides, how egotistical did she have to be to brazenly show her face to Kayla? Well, she hadn't exactly seen her full face with it being behind a mask and all, but her costume was unmistakable. Once Kayla was free, she'd get even in no time.

Well, turns out, the ropes she and Madelyn were placed in were no joke. Kayla struggled all she could, but there was no getting free...Madelyn was in the same boat too. Hours passed as she and Madelyn grunted through their gags and shifted around trying to get loose to no avail.

It wasn't until much later, when the cleaning crew showed up, that Madelyn and Kayla were finally set free. By now, the party was long over and everyone had cleared out. Kayla, who just didn't know when to quit, was still determined to expose Sasha.

She stormed into Sasha's office the next day, ready to launch her accusation. She was met by a very confused looking secretary.

"Oh um...can I help you?"

"Yes. My name is Kayla Grace, and I'm here to shed some light on a very shady activity!"

"What's this all about then?"

Kayla turned to see Sasha sauntering over, arms crossed over her chest, a devious scowl painted across her face.

"You," Kayla said as she sneered at Sasha.

"Have we met?" Sasha asked.

"Have we m...you tied me up last night!?"

"Oh dear, I'm afraid you must have me confused with someone else..."

"Don't play that game with me. I know it was you! You were there, at the Harvest Party, dressed as...catwoman! Yes, catwoman. Latex suit and all."

"Darla, would you please pull up the records."

"Records?" Kayla said as she turned back toward Darla who was typing away at her computer.

"Yes...I have it...oh, yes, right here. Your Harvest Party costume logs. A complete list of all past and future costume arrangements."

"Excellent, thank you, Darla."

"What is this..."

"As a councilwoman, I prefer to have my schedule planned as far out as I can get. Planning my costume for the Harvest Party is something I make an effort to do each year."

Kayla didn't like where this was going...

"Darla, could you please pull up this years costume plans?"

"Yes, I have it right here. You went dressed as the Greek goddess, Athena. I have all the other info here if you'd like me to get that to you as well."

"No, thank you though, that was all that I needed."

Sasha stood there, an evil looking smile beginning to form at the corner of her mouth. Kayla knew she had been played, yet again.

"Go ahead," Sasha said, "ask the other guests who were there that night. I was dressed as a glorious goddess divine...not some mangy catwoman...it seems like your memory isn't serving you well. Either that or you're trying to lob baseless accusations at me. I sure hope that isn't the case. I do hate dealing with defamation lawsuits after all. They're such a hassle."

How she had done it, Kayla didn't know, but somehow Sasha had managed to change costumes at the last second in order to keep her alibi airtight. It was impressive to say the least, and Kayla knew there was nothing left for her to do but to admit defeat.

She turned around and walked away, not giving Sasha the satisfaction of seeing her get any more angry. It was clear now that in order to take Sasha down, Kayla was going to need to be much more careful. Her direct approach had clearly backfired in her face as Sasha had not come to play any games.

It was currently 0-1 in Sasha's favor, but Kayla was far too invested now to just turn back and give up. One way or

another, she'd expose Sasha for the lying criminal thug she was!

5

It had started off like any other day for Kayla. She headed into the office to get some paperwork done before following up on one of her leads. She had just sat down at her desk and barely settled in before Toby zipped over. Kayla eyed him with suspicion.

"You look like you're up to something," she said.

"Did you hear about the new hire?"

"What? No! When did they do that?"

"Yesterday. Apparently, she only had two interviews, and was hired right away after the second one."

"You're joking."

"Wish I was, for your sake of course. I know how big your ego is after all."

Kayla gave Toby one of her infamous glares. He immediately backed off and started profusely apologizing. In the meantime, Kayla wondered about the new hire. Currently on staff, she was one of the only rookie reporters. Most folks had been there at least a few years if not more. So it meant a lot to Kayla, and every time she came in clutch with a big story she really stood out. Now, with another rookie on the team, perhaps her work would be overshadowed a bit.

Kayla shook it off. Why was she worrying so much after all? She had no real reason to be threatened. She hadn't even met the girl yet.

"Oh wait...there she is!"

Kayla turned where Toby was pointing. Her eyes grew as wide as saucers, and her jaw dropped to the floor. There she was, the fresh new hire, strutting down the office floor dressed from head to toe in fashionable attire. Her soft pink blouse tucked into a patterned skirt which she wore over a pair of sheer nylons. Her feet tucked into these incredible rose gold heels, and to top everything off she wore this black leather jacket over her top giving her this badass aesthetic.

It made Kayla second guess her own outfit. A plain gray turtleneck under a sleeveless tartan dress was what she had picked out for the day. She paired it with a some nylons and black ankle boots. It was nice enough, but nothing compared to how the new girl looked.

That wasn't even the kicker though. Sure, her outfit was on point, and her strut was confident. The real punch to the gut had nothing to do with any of this. It was the fact that she and Kayla shared something in common, something Kayla thought would give her a leg up in the reporting world at least at the Tribune: they were both of Asian descent.

Not only would Kayla have to be competing with a new hire, but she had to compete with another female Asian reporter! Climbing the ranks in the reporting world and getting put on the big cases was all about clout. The Tribune had made it clear that they were looking to

diversify their staff and give voices to more women and people of color. With Kayla checking both of those boxes she was ready to step up to the plate.

On the one hand, it was great that the Tribune was diversifying their new hires! But in Kayla's head this was an utter travesty. She thought her path to success would be so easy, but things had just gotten a lot more complicated for her. Or, well, so she thought in her moment of self pity. Besides, she hadn't even had a conversation with the new girl yet. She could be a total sweetheart, and a potential new friend at the office! Perhaps the two of them could lift each other up as they both climbed the reporting ranks! Yes, surely that was what the future held for Kayla! She kept her hopes high for this outcome and not the first.

"Do you know anything about her?" She asked Toby.

He shook his head, "nothing. I just found out about it this. She looks nice though."

Kayla shot another glare at Toby.

"I mean...looks can be deceiving I guess. Look, just don't make this into something bigger than it needs to be."

"Don't you have something to be working on?"

"Roger. Bye, Kayla!"

Toby scurried away, leaving Kayla to just stare at the new girl watching her every move. She was being shown around by HR.. As Kayla watched her right away she could tell this girl would be trouble. There was just this look of sheer will and ambition in her eyes. Kayla didn't quite know how to describe it or why she got that vibe from the girl, but it was just...there.

It was bound to happen given Kayla's incessant staring, but as the new girl was looking around the office she locked eyes with Kayla. It was like a silent bomb had gone off in the office sending jolts of electricity all across the room. The look the new girl gave Kayla was so cunning, so sly, so...evil? No, not evil, but Kayla was so caught up in her head she was keen to think that at least. Clearly, this new girl had not come to play games, but Kayla summoned up her most threatening look as well and fired it back at the girl.

The two stared at each other for a moment, before H.R. led the new girl away and their stare was broken. A shiver ran down Kayla's spine. No words had been exchanged by the two, but it was very clear that a rivalry had been born...

"I mean you just should have seen the look she gave me! She thinks she's so much better than me just because she's got these long gorgeous legs and doesn't need to wear glasses."

"She told you that?"

"No, but she might as well have!"

Kayla was venting all her frustration to Madelyn as the two girls met for lunch. Madelyn, as supportive of Kayla as she was, could not see why Kayla was making such a fuss.

"You need to just talk to her," she said, "you're going to build up this version of her in your head and stress yourself out. Just talk to her, see what she's about, and who knows, maybe you misjudged her?"

"God, you sound just like Toby."

Madelyn pretended to vomit which made Kayla crack a smile.

"Look," Madelyn continued, "all I'm saying is that you need to at least give her a chance. Once you do that, sure, then we can talk."

"Yeah, you're right...hey, so what are you up to the rest of the day. You still doing that modeling gig?"

"Oh um...yeah."

"What, is it not going well or something?"

"No, it's going fine!"

"Wait then why are you being all weird about it?"

"I'm not, sorry, I don't know why I responded like that. Yeah, modeling gig is going great."

No matter how hard she tried to brush it off, Madelyn was hiding something from Kayla. She was a reporter after all. Sniffing out bullshit was part of her job! She could tell Madelyn didn't want to talk about it though so she left it alone. Still, she pocketed it away and decided she'd bring it up again if the moment was ever right. She didn't want to pry or be intrusive, but she was curious as to what Madelyn wasn't telling her. The two of them never kept secrets from each other, and so this was a bit odd.

"Okay well that's good. Listen, I'd love to stay more and chat, but I've got a lead to follow up on this afternoon. What do you have going on?"

"Me...oh, I've got a few errands to run."

Again, she was hiding something...but still, Kayla let it go.

"Cool, well, I should probably get going. I'll see you later, yeah?"

"Definitely! Good luck!"

"Thanks, Mads."

And so Kayla was off. She had an interview with a local shop owner about a recent break in. There had been a few break in's around town recently, and Kayla was interested to see if they were connected in any way. Showing up at the shop she confidently strutted in, ready to rock this case and show that she really was the top rookie at the Tribune.

But when she stepped inside, a true horror awaited her as her worst fears were confirmed. Standing there in the center of the shop, already talking to the owner was the new girl. If this was a cartoon Kayla would have smoke coming out of her ears. How in the hell did she get beaten to the punch? Who even clued her in on this story? Even if she was clued in, shouldn't she have been told this was Kayla's lead? Why was she here?!

Kayla, red hot with rage, composed herself for a moment. No matter what she had to remain calm. Getting angry was no good and only played into the new girls hand. Besides, maybe this was just some honest mistake. She hadn't even had a face to face conversation with the girl yet! Perhaps, this was all something Kayla was building up in her mind and there was nothing to worry about.

Taking one last deep breath she walked over. By the time she arrived, the owner had returned to the counter to help a customer. It was just Kayla and the new girl now.

"Hi," Kayla said in the most friendly voice she could muster, "I'm Kayla, Kayla Grace."

"Jennifer, Jennifer Lee. I've heard quite a lot about you, Kayla. You've made quite the name for yourself at the Tribune already."

"Yes, I have. I've worked pretty damn hard this last year, but I guess it's paying off."

"Seems like it."

"So, I'm sure the chief told you this, but I was following up on these jewelry store robbery leads. I was supposed to meet with Miss Mankin today."

"Yes, he did tell me that. He also said that it would be great if I shadowed you around for a bit, you know, just to get my feet underneath me."

"Oh, I wasn't told about that."

"Really? Gosh, he probably just forget to CC you on the memo. Here, I can forward it to you."

Keep it together, Kayla. Keep it together!

"So did you already interview Miss Mankin?"

"Yes, I took all the information from her already about what happened."

"I hope you mean no offense by this, but if you're going to be shadowing me then I think I should take the lead on these things. Just, you know, so you can see how it's done."

Kayla was trying to set some early ground rules as nicely as she could, but there was definitely a slight tinge to her voice. Jennifer picked up on that tone and responded in kind.

"Oh, I'm sorry, well I certainly meant no offense by talking to her. I just thought since I arrived her first that I might as well get things going by talking to her."

"Right, I can see how that makes sense. It's just, I've been working on this story for a bit now, and I think that it would be best for me to take the leads on these interviews."

"Oh, well alright, it's just the interview was scheduled to be at 1:30, and you got her at 1:33. We were waiting for you to show up, and when you didn't I just decided to jump into things. I didn't want to waste her time after all."

Kayla was about to lose it. Jennifer had this smug look on her face that she wanted to just slap off. She clearly was posturing with Kayla, trying to one-up her and establish dominance. Kayla, as equally competitive, was not about to let that happen.

"Well, I don't think running 3 minutes late is hardly anything to be concerned about. Just, please, wait for me next time. Okay?"

"Oh, so when I schedule meetings I should plan to show up late too? Is that how it works at the Tribune?"

Kayla was throwing politeness and the benefit of the doubt out the window. It was time for the gloves to come off. Jennifer had pushed too many buttons and was clearly asking for it. Kayla laid into her.

"Look, I don't know who you think you are, but this is my story, got it? I was put on this story, not you. You are shadowing me, and as long as that's the case you'll follow my lead. You may think you're some big hotshot right out the door, but I've been here working my ass off to get to where I am. You do not just get to waltz on into the Tribune and coast on up to the top. Are we clear?"

Jennifer had a sour look on her face. Kayla had gotten through alright.

"Fine, if that's how things are going to be, then so be it."

And with that, Jennifer turned on her heels and stomped out. Even though she knew it wasn't, Kayla still

pocketed the exchange away as a victory. Walking over to Miss Mankin, she attempted to conduct her own interview.

"Well, I already gave my statements to that other reporter."

"Yes, I understand that, but..."

"I'm sorry, but I have a lot to take care of around here. If you wouldn't mind checking with her I'm sure she can fill you in on everything."

Kayla didn't want to drag Miss Mankin into her feud with Jennifer. Instead, she chose to swallow her pride, and bid Miss Mankin a good day before heading out. She despised the fact that she'd have to get the information from Jennifer, and she honestly doubted Jennifer would even give her anything. Things had turned into a real mess real fast.

Kayla pouted all the way back to the office, and the first thing she did was march over to Toby's desk as she prepared to unload her drama onto him. She could tell from the look of sheer terror in his eyes that he knew what was coming.

"I told you this would happen," she said with arms crossed and eyebrows furrowed.

"I'm sorry...?"

"Sorry isn't gonna' cut it. Now Jennifer has all the latest information on the jewel robbery case and I have nothing."

"She didn't get any of it to you?"

"What do you think?"

"...no?"

Kayla rolled her eyes.

"Hey," Toby said, "for the record, this feud is between you and Jennifer. Don't drag me into the middle of it."

Kayla knew Toby was right, and so once more she swallowed her pride and took her attitude down a notch.

"You're right. Sorry, Toby."

"Hey, no worries. I'd be frustrated if I were you too."

"Guess I better go make the walk of shame...unless..."

Kayla eyed Jennifer's desk. It was currently empty. She looked around and spotted her near the break room with a cup of coffee in her hand. Some guy was busy chatting her up, because of course he was, but in the meantime Jennifer's desk was left totally unattended. Taking advantage of the situation, Kayla sneaked over to Jennifer's desk and rifled around until she found her notes from earlier.

Jackpot.

Kayla snapped a few photos and then dipped out fast before Jennifer caught wind of what was going on. As Kayla walked away, she glanced over to where Jennifer was, still chatting it up totally unaware of what Kayla had just done. Kayla breathed a sigh of relief. She was back on top, and ready to trounce Jennifer.

Sitting back down at her desk she pulled out her phone and browsed Jennifer's notes. According to Miss Mankin and what she had seen on the security camera, the robbery had occurred around 3 a.m.. At that time, a dark van was seen pulling up as a few masked men hopped out. After that, the entire security system was taken down as the men cleaned out the store of its most valuable products and then left. No alarms were triggered, and no glass or doors

were broken. It was super straightforward and clean, just like the last two had been!

So far, that was the only pattern, but at least this latest break in confirmed the trend. Everything made sense to Kayla, she just had to pitch the idea to her boss, Mr. Kruger to see if he thought so too. She looked over at Jennifer, now sitting at her desk going over her notes and inputting them into her computer. Kayla had to stay a step ahead of her. She saw how cutthroat Jennifer was willing to be. Even though she was only supposed to shadow Kayla, she knew damn well that if given the opportunity she'd look to take credit for all of it and outshine Kayla's work. So Kayla went out on a limb and went to Mr. Kruger herself.

"So, as you can see, there's a clear pattern here with these break-ins. They're not random, it's the same people doing them each time."

"But the vans in each of them are all different. In this one it's a white van, but here it's a much darker one. Also the clothes of the men are all different too."

"It's to throw us off."

"Kayla..."

"No, really! Every other aspect of the break-ins are the same. How the security system is taken offline, the fact that nothing was broken in order to get in. There's a pattern here."

"What does your partner think?"

"Oh, Jennifer? Well..."

"Come to think of it, she should be in here for this."

"Oh, that's okay. I already briefed her on everything, and yeah she agrees."

Mr. Kruger raised his eyebrow at Kayla. He could tell she wasn't being honest with him. He didn't just become the head of the Tribune overnight after all. He had a pretty good snooping sense himself.

"Look, I know it's hard having another newbie around, but you two have to get along. I put her on this case with you so she could learn. You started this thing off on your own, but now I'm asking that the two of you wrap this thing up together."

"You could have told me she was going to be working with me."

"I did, or at least I told Jennifer to..."

Ah, that scheming bitch!

"I see," Mr. Kruger said, "well look, just, try and get along, okay? That's all I ask."

"I'll try my best."

"Good. Oh and, I believe you by the way, about these break-ins. They look fishy to me as well, I just need solid proof of it that's all. Turn that hunch into some hard evidence and I think you've got yourself a nice story."

"Thank you!"

Leaving Mr. Kruger's office, Kayla headed back to her desk. Jennifer was still at hers, none the wiser. It was "tit for tat." Jennifer withheld notes from Kayla and conducted the interview without her, Kayla went to Kruger and pitched the story her way. Now they were even.

"Don't think I didn't see that," Toby said slinking over to Kayla's desk with a smirk on his face.

"I don't know what you're talking about."

He chuckled.

"Hey," he said, "so what's next? How are you going to wrap up this story?"

"I'm not sure, but there's a link between these cases that'll blow this thing wide open, I'm sure of it. As long as I find that, we're set. I just have to do it before Jennifer does."

"So, you're not going to try and work together on this."

Kayla shot a "what do you think" look at Toby.

"Gotcha. Well, best of luck to you with that."

As he walked away, Kayla went back to looking at her notes. So far, there had been four break-ins. The main common link was that they were all jewelry shops of some kind. They had all occurred over the course of about a month, and each time the break-in had been a clean job. Nothing broken, no excessive force, no injuries, etc.

Looking at her notes, something caught Kayla's eye. The other common thread was the fact that in each on the security system was taken offline with no real hassle. It just would go down at the start of the robbery, and then pop back online after the fact. It was curious to say the least.

What was less curious though was that after she looked it up, she found out that each of the shops carried the exact same security system! Surely that was no coincidence! Kayla was starting to get excited now. Looking into the security system now her excitement grew even more. Turns out, it was a small local company, not some big name national brand. In fact, if she remembered correctly from her notes, a lot of the shops had their systems "upgraded" within the last couple months. One of the shops even had

theirs upgraded because of the recent break-ins! If only they knew...

Grabbing her keys Kayla headed out. She was going to follow up on this lead and bust the story wide open! She had a good feeling about this.

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By the time she arrived at the security system office, Lance Systems to be exact, it was already starting to get dark out. She was catching them right at the end of the work day, which she wasn't sure if that was a good thing or a bad thing. Either way, she'd try and get a meeting with them tonight, if not schedule something for later.

Pulling up into the lot she parked right out front and headed in. It was a small office building tucked inside a larger business complex with lots of other businesses. As she entered the building she noticed nobody was there. The lights were all on, but no one was sitting behind the desk.

"Hello?" She said.

Eventually, a man entered from one of the back offices and came to greet her.

"Sorry about that," he said, "I hope you weren't kept waiting too long."

"Oh not at all. My name is Kayla Grace, and I was hoping to talk to you about the recent break-ins that have been occurring at some local jewelry store shops."

"Right, of course! Give me just one moment."

The man quickly returned to the back office and was gone for a short while before returning back to the lobby.

"If you don't mind following me back here, I have a manager who can speak with you."

"Great, thank you!"

Kayla followed the man to the back office. She thanked him as he opened the door for her, but stepping inside she realized immediately that she had made a grave mistake.

"No way..."

Inside the small office was a group of men, probably about 5 or 6, but joining them, was none other, than her new rival, Jennifer. How she had beaten Kayla to the punch was beyond her. She'd sort through those emotions later. Now was not the time for petty rivalry.

"What?! Another snoop?"

"I'm a reporter," Kayla said back, but she was also joined by Jennifer who retorted back with the same line.

"Hey, shut it!"

Jennifer rolled her eyes. She was currently sat on top of the desk, arms pulled behind her back and presumably tied together. Her legs were also pinned together with more rope as well, a single heel left on her feet with the other laying on the floor nearby next to her leather jacket. The large bow in the front of her pink blouse had come undone revealing some of her lacy bra underneath it. She wasn't gagged though, and there really weren't that many ropes circling her body...yet. Kayla turned to the sound of a lock clicking behind her as she watched the first man she had interacted with lock the door to the office. As if it mattered though. She was severely outnumbered.

"What now, boss?"

"Well tie her up too!"

"On it!"

Kayla didn't even bother putting up a fight as the man behind her grabbed one of her arms while another one approached her and grabbed her other one. They dragged her over to the desk and forced her to sit on it beside Jennifer. Taking rope from a nearby box they tied her wrists behind her back as well before securing her legs too. She looked at Jennifer who was taking everything in stride. There wasn't any look of fear on her face, just one of annoyance. Perhaps this wasn't her first time ending up like this...

"Okay well, let's just leave them here like this while we figure something out. We need to get all that inventory sorted out fast if they're onto us like this. Let's go take care of that first."

"Got it!"

And so the men scurried out of the room leaving Kayla and Jennifer alone by themselves.

"I can't believe you," Kayla said as she tried to strain her wrists and see if there was any slack in the rope.

"I can't believe *you*," Jennifer said as she too struggled in her restraints.

"How did you even know to come here?"

"Seriously?" Jennifer huffed, "do you think I'm that dumb. I read your notes. It wasn't that hard to put it all together. I'm surprised it took you so long honestly. Guess it's a good thing I'm here."

"Like you have room to talk. Look at where we are! If you had left things to me we wouldn't be in this mess."

"Oh please, don't even give me that. You end up like this all the time...everyone knows it."

"Well it doesn't look like you're any better now does it."

Kayla was about to keep the banter going when the door opened up again. The group entered the room and shut the door behind them.

"You ladies comfortable?"

"Perfectly," Kayla replied not giving him the satisfaction of her getting worked up.

"Are you sure we're good to just stash 'em here?"

"Yes. Everything's packed up. We're good to skip town and just get the hell out of here. Plus, with the two of them together, I'm sure they'll find a way out somehow. We just need to buy enough time to make our escape."

"Well, in that case, should we tighten those ropes up a bit?"

"Absolutely. And add some more for good measure."

Kayla eyed the large box with seemingly endless amounts of rope and watched as the men scooped up a bunch of it. Clearly, they weren't here to mess around...

"Hey," she said, "I'll be honest with you. I've tried to get myself out of these ropes ever since you guys left, and I haven't had any luck! We're probably good tied up like this. No need to do anything more."

"Shut it!"

Scooping Jennifer up off the desk she was lowered onto the ground on her stomach. From here her legs were brought up as she was placed in a hogtie, her other shoe coming off in the process leaving her feet in just her nylons. Kayla too was placed in a hogtie, but on the desk instead.

She could just spy Jennifer down on the floor wriggling around as the men pulled her bindings tight.

"K, we just gotta shut 'em up and then we're outta here."

"There should be a roll of tape in the box."

"Got it!"

The man reached into the box and pulled out the roll. Following this he grabbed both of Kayla's boots and yanked them off tossing them to the floor. Underneath, he found a pair of patterned ankle socks that he promptly peeled off Kayla's nylon clad feet. She knew where this was going...the only question was, did Jennifer?

"Alright ladies, open wide!"

"Open wide what the fmmmmmph!? GGGNMMMMPH!"

Kayla couldn't help but smile as she watched Jennifer's mouth get stuffed full of sock. It was jammed in deep into her mouth so that layers of duct tape could be wrapped between her lips sealing the sock inside.

"Ffffffmmmmph mmmmmmmmgggggph!"

It was music to Kayla's ears honestly. To hear her rival coughing and sputtering into her gag made up for the fact that Kayla too was having her own mouth stuffed full of sock along with many rounds of tape going between her lips and around her head.

"K, they shouldn't be going anywhere any time soon."

"Good, then let's dip!"

And so the men made their escape as Jennifer and Kayla remained hogtied and gagged in the office. As soon as the door slammed shut, the two girls went at it trying to get free from their ropes. Kayla watched the way Jennifer

flexed her wrists and ankles trying to find weak points in her bindings. Again, this clearly wasn't the first time she'd been left like this. She knew exactly what to do in terms of getting loose.

"Mmmmmmmmmph!"

Kayla grunted through her stuffed mouth as she too tried to get free. Thankfully, the men who had tied her didn't do the best job. The ropes were loose enough giving her room to move her wrists around a bit.

"Hmmmmph!" She grunted and groaned as she struggled through her ropes on top of the desk.

She let out a muffled grunt of triumph as she was able to lower her legs down and push herself upright. From here, all that was left was to get the rest of the ropes around her legs undone and she was good to go! Jennifer on the other hand was not as far along as Kayla was at all. She had barely made any progress on the ropes circling her wrists. Kayla smirked at the sight of this. It brought her much pride knowing she was a better escapee than her rival.

With her body now totally free of rope, the last thing Kayla did was reach up and undo her gag. She spat her ankle sock onto the floor as she flexed her jaw and licked her chapped lips.

"Ffmmmmmmph mmmmmmmph gggnnmmph!"

Jennifer, who had noticed Kayla had gotten herself free, was trying to signal for her to lend a hand and get her free as well. She was making gestures with her head for Kayla to come and help her and wiggling her nylon clad feet up and down, but Kayla had something else in mind. Hopping

down from the desk, she first fixed her dress so that it actually covered her rear again. Skirts and dresses were cute and all, but when you get tied up like that they start to get a mind of their own. Jennifer's was currently riding up quite high as well exposing the tops of her tights even!

"Hhhhhmmmmmp!"

"I'm sorry," Kayla said as she crouched down near Jennifer's head, "I can't hear you."

"Ffffmmmp ymmmp! Hhhmmmp mmmmp!"

"I just can't understand what you're trying to tell me."

"GGGnnnnnnmp!"

"Oh alright, if you insist."

Kayla reached up and undid Jennifer's gag by unwrapping the tape from around her mouth. She too spat Kayla's sock out and took a deep breath of fresh air in.

"God, could you have taken any longer?"

"You're welcome, you know."

"Whatever, just get me untied and let's get out of here! We need to turn those thugs in."

"Still waiting on that 'thank you.'"

"As if I'd ever thank you. Besides, I don't need your help. I could have gotten out of here if I wanted to. You just happened to get free first."

Kayla raised her eyebrow, "is that so?"

"Yeah, they must have tied your ropes loose or something. So don't feel so hot. Clearly, you had some kind of advantage."

"Well if that's the way you feel...then I guess I should just leave you like this."

"Fine by me! I'll get out of these ropes in no time."

"Right...well then, if you really don't need my help at all, then I guess I should put this back."

Kayla picked up her sock that had been stuffed in Jennifer's mouth. At the sight of it, Jennifer's eyes went wide before once again narrowing as she shot a dirty glance at Kayla.

"Don't you dare," she said.

"Hey, you asked for this, not me. You said, and I quote, I don't need your help."

"Yeah but I didn't meanmmmmmph!"

"Too late."

Kayla plunged the sock into Jennifer's mouth, something that had been done to her on many occasions but something she had yet to do herself. It was oddly satisfying to hear Jennifer's speech suddenly garbled behind the sock. She was about to grab the roll of tape and wrap more layers around Jennifer's head when she spied her other sock. She looked at Jennifer.

"Fffffmmmmph yyyymmmp nnnnmph ggggmmph!"

Her speech was muffled, but it could be better. Plus, her mouth didn't look that full. There was room for one more sock, surely.

Picking it up off the floor, Kayla balled up her other sock. Jennifer saw her doing this and knew what was coming. She shook her head frantically in protest, but Kayla just ignored her. Pushing the first sock aside, Kayla scrunched the second one into Jennifer's now gaping mouth. She could immediately hear the difference.

"There we go," she said, "much better."

"Fmmmmmmph!"

"Hey, I'm just doing what you asked me to do. Not giving you any help. If you're really going to get out on your own, no head starts!"

Kayla said this as she wrapped tape around Jennifer's head.

"Ggggggggnnnmph!"

"And there we are. Alright, now, I'm going to go call the authorities. You think you'll be able to get out in time?"

"Hrrrrmmmmmmph mmmmmmmph!"

"Eh, if not, they can always help you out."

"FFFFMMMMMMMPH!"

Jennifer roared behind her taped and stuffed mouth. Kayla wondered if she had been too mean. Probably, but it was too late now. When all was said and done, Jennifer wasn't able to escape her bindings by the time the police arrived. Reluctantly, Kayla helped cut her loose real quick before they went and gave their statements to the authorities.

The jewelry thieves were never actually caught. They skipped town and vanished. With them gone, there was at least some peace of mind amongst the local shop owners, but Kayla would have liked to have at least turned the thieves in. She settled for second best though.

The story was published under her AND Jennifer's name, which Kayla greatly disliked, but at least it was published. Ever since the ordeal, she could tell Jennifer was giving her the cold shoulder. It was to be

expected...after all they were rivals now...and Kayla had a feeling this was only just the beginning...

6

"Mmmmmmmph!"

Kayla had been worse straits, but at the moment she was currently not doing so hot. She was bound and gagged on the floor of a Boeing 737. Trussed up in the back of the plane, Kayla was tied up in the flight attendants galley, the curtain pulled over the entrance hiding her inside.

"Fmmmmmmph mmmmmph!"

Dressed as a flight attendant herself, Kayla writhed on the dirty floor, her once pristine uniform now all wrinkled and dusty. Her hair, which was previously tied up in a bun, was spilling down into her face. She was quite unhappy with how things had turned out, and to think at one point they were going so well too! It was an airtight (no pun intended) plan that she had come up with, or, so she thought. Now here she was bound and gagged with her accomplice most likely joining her any time now. It was her first time going undercover, and what an ordeal it was turning out to be!

She decided that if she was able to get free, she'd just stick to straight forward reporting from here on out...

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"There she is!"

Walking into the coffee shop, Kayla was met by the smiling face of a long time friend she hadn't seen in ages. Andrea jumped up from her seat as Kayla approached the table, giving her a big hug. Kayla was very happy to see her friend. She worked as a flight attendant so visits like these didn't come often.

Andrea was a few years older than Kayla, but didn't look it at all. She had a very youthful aura, and was always smiling and energetic. Her family came to Hazeldale from Mexico when Andrea was still very young. They worked hard to preserve their families cultural heritage and made sure Andrea grew up speaking both English and Spanish. As such, she had a slight Spanish accent to her voice, but Kayla noticed it slowly dwindling the older Andrea got. She was a very beautiful girl, with long brown hair that tumbled well past her shoulders and down to the middle of her back. Her smile was so contagious, as was her laughter. Kayla always looked forward to the times they got to spend together.

"How are you?" Kayla asked as she sat down.

"Great," said Andrea, "yeah, it's been a good year."

"How are you liking things so far?"

"Oh my god, they're fantastic! I'll tell you what, it's like being on vacation all the time."

"Is it really?"

"I mean, you have to deal with some pretty shitty passengers from time to time, and the pay isn't the best, but I've been to...I think about 10 states now, so that's super fun!"

"Well I'm glad to hear you're liking it. From your photos it sure looks like you're having a great time."

"Yeah, and I mean it has its ups and downs, but overall I'd say it's the best decision I ever made."

"Wow, high praise. Had anyone offer to buy your pantyhose yet?"

"Oh my god! Yes! I never would have thought that's a thing, but it totally is."

"Well...don't be shy...have you sold any?"

Andrea laughed, "no, not yet, but maybe! Some gals sell theirs for hundreds of dollars...it's nuts."

"Wow, that's pretty good."

"I know right!"

"Well let me know if you're selling any. I'll be your first customer."

Andrea laughed again, "girl, stop! You kill me."

"Anyways," Kayla said hoping she wasn't shifting the conversation too quickly, "you said in your text you had something you wanted to ask me about. Something I might be able to help you with."

"Yes, okay, it's a little bit of a story, so just bear with me."

Kayla mentally buckled herself in, having no idea where Andrea was going with this but ready for it to go anywhere.

"So, I'm working with this crew the other day, and right away I can just kind of tell something's a little bit off. Usually when you meet your crew you like talk a bit and share stories and get to know each other. I mean, all of us up there in the sky are like family anyway, so when you get to work with new crew you try and hit things off right away. Okay, so, I'm working with these 3 girls and two of them are

like super quiet. They don't really say much, at least to me and the other girl. I notice them talking a LOT by themselves though. I didn't really think anything of it at first, but then, when I was using the bathroom on the plane, I happened to catch a bit of their conversation they were having in the galley."

As Andrea recounted her story, Kayla was busy furiously typing this all up on her phone. Andrea talked quite fast, and so it was a struggle to keep up, but Kayla was doing her best.

"They were talking about some kind of shipment...I didn't hear what...but they were saying how there wasn't much time to get it moved once they landed, and that hopefully their contact at the airport would come through. They said that it was loaded into the plane no problem and that everything so far was moving smoothly and that all that was left was to get it to their contact and they'd finish the job. That was all I managed to pick up but...I don't know it sounded kinda shady. What do you think?"

Kayla finished getting everything into her notes and then set her phone down on the table.

"It definitely sounds shady," she said, "sounds like they're moving around something illegal at the very least."

"Yes! I knew it!"

Kayla smiled, "so, where do I come in with all of this."

"Well, I haven't caught them doing anything bad yet. I just overheard their conversation...so, I don't have any proof or anything. If they are doing shady things I'd like to turn them in! The only problem is I don't know how I'm supposed to catch them..."

"I'm guessing that's where you need my help, right?"

"Yeah, I was thinking maybe you could help me catch them red handed! I've read all your stories, and god, you're such a badass bitch! You've exposed some high level criminal activity!"

Kayla caught herself blushing ever so slightly. Even coming from a friend, compliments of such a nature were really flattering.

"Thanks," she said, "but I really don't know how I'm supposed to help out. Do I try and book a flight you're working on...?"

"So, I may have already worked out a plan."

"Oh really?"

"Yes, and if it's terrible please tell me, but I think it's pretty good if I do say so myself."

"Alright, well then let's hear it."

"Okay, so, just bear with me here because this might sound bad at first...but there's this other flight attendant who I've worked with, and she's Asian American just like you...and I think that if we did your hair like her, and your makeup too...you could go undercover as her and I don't think anyone would notice."

Kayla understood what Andrea meant now by "this might sound bad," but she was fine. Honestly, it was kind of a great plan. It would allow Kayla to see things first hand while assuming the risk of something bad happening to her instead of to Andrea's friend. Sure, if she was caught it'd spell bad news, but she was impressed with Andrea's initiative.

"Not a bad plan," Kayla said.

"Really?!" Andrea's eyes lit up as she leaned forward onto the table.

Kayla smiled, "yeah I mean, it sounds great. I've never gone undercover like this before...could be fun! Plus, I'm assuming I get to wear the flight attendant uniform and everything."

"Oh my god, of course! Aren't they just the cutest? Okay, so, I'll need to figure out when those two girls are scheduled to work and see if I can get us on the same shift as them. That might take a bit of work, but if I can manage it, the plan will be a go!"

"Great, so I guess I'll just wait to hear back from you until then, yeah?"

"Yes, oh my god this is just perfect! You know, being a flight attendant is cool and all, but to be a reporter like you? God, must be so much fun. I can't believe we get to work together!"

"Well, just be prepared in case things go south."

"Oh, I will. Don't you worry about me. I can handle my own!"

"Good, because you never know what might happen out there."

Andrea lifted her arm up and gave Kayla a salute.

"You got it!"

They held straight faces for as long as they could before bursting out into laughter. Kayla was thankful for her friend, and quite excited to go undercover with her!

The next few weeks seemed to fly by. Before Kayla knew it, the time had come to set their plan into motion. Andrea's

coworker, Lisa, had sent her uniform over and the morning of the "operation" Kayla laid it out on the bed in front of her. Work gave them an option of a shirt and skirt, shirt and pants, or dress for the uniform. Lisa had opted for the shirt and skirt. They were both very straightforward and plain. The shirt was a simple white dress shirt, and the skirt was all black. It did however come with a very cute scarf, which Kayla was looking forward to wearing. In addition to the uniform, flight attendants were required to wear nylons, but lucky for Kayla she had plenty on hand that would do the trick.

Grabbing a pair black semi-sheer nylons she slipped them on first before stepping into the skirt and putting the shirt on next tucking it in as she did so. The fit was perfect. Walking over to the mirror Kayla took a look at herself in the uniform. The way the skirt hugged her rear was quite flattering, and the shirt was formed enough that it highlighted the natural curves of her upper body in all the right places. Adding the finishing touch, Kayla took the scarf and tied it around her neck. It took her a few tries to get it right, but she finally managed to get it in a good spot.

She also did her hair a bit differently too. She usually never wore it up, but it's how Lisa wore it so that's how she styled it. She had borrowed a large clip from her, and so throwing her hair into a quick and messy bun she clipped it together at the back of her head.

To complete her outfit, she stepped into a pair of black heels she'd borrowed from Lisa too. They were shoes specifically made for flight attendants, and were super comfortable! Kayla was blown away by how good they felt

on. She took one last look at herself in the mirror before pulling up a picture of Lisa to see if there was any resemblance. It wasn't perfect, but pretty damn close she had to admit!

Grabbing her suitcase that she'd packed the night before, Kayla headed out and off to the airport where she'd meet Andrea. The flight wasn't long thankfully, and it was just the one flight that they'd be taking. After that, Andrea would have a layover for a day before working another flight back home. The plan was for Lisa to meet them and then swap out with Kayla during the layover. They were only giving themselves one shot to get the evidence they needed, but Kayla was confident in her abilities. She'd get to the bottom of things one way or another!

She arrived at the airport right on time. Andrea was waiting outside for her. She was wearing the dress version of the uniform paired with knee high black boots and tan nylons. As soon as she saw Kayla she skipped over to her, dragging her suitcase behind her.

"Oh my god!" She said in a hushed yet excited tone, "we're finally doing this! Oh, and let me just add, you look adorable. That uniform looks gorgeous on you, babe!"

"Thanks," Kayla replied, "I'm assuming I'll just follow your lead on everything."

"Yes, just do what I do. It should be a pretty smooth ride through security. Come on!"

Andrea skipped off as Kayla followed behind her. Security was a breeze, the easiest Kayla had ever experienced going through an airport. Then again, flight attendants did get expedited access. This was the only part

Kayla was somewhat nervous about, but her "disguise" worked perfectly. She passed through security no problems at all. So far, everything was going just according to plan.

Andrea and Kayla found their way to the gate. Standing near the entrance to the tunnel were two other flight attendants. She looked at Andrea who gave her a slight nod. So these were the supposed culprits.

They looked incredibly unassuming. Dressed in the same uniform Kayla and Andrea were wearing, they stood around with their suitcases in hand quietly looking down at their phones. The taller one was Molly, and the other was Lindsay (Kayla made sure to know their names ahead of time so as not to blow her cover). Nothing suspicious about them at all. Andrea took the lead and walked over to them as Kayla trailed behind.

"Hey," Andrea said, "how's it going?"

"Good," Molly responded with a smile, "we're just waiting for the go ahead so we can board and start setting things up."

"Awesome! This is my friend, Lisa. We know each other pretty well, but looks like this will be the first flight y'all get to work with her!"

"Nice to meet you, Lisa," said Lindsay as she smiled at Kayla.

If they really were up to something shady they were damn good at hiding it!

"Ladies, tunnel is clear. You're good to go!"

"Looks like we're up," said Molly.

Kayla and Andrea followed the two girls into the plane. They were going to be stationed at the front, while Kayla and Andrea were taking the back. As soon as they boarded, Andrea helped Kayla stow her bag. The flight attendants were given the bins at the back of the plane to stash their bags, and so Kayla set hers beside Andrea's. Molly and Lindsay stashed theirs in the compartment across the aisle. After this, they walked the aisles picking up any trash and resetting the cards in the back of the seats. So far, everything was going super smooth, but that didn't stop Kayla's heart from racing the entire time. It was such a rush being undercover like this.

"So," Andrea whispered to Kayla as they restocked the cart in the back, "what's your plan now?"

"Well," Kayla said, "I'm not sure. From what you were saying, it sounds like they're smuggling something...it would be best to try and look through their bags to see if I can find anything."

"And how are we going to do that without them noticing?"

"I'm not sure...I need to figure that out. In the meantime, let's just keep laying low."

"Copy that. We're going to start boarding soon anyway. Once we takeoff maybe we can try something then."

"Yeah, I'll keep trying to figure something out."

But truth be told Kayla was a bit stuck. She needed some kind of diversion to snatch one of the other flight attendant's bags to look through them and see if she could find anything. Thankfully they were at the front of the plane. Maybe all Kayla needed was to wait until takeoff and then

she could get into the bin and grab the bags. Surely if she was quick about it the girls wouldn't notice. Besides, her bag looked fairly similar to theirs anyway. How would they be able to tell which bag she grabbed from all the way at the front of the plane? It might be risky, but it was all Kayla was able to come up with for the time being.

Until then, she helped out with the boarding process. Thankfully, she had spent time studying the routine prior to this as Andrea had sent her quite a bit of guides to help Kayla blend right in. It felt a little awkward at first, but no one was giving her any weird looks so she had to be doing something right!

Once all the passengers boarded and their bags were stowed, the girls went through their safety demonstrations. They did the whole routine, with Kayla following along every step of the way. It wasn't too bad really. Besides, she'd seen this done enough times anyway that doing it herself didn't feel that foreign. Granted, she did practice the whole routine at home for quite a while. Once it was over, Kayla breathed a small sigh of relief. In terms of her duties as a flight attendant, that was kind of the worse part. Now all that was left was to find a way to investigate the bags before landing.

"Oh my god," Andrea said with a big smile on her face, "you did amazing!"

She and Kayla were sat in the back row for takeoff together. They had some time between then and when they reached cruising altitude to discuss their plans.

"Okay," Kayla said, "so here's the deal. I need to get into that overhead bin to check their bags. I can't risk having

either of them come back here while I'm doing it. Is there any way you can kind of help keep watch while I rifle through things?"

"Yes, absolutely. Plus, there's a curtain up between the main cabin and first class anyway. As long as they stay up at the front of the plane we should have no problem. But, I can help keep them occupied while you check."

"How so?"

"Our coffee pot is always having issues, but hey have one at the front I can use. I was thinking I'd head up there and ask to use their pot to prep coffee for our cart back here. While I'm up there I'll tell some of my famous long winded stories...they won't think anything of it, I'm always talking way too much anyway. But basically, while I'm up there keeping them busy, you can be back here going through their luggage. There's no telling how long I'll be able to make sure they're distracted so you'll need to be quick."

"Okay, that sounds like it should work."

And so the plan was set. Prior to beginning the in-flight service, Andrea headed up to the front to engage in her little ruse. Kayla's heart had settled down, but once again started racing as she reached up and removed one of the other flight attendant's suitcase. She brought it into the back galley and pulled that curtain closed too. Carefully unzipping the bag she started rummaging through it. There was nothing suspicious about it at first glance. It was just filled with spare clothes and other traveling essentials. However, that didn't stop Kayla from really investigating. If these girls really were smuggling something it would have

to be hidden really well, so well in fact that it would escape the notice of any TSA agent or machine. It clearly wouldn't be just set in the bag, but rather it would be hidden in some kind of secret compartment...

Bingo!

As Kayla felt around the bottom of the suitcase she noticed that on the one edge she could slip her fingers underneath the fabric. As she did so she could feel a few stacks of thin rubber sheets had been stuffed underneath the bottom layer of fabric. She tried to pull one out but they were pretty large and fairly well packed in. There was no way that these rubber sheets were part of the suitcases design. No, they felt intentionally placed inside. She had no idea what in the world they could possibly be though...was it drugs? What kind of drug could you store like that? If it was drugs Kayla was shocked as to how they managed to get this past security. She gathered it was probably something else, but for the life of her she couldn't figure out what this strange material was!

Zipping the suitcase back up, Kayla returned it to the overhead bin. A short while later Andrea returned with a fresh pot of coffee in hand. Together, she and Kayla convened in the galley to discuss Kayla's findings.

"So I was right!" Andrea said with a sparkle in her eye.

"Maybe...I just can't figure out what those sheets are...it's obviously something they're keeping hidden, but I don't know what it could be."

"Well that's okay, at least we know that they are smuggling something, right?"

"Yeah...wait a second that's right! We know now that they're smuggling something, or at least...we're pretty sure they're smuggling something. So that means all we have to do is trail them and figure out where the hand-off is happening."

"Ooooh, Kayla, good work!"

"So for now, we just finish this flight, and then from there I can start trailing them. I might even change out of this uniform and just head for it solo."

"You mean...I won't be your partner anymore...?"

Andrea stuck out her lower lip as her eyes grew big almost like she was about to cry.

"No Andrea it's just that."

"Ha, I'm just kidding!"

She nudged Kayla playfully, her smile returning once again.

"It's been super fun," she said, "thanks for doing this."

Kayla smiled. It had been fun, and from the looks of it the mission had been a success! Still, she held her breath until things were all squared away. She hadn't been in this business for that long yet, but long enough to know that the tides could turn quickly. She had to stay alert.

She and Andrea returned to their seats as the plane began its descent. The only thing left for them to do now was wait until landing, and then clean up the plane once all the passengers made their exit. From here, Kayla would tail Molly and Lindsay and see if she could spy the hand-off taking place.

Together with Andrea, she worked through their checklist to make sure everything was taken care of. She

watched Molly and Lindsay carefully in the meantime. They looked the same as they did earlier. No signs of suspicion yet.

"I'm going to take this coffee pot back to the front," Andrea said, "we should be just about finished cleaning up. You might want to go over the list one last time though to make sure we didn't miss anything."

"On it."

As Andrea headed back to the front to return the coffee pot, Kayla looked over the list in the galley. She was going to wait for Andrea to return to see what was next. Finally, she saw someone coming up the aisle, but it wasn't Andrea. It was Molly and Lindsay. Kayla expected them to stop at the overhead bin and start retrieving their luggage, but instead they passed by it and stepped into the galley with Kayla.

Something seemed off...

"Game's up, Lisa...you and Andrea stuck your noses where they don't belong!"

"What are you talking about?"

"You think we didn't take precautions? We know you were snooping around in our luggage. It has a silent alarm attached to the hinge. Bet you didn't think about that, did you?"

Damn...they really did plan things out so as not to get caught. It wasn't looking good for Kayla now.

"Your friend was easy enough to deal with...let's hope you're the same."

In perfect sync, Molly and Lindsay rushed Kayla. Grabbing her arms they wrestled her down to the ground.

From here, Molly straddled Kayla's body and pinned her down to the floor between her legs. Lindsay disappeared for a moment but quickly returned with her suitcase in hand. Opening it up she started to pull out numerous pairs of nylons. Kayla was astonished at how many she had stored in there. Andrea had said that it was a flight attendant thing to carry a bunch of backups in case your other pairs ripped. They were invaluable to have in that case, but unfortunately for Kayla they were also invaluable to have in a situation like this one!

With nylons in hand, Molly and Lindsay made quick work of Kayla as her wrists and ankles were bound with the soft material. Taking extra precautions to make sure she was really secure they connected her wrists to her ankles with more nylons so that she was now in a very snug hogtie.

"God...do you really think you're going to get away with this?"

"Yes, in fact, we do. I'd tell you to shut up, but in a moment here you're not really going to have much of a choice."

Kayla huffed as a strand of hair fell down into her face. Her bun was starting to come loose in all the commotion and she was already working up quite the sweat. She only hoped that Andrea was okay...that, and she wondered what the plan was for the both of them...

"Alright, now just be a good girl and open wide!"

Kayla rolled her eyes. There wasn't much use in putting up a fight now, and so she made the choice to save her energy and just let whatever was going to happen, happen.

Crouching down right in front of Kayla's face Molly grinned as she held up a handful of ankle socks in one hand along with another pair of nylons in the other. Setting the pantyhose down she grabbed Kayla's face and began stuffing in as many ankle socks as would fit.

"Gnnnnnnmph!"

"Atta' girl! Way to cooperate!"

She had no idea how many socks Molly was able to cram inside, but it felt like a lot! Her mouth was practically bursting and there was no way her mouth was ever going to close over the mass. To seal it all inside, Molly wrapped the nylons around Kayla's head and between her lips making sure to make at least a few loops before tying it off. Kayla's speech was completely cut off now reducing her to muffled grunts and moans.

"Fffmmmmmmph mmmmmph!"

Rolling around on the floor, she hurled insults at Molly and Lindsay who quite frankly could not have cared less.

"Should we bring Andrea back here too?"

"Yeah, best not to leave her up there like that. Captains are already off, but the cleaning crew is going to need to board eventually."

"What about your contacts here? Do you think they're going to be able to help take care of these two?"

"Absolutely. That's what we're waiting on. Once they get here with the cart, let's load them in. We'll use the back door."

"Got it."

"Nmmmmmmmph mmmmmmmmmmmgggggggph!"

Kayla thrashed around as she pulled and flexed in her restraints, both of her heels coming off in the process. Rope and tape made for much sturdier bindings, but these nylons were pretty much just as effective! The girls had made sure to pull their loops tight leaving little to no slack for Kayla to work with. At first Kayla thought that by using pantyhose she'd have an easier time getting out, but that was just simply not the case.

She lifted her head as she head Molly and Lindsay returning. Andrea's own muffled grunts joined Kayla's as she was dragged into the back galley and plopped down on the floor where she was promptly hogtied as well. Her boots and socks were missing from her nylon clad feet, and her mouth was plugged with a fluffy pink mass that peeped over the top of the nylons wrapped between her teeth. Molly and Lindsay were nothing if not resourceful...

"Mmmmmmmgggph!"

Andrea was really thrashing around as she sputtered through her gag. Kayla wasn't at all surprised though. Andrea was resilient so it was no surprise that she would be taking this all in stride.

"Okay, I just heard back from the rampers. They'll be here any minute now."

"Good, it's about time! We're cutting this really close."

"I know, but just hang in there. They'll be able to dispose of these two no problem. We just make the transfer after that, and we're out."

"FFffmmmmmp!"

Molly knelt down and grabbed a handful of Kayla's hair, now completely loose from its bun. She tugged on it hard

and pulled Kayla's head back causing her to yelp through her stuffed mouth.

"Now listen, you. Just sit there and be quiet. You've already screwed with our plans enough."

"Gggnnnnnnnmph!"

"Molly, just relax. Look, here they come!"

Lindsay and Molly stepped away for a moment, and upon their return they were joined by two men dressed in safety vests, goggles, and ear muffs.

"You can take care of them, right?"

"Yeah, shouldn't be any problem. Just leave it to us."

"Good. Now just get them out of here."

"You got it."

Starting with Andrea, the men unrolled what looked like a large blanket. Lifting her up they placed her on top of it before rolling her up with it. All the while she cried out through her sock packed mouth, but there was nothing she could do to stop the men from lifting her up and carrying her out of the plane. Before long they returned and repeated this process with Kayla. As if she wasn't already sweaty enough, being wrapped in a thick blanket made things so much worse. On top of that her mouth stretching gag made it super hard to breath. Closing her eyes she did her best to calm herself down and breath slowly so as to preserve her strength.

She was carried out of the plane and tossed into some kind of crate. She could feel Andrea moving around beside her. A lid was slammed over the top of the two girls plunging them into total darkness. The next thing Kayla

heard was the sound of a car engine firing up. Not too much time passed before they came to a stop.

Kayla and Andrea were lifted out of the crate and carried inside some building. Thankfully, the men were kind enough to not just leave them wrapped in the blankets, but this kindness was short lived as Kayla and Andrea were roughly dumped onto a concrete floor. Kayla looked around as she laid on her side, still snugly wrapped up in her hogtie and chewing on the ridiculous amount of socks stuffed in her mouth.

Andrea had settled down a bit now too. Perhaps the gravity of the situation was starting to hit her. Kayla was starting to get a bit nervous about things herself. At least she and Andrea were being stashed together like this. That would at least give them the opportunity to help each other escape...that is if they were ever given such an opportunity.

"They should be fine stashed here for the time being. I have a contact that will know just where to take these two pretty ladies, but they won't be available until later tonight."

"Sounds good. We'll just come back for them then I guess."

Good, Kayla figured that would be plenty of time for her and Andrea to make their escape.

"Fmmmmmph mmmmmph!"

Kayla urgently began signaling to Andrea as she wriggled her way closer to her. Thankfully, Andrea was able to pick up on her signals and together the girls began working their way free little by little...

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"Alright, they'll be here shortly so let's get the cargo ready for trans.."

BANG! SMACK!

thump. thump.

"Phew...that was easier than I thought it would be!"

Kayla and Andrea stood over the two men with their weapons of choice in hand: two led pipes to be exact. While these were great weapons for staging a sneak attack, Kayla quickly dove down and reached for the men's guns which would make far superior weapons. Handing one to Andrea, Kayla cocked the gun and pointed it at the men on the ground who were just starting to stir.

"Ugh...what the hell?!"

"Hands behind your head, now!" Kayla managed in her most threatening voice possible.

The men looked up at her and Andrea, realizing they had been clearly beaten. Sitting up they placed their hands behind their heads per Kayla's instructions.

"Now then," Kayla said, "let's figure out what you know."

The men were surprisingly cooperative giving Kayla the full extent of their operation. Then again, she was holding a loaded gun at them. Still, she was able to learn that the two flight attendants were in fact smuggling drugs, cocaine to be exact. It had been melted down and changed into those thin rubber sheets so as to make for easy transportation and near impossible detection. Lindsay and Molly had been helping transport the drugs for some time now. They were working with a bunch of different people too at a few

different airports. It was a fairly large operation that Kayla and Andrea had stumbled on, and it was all thanks to Andrea and her hunch.

The only thing left now was to call the police and get them involved in wrapping things up. Kayla was about to place the call when Andrea stopped her.

"Wait a second," Andrea said, "before you do that...we need to settle the score."

"What do you mean?"

Andrea turned to the two men.

"Do you know where Molly and Lindsay are?"

They nodded. Andrea turned to Kayla with a devious smile on her face.

"Let's go bag some bitches!"

.

knock knock knock

Molly turned her head toward the door. Who could that be at this hour? She was definitely suspicious, but whoever it was kept knocking. Slipping out of bed, she slid her sock clad feet into her slippers as she carefully walked over to the door and peered through the peephole. There was no one on the other side...

Perhaps she was tired, or perhaps she just wasn't thinking, but either way Molly opened the door to check the hallway. As soon as she undid the lock and started to open the door, someone on the other side slammed into the door sending Molly flying backwards. She fell onto the carpet, her thin leggings doing nothing to cushion her fall.

She looked up at who it was that had barged in, her jaw dropping to the floor.

"No way...but how?"

"Surprise, bitch," Andrea said as she slammed the door shut behind her.

Together, she and Kayla pounced on Molly wrapping her body with tape. They held nothing back as they wound layer after layer around her arms, legs, and chest. Just like she had done to them, they made sure to place her in a restricting hogtie. Kayla was so used to being on the receiving end of this kind of thing, that dishing it out felt a little strange. However, it did feel good to get a little revenge. She was even getting a bit of a rush out of it! Was this how thugs felt tying her up?

"Andrea...Lisa...listen...we can talk this out, okay? I can get you whatever kind of cut you want...you can share in the profits I swear! Look, we can even gang up on Lindsay. She's in the room next door!"

"Great, thanks for letting us know where she is," Andrea said.

"Lisa...please..."

"Oh, by the way," Kayla said as she reached for Molly's socks and peeled them off her feet, "the name's Kayla...as in renowned Tribune Reporter Kayla Grace."

"Who?"

"Oh forget it."

"Mmmmmmmmmmmph!"

Jamming both of Molly's socks into her mouth, Kayla made sure to pack them in as far back as they'd go because she wasn't done yet. Taking a pair of nylons Kayla managed to scrunch those in too.

"GGggnnnnnnnmmmm mmmmmmmmmph!"

Molly shook her head trying to dislodge her massive mouth packing, but Kayla had packed so much in it wasn't going anywhere! To really make sure of this though Kayla wound a bunch of tape around Molly's head. She had one final piece to add though. Tying Molly up was to get even for the fact that she had tied Andrea and Kayla up, but this last bit was for trying to get rid of them via whatever those goons had planned.

Taking a pair of underwear from Molly's suitcase, Kayla pulled it over Molly's head and wrapped even more tape around her mouth to seal the panties in place. Molly was fuming, and rightfully so.

Kayla stepped back to admire her and Andrea's work. She turned to Andrea who had a very accomplished look in her eyes.

"Shall we go and give Lindsay a visit?"

"I think so," Kayla said as she and Andrea headed out with tape in hand, "but after that we call the police and wrap this up. I'm ready to go home."

"Agreed. Come on, let's make this quick!"

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About a week had passed since Kayla and Andrea had caught Molly and Lindsay, and in that time Kayla had published a piece on the whole affair. It really was a large operation that she and Andrea had stumbled upon, and as such her story gained quite a bit of attention. She owed it all to Andrea though, and of course in her story she made sure to give her friend all the proper credits.

In any case, Kayla felt as though she was really starting to move up in the reporting world. She knew that this would come with all new kinds of trouble, namely a bigger target on her back, but she welcomed the challenge. She had made it through so much so far...how bad could things really get?

No, Kayla tried not to think this way. Those would be infamous last words if anything. Instead, she just kept her head held high and prepared herself for whatever was inevitably going to come next!

7

Kayla Grace was hot on the case. There was an alleged serial arsonist on the loose causing loads of damage throughout the city. Apparently, there had been a similar case of this years ago, and Kayla was curious to know if there was any connection. The city library would certainly hold the key to this. They kept old newspaper records as far back as they could, and all Kayla had to do was get her hands on them and compare what happened then with what was happening now. She wasn't exactly sure what she was looking for yet, but she'd figured she'd start there and see if it inspired any new leads in the case.

Kayla loved the library, especially the one in Hazeldale. It was this gorgeous brick building with huge windows in the front that let in tons of natural light. She would sometimes spend all day there reading books upstairs by the window. Today, she wasn't here to relax and take it easy. She was on a mission.

"So, what are you here for again?"

Madelyn didn't have anything else going on, and had voluntarily decided to join Kayla. It was a weekend after all.

"I need to check some old newspaper records they have. Hopefully it'll help me find a break in this arson case."

"Oh wait, does that mean we'll get to use that really cool archive room?"

"Yep, I've always wanted to see what it was like in there but never had a good excuse."

"Well now you do!"

Kayla smiled, but kept her gaze forward as she marched toward the library. It might have been the weekend, but Kayla was dressed for success. Sporting a chic look, per usual, she had paired a black shift dress over a white collared shirt with a thin belt accentuating her waist. Black tights tucked into a pair of tall black boots completed her library look. It may have been her day off, but she never let that stop her from looking her best!

Similarly, Madelyn was also dressed in an equally cute and put together library look. Wearing a black turtleneck underneath a patterned dress, tights, and black ankle booties she was just as ready for a day at the library as Kayla was! Her long brown coat flowed in the air as she walked beside Kayla. Together, the two of them made their way inside and up to the second floor where the archive room was.

"Hey, while you're busy, I'm going to go sit down and read for a bit. Just come get me when you're done."

As Madelyn trotted off, Kayla set her sights on getting herself access to the archive room. In order to get in, she was going to need permission from a librarian. Not just anyone was allowed in after all. The materials in there were especially fragile, and one needed a good excuse to go inside and browse them. Kayla had no worries about being let in though. Besides, she had been making quite the

name for herself around town. Surely she would be given access to the room!

"Sorry, but the archive room is closed," the librarian said as she adjusted her glasses before continuing down the aisle with her cart. Kayla noted the name tag on her blouse that read: "Alexandra Paige: Head Librarian."

Kayla was a bit taken aback by the librarians, short response. Then again, the woman looked to be quite stern. Her neatly pressed teal blouse was tucked into a beige skirt, also pressed and without any wrinkles. Her bare legs shimmered in the soft afternoon light and her feet were tucked into a pair of black heels. Her auburn hair was kept in a surprisingly messy bun at the back of her head. Perhaps she wasn't all that uptight.

Kayla hurried over and slid in front of the librarian forcing her to come to a halt with her book cart.

"When will it be back open?" Kayla asked.

"I'm not sure," the woman said clearly starting to get irritated at Kayla's persistence. "I have received specific instructions not to let anyone enter that room under any circumstances. Now please step aside."

The librarian's tone was firm. She clearly was not one to be pushed around. Kayla did as she asked and moved to the side allowing the head librarian to pass.

"Sure, but what if I told you it was to help catch a serial arsonist?" Kayla said as she continued to pester the woman.

"I don't care what it's for, rules are rules and they must be followed."

"But..."

"I'm terribly sorry, but there is nothing more I have to say about the manner. Now please, you are interrupting my work."

Kayla was not one to admit defeat easily, but she could tell that she wasn't going to get anywhere with this woman. She could just judge from the look in her eyes and the way she carried herself that she wasn't going to budge no matter how persistent Kayla was. It was time to try a different approach.

"Madelyn, I need your help."

"Come on, can't I just keep reading in peace?"

"Sorry, but the librarian is being a real pain in the ass."

"How so?"

"She won't give me access to the archive room!"

"Oh, is it closed for the day?"

"I mean...yeah. At least, that's what she's saying. Something tells me she doesn't want me going in there."

"Yeah," Madelyn said, "because it's closed."

Kayla rolled her eyes as Madelyn grinned deviously.

"Are you going to help or not," Kayla said planting her hands on her hips.

"Right, sorry. What do you need me to do?"

"Come with me."

As Madelyn followed behind Kayla, they inconspicuously made their way toward the librarian again keeping a safe distance so as not to be noticed. Thankfully she was too busy stocking the shelves that she didn't look around much.

"Okay," Kayla said, "you see her cart there?"

"Yeah, what about it?"

"Do you see the keys clipped to it."

"Yeah...wait, you're not going to steal her keys and break in are you?"

"Duh, what else did you think I was planning to do?"

"I thought you needed my help to like charm her into letting you in or something!"

"I do need your help to charm her...but not to let me in. To distract her!"

Madelyn shook her head.

"Kayla Grace, this is a recipe for getting into trouble."

"Look, are you going to help me or not?"

"Fine, just don't say I didn't warn you."

And with that, Kayla's plan was put into action. Madelyn skipped over to the librarian and started working her charm. Kayla listened as she made up a fake story about needing help finding some books a few sections over. The plan worked perfectly! Off the pair went, leaving the cart behind with the keys sitting right out in the open! Kayla hurried over and scooped them up. She didn't have much time to waste. She needed to get to the archive room, unlock the door, and rush back to replace the keys before the librarian knew what was going on.

Thankfully, Madelyn was doing a bang up job keeping the woman busy. Kayla had plenty of time to get the door unlocked and return the keys. As she raced back to the archive room which was now unlocked and ready to be explored, Kayla slipped inside and pulled out her phone. She had to be sneaky about this and as such didn't want to turn on the lights. Using the flashlight on her phone instead

she crept around looking for the newspaper records she needed.

"Jackpot! There we go!"

Grabbing the records off the shelf, Kayla set them down on a nearby table as she flipped through them. She was so engrossed in trying to find what she was looking for that she had completely let her guard down and missed the fact that a door had opened and shut behind her...

WHAM!

Something heavy slammed into the back of Kayla's head as she tumbled out of her chair and onto the floor. Her vision slowly faded as the sound of heels clapping on the soft carpet grew closer and closer.

"Looks like someone doesn't know how to listen. No matter...you'll learn your lesson. I'll make sure of it."

These were the last words Kayla remembered hearing before her vision went out and everything went dark.

.

"Mmmmmmmnph."

Kayla slowly came to. Her vision was still foggy, but at least she was awake now. She had no idea how much time had passed, but she remembered being ambushed. The back of her head was throbbing from the surprise attack, but as Kayla looked around and took stock of her situation a little headache was the least of her worries!

"Hmmmph!?"

She was on her back, her arms pulled up and resting on the table past her head. Her torso was pinned down to the table with loads of soft white rope that looped around and underneath the table somewhere. Her legs where in a v-

position with her feet resting on the desk just below her rear. They were kept in this v-shape with more rope tied around them at multiple points pinning the heels of her feet to her thighs.

She was in a real bind, and as she strained in the ropes that held her down she quickly discovered that whoever had tied her up knew how to properly tie a knot! She had been properly gagged too with a large amount of stuffing crammed into her mouth sealed in place by tape wrapped around her head.

click

Kayla turned her head as she heard the door unlock. In walked the librarian, shutting the door and locking it behind her. She gleefully sauntered over to Kayla, slapping a long wooden ruler in her hand as she did so.

"Well, well, well," she said as she waved the ruler around, "look what we have here!"

"Mnn hmphphmr mmph mmmm gnmmp!"

"Good. It seems those socks of yours did the trick."

"Mmmmmmp!"

Glancing over to the floor beside her, Kayla spied her discarded boots and sighed into her gag, now realizing it was her two bright pink crew socks that she was chewing on. She just could not catch a break!

"If I recall, I remember telling you that this room is strictly off limits. Did I not?"

"Fnch mnnmmmp! Mmph mm nnph nf hmrm mnn crnphm hnphch!"

"My, even with both of those socks stuffed in your mouth you're still incredibly noisy."

"FffmmmpH!"

"Well, I think it is quite clear to me that someone has not learned their lesson. It's a shame really. I thought tying you up would send the message, but it seems as though I must use...stricter disciplinary measures for you to learn."

"PHhnph nphn'ph phphrncph mnnngh?!"

"Now then, let's see if this doesn't teach you to stay out of trouble and follow the rules like everyone else."

Grabbing Kayla's bound ankles, the librarian lifted her legs up so that her knees were pushed into her chest. Doing so exposed Kayla's rear which was already exposed in the sense that her dress was no longer covering it! Her tights weren't that thick after all and did little to hide her patterned underwear!

"Pnph mm mmgph nnmmn mnn nnphphm nmnnhgmgmpH!"

WHACK!

"WWHHMMMPH!"

Kayla yelped through her gag as the librarian slapped her rear with the ruler. It really stung!

WHACK! WHACK!

She came down again and again, Kayla's thin tights doing absolutely nothing to cushion the repeated blows.

"FFFMMMMPH!"

"There we are," the librarian said as she let go of Kayla's legs, "it's a shame I don't have my feathers with me. Otherwise this next part would be really fun! Oh well, I suppose I'll have to work with what I have."

Setting down the ruler, the librarian placed her hands on either side of Kayla's stomach and began to tickle her.

"PHphnp np! Pmmnphm! hnhnhnhnhnmmp!"

Kayla kicked and recoiled trying to break free of the woman's dancing fingers relentlessly attacking her sides, but with how tied up she was there was no escape for Kayla. Tears poured from her eyes as she laughed and sputtered into her socks. She was already quite ticklish to begin with, and the librarian seemed to know exactly where to target! Then again, with the way she had tied Kayla up, it was most likely not her first time doing something like this...

Finally stepping back as Kayla took deep breaths in and out through her nose, the librarian planted her hands on her hips as a wide smile cracked across her face.

"So then, have we learned our lesson?"

"Fffmmmmph!"

"No? Well, that's quite a shame now isn't it. I suppose I'll have to keep you here for longer then."

"And just what do you think you're doing?"

"Mnnmmmn!?"

The librarian whipped around to see Madelyn standing in the doorway.

"Did you really have to tie her up like that?"

"Yes! I gave her explicit instructions that this room was closed and off limits for the day. She's lucky this is the only thing I did. I could have her banned from the library you know!"

"Fffnnnmph!"

"Right...well I think it's safe to say that you're a crazy bitch, and that this is not okay. I'm going to find security."

"Oh no you're not!"

The librarian rushed Madelyn, who was midway through opening the door and yanked her back. She slammed the door shut and then pounced on Madelyn, wrestling her to the ground. Her first order of business was to rip of Madelyn's long brown coat and throw it aside.

"Hey! Watch it! That's an expensive jacket!"

"Oh hush up!"

With Madelyn on her stomach, the librarian pulled her arms behind her back and lashed Madelyn's wrists together with white rope. Kayla just had to sit there and chew on her socks as she watched her friend get tied up.

"God, you insufferable hag! Get off me!"

"I thought I told you to hush up!"

"Oh yeah? Make me!"

"Suit yourself!"

Flipping Madelyn onto her back, the librarian grabbed her legs and one by one yanked her booties off her feet revealing a pair of dark ankle socks. Grinning she peeled the socks of Madelyn's nylon clad feet and balled them up in her hand. Due to Madelyn's refusal to quiet her protests, the librarian had no problem shoving both socks deep into Madelyn's mouth while she was busy yelling.

"Fmmmmmmph!"

"There we are. Let's see how much noise you're able to make now!"

"Mnnnnph ngmm nnphphm hnphchhhh!"

"That's what I thought! Now, hold still while I finish up!"

"Fmmmmmmph!"

In just a few short minutes, the librarian had Madelyn completely trussed up in a hogtie on the floor. Madelyn cursed and grunted through her socks, which by the way had been sealed inside her mouth with tape wrapped around her head. She rolled around on the carpeted floor, struggling with lots of vigor.

"Well, I think my work here is done, wouldn't you say so?"

"Ggnnnnnnph! Hhmmmmmmph!"

Both Kayla and Madelyn shouted through their stuffed mouths. The librarian laughed at the sight of both of them.

"I'll leave you two here to think some more. From the looks on your faces it really doesn't seem like you've learned much at all! It's no matter to me really. I guess I'll just have to leave you here for as long as it takes."

"Nnnnnnnmmmmmmmmph!"

"Don't worry, I'll be back. Have fun, ladies!"

"Fmmmmmmph mmmmmmmmmph!"

And with that, the librarian walked out of the room and shut the door behind her. The sound of the door locking echoed through the dark room. As Kayla flexed in her bonds, she watched Madelyn struggling on the floor trying to get loose. Her blonde hair swishing around as she flexed her wrists and nylon clad ankles in the ropes.

Kayla let out an exasperated huff through her nose as she prepared herself for a very long afternoon. She had no idea how she and Madelyn would get out of the bind they were in. What had started out as a fun day at the library had turned into a real predicament! Such was the nature of

Kayla Grace's adventures though, and she was starting to think it wasn't going to change any time soon!

8

"Ugh, I cannot stand these stupid outfits!"

Kayla held her arms close to her sides, her face flush with embarrassment. Meanwhile, Madelyn was practically skipping along, basking in the glow of all the ogling faces from the guests at the party.

"Really?" Madelyn said, "I love it!"

Much like Kayla's recent adventure she had found herself undercover again. Only this time, the stakes weren't nearly as high (pun indeed intended). The only tradeoff being she was dressed in an utterly ridiculous and revealing outfit. A pink bunny suit to be exact.

How she had come to be dressed in such a way and attending such a party was quite simple. She had received a tip that a big drug deal was going down and the party was to be used as a cover. It was an exclusive event, but thanks to some friends of some friends she had managed to get herself and Madelyn on the list.

The list of waitresses that is...bunny suit wearing waitresses at that.

As such, she and Madelyn were required to wear the waitress uniform for the party which consisted of the pink high waist one piece suit which had a little white fluff ball in the back for a tail, black pantyhose, and pink high heels.

Oh, and of course, the look was not complete without a set of white cuffs and pink bunny ears.

At least Madelyn was having fun with the get up. Kayla was just ready to bust the deal and get out of there!

"Hey," she said as she grabbed Madelyn's arm, "remember to act professional and don't make a scene."

"Right...sorry."

"It's okay, just keep on the look out."

"You mean like that?"

Kayla looked to where Madelyn was pointing. A group of men were gathered in the corner of the room whispering together. Before long, they look off down a hallway, looking back to make sure they weren't being followed as they did so.

"Good eye," Kayla said as she took off with Madelyn.

Trailing the men down the hall and up a flight of stairs in the other wing of the mansion, Kayla and Madelyn kept a very safe distance as they carefully followed them around. The girls even went so far as to remove their pink heels to help hide the sound of their footsteps. Their nylon clad feet made hardly a sound as they crept down the hallways after the men.

The final destination was an upstairs bedroom far away from the main party. The faint sounds of music and talking could only barely be heard now, but other than that it was deathly silent. Kayla and Madelyn held their breath around the corner as they listened carefully to the conversation taking place in the bedroom. Reaching into her cuff, Kayla pulled out a small recorder and clicked it on as quietly as she could.

"Is this all of it?"

"Yep, there should be at least three hundred pounds in the boxes here."

"We'll see about that. I don't want you skimping me on any product."

"Trust me, it's all there. But feel free to weigh it yourself."

"I will. This is no small sale."

"Look, I get it, but I'm telling you it's all there. I always come through for you, don't I?"

"Yeah, yeah, whatever."

As Kayla continued to listen in to the men's conversation, recording it all as she did so, Madelyn had forgotten her role of the investigation.

Being the lookout!

"And just what do we have here?"

Kayla and Madelyn whipped around to see a pair of burly men towering over them from behind. Before Kayla had time to scold Madelyn for being such a lousy lookout, the men grabbed the two girls and lugged them into the bedroom. Kayla strained against the man holding her, but his grip was tight around both of her arms. Plus, without her heels on her feet she wasn't left with any way to fight back. A kick with a pantyhose clad foot wasn't really going to do much!

"Found these two little bunnies snooping outside!"

"Dammit! And here I thought things were going so well."

"Whadda we do with 'em?"

"Well they've seen us now haven't they?! The whole operation is at risk at this point!"

"We can forget we saw anything," Madelyn said in a desperate yet completely naive attempt to wriggle out of their situation.

The men all laughed of course as Kayla rolled her eyes. It was worth a shot at least.

"That's cute. Look, just tie them up and leave them here. I'll figure out what to do with them once the party is over with. We don't want to be missing for too long. So hurry up, get them secured, and then let's get back to it."

"Roger that!"

The brutes holding Kayla and Madelyn dragged them over to the large bed in the center of the room and tossed them onto it. Pulling open a nearby dresser they produced handfuls of nylons and started dumping them onto the bed. With two goons to each girl, Kayla and Madelyn were tied up in no time.

Their legs were pressed together as nylons were tied around their ankles and knees. At the same time, the other goons were behind Kayla and Madelyn tying their arms behind their back. They even went so far as to force their elbows together before looping rope around their upper arms. Kayla winced as they did this, her chest being forced out in the process.

From here, the men proceeded to use pretty much every last bit of pantyhose they could get their hands on to further envelop the girls as much as they possibly could. They wrapped pantyhose around their chests, above below and even between! They were even so "kind" as to loop nylons between their girls legs making sure to pull real

tight on them before tying them off around their waists. None of this was necessary, but then again it never was.

Finally, with both girls more than tied up, the men reached back in the dresser to finish up the job.

"Time to keep you bunnies quiet!"

"I have a name you lousy mook, it's Kayla
Grmmmmmmmmph!"

"Oh piss off!"

"Fmmmmmmmmmmph!"

The man had taken the liberty of shoving two pink dress socks into Kayla's mouth scrunching them in as far as they would go before taking a long thigh high sock and wrapping it around her head and between her lips. She turned over to watch Madelyn suffer the same treatment with another pair of dress socks.

"She's the mouthy one, you don't need to gag me! I'll be quiet as a moummmmmmph!"

Once again Kayla rolled her eyes at her best friend as her mouth was crammed full of socks followed by the thigh high cleave gag. Despite her gag, Madelyn continued to protest.

"NNnnnnngggmmmmph mmmmmph hhhmmmmph!"

The men ignored her muffled shouting and instead roughly flipped her over onto her stomach before grabbing what little pantyhose they had left to tightly hogtie her. Kayla was promptly hogtied as well, the two girls now laying on the bed side by side grunting and cursing through their stuffed mouths.

"That should keep ya nice and quiet then!"

"Fmmmmph ymmmmph hmmmmmmph fffmmmmph!"

The men laughed, "yeah, cuz we totally understood that."

"Hey...I know we have to get back to the party and all...but it wouldn't hurt if we took a few minutes to teach these snoops a little lesson, would it?"

"FmmmmmpH!?"

Kayla and Madelyn both turned to each other, their eyes wide with fear as to what the men had planned for them. Surely it couldn't be as bad as the Harvest Party incident. God, what was with these goons and their weird fetishes?!

"I don't see why not?"

"Nnnnnnnph mnnnnnn nnnmmmpH!"

SMACK!

"Gggggnmmph!"

Kayla yelped as one of the men smacked her exposed rear, quite hard at that.

SMACK!

"Nnnnnmmmmnch!"

Madelyn's butt was slapped next as she recoiled from the blow. Their rear ends were subjected to smack after smack as the men joyfully took turns giving the girls a proper spanking. Thankfully, this didn't go on for that long, but what followed was almost just as bad.

"Let's see how ticklish you bunnies are!"

"NNNNMPH!"

Kayla loudly protested through her sock stuffed mouth as she tried to turn herself over and hide her exposed nylon clad feet from the goons, but there was no escape as he held her legs with one hand and relentlessly tickled her feet with the other.

"Hnhnhnnhnhnmmpph! Phphnpphhh!"

Tears of laughter poured down her face as her and Madelyn's feet were ruthlessly tickled. Out of the corner of Kayla's eye she could see Madelyn's long golden locks flailing around as she writhed in her bonds trying to get free.

"Hnhnhnmmpmh! Mmmmmph! Nnnnnnnnmph!"

"Okay, boys, I think they've had enough. Come on, let's get back to the party."

The men retreated and left the room, as Kayla and Madelyn took their time to catch their breath as they both took in deep breath after deep breath through their noses. Kayla's behind was hot and stung from all the slaps it had endured, and her feet felt weird and tingly. Was she ever going to get a break from this kind of stuff?! Probably not she figured, but now wasn't the time to worry about that. She had to focus so that she and Madelyn could get loose and get out of there, otherwise they were in for a lot worse than just some slaps on the ass...

9

"Ladies and gentlemen thank you for flying with us today. The temperature is currently 65 degrees Fahrenheit, or 18 degrees Celsius and slightly overcast. Whether you're coming home, or here to see the sights have a great rest of your day here in England!"

Grabbing her luggage Kayla stepped outside and took a deep breath of that sweet England air. Thankfully, Hazeldale had a fairly similar climate, so it didn't feel that different from home. She was used to the clouds and the rain. The weather was supposed to be pretty good for her trip. Today was the only gloomy day in the forecast, but the rest of the time it was hopefully going to be decently warm and sunny! She had landed at Gatwick airport just south of London. From here she would take the train down further South to where she was staying for the week.

Kayla made it an effort to travel abroad at least once a year. Thanks to Andrea she was able to get buddy passes and so traveling like this was totally affordable. This time around she was staying in the Southeast England countryside at the legendary Marigold Inn. They had horseback riding nearby, plus it was close enough to Rye and Camber Castle that she figured she'd visit out those places as well. On the way back she'd stay in the city for a few nights before heading back home.

The train ride out was so dreamy. Kayla found herself staring out the window almost the whole time. She adored the English countryside. She had shows like Downtown Abbey and The Crown to thank for that! Between gazing out the window and reading one of the many books she packed, the train ride passed by quickly. After getting to the station it was a quick taxi ride out to the inn. It was just as cute as the pictures made it out to be, no, it was even cuter. Leading way to the grounds was this gorgeous arch covered in ivy that spilled all down the sides and across the stone walls that ran in front of the property. The stone path looked old and cobbled together, but it was so charming and rustic at the same time.

The inn itself was of brick construction with more ivy winding its way up the sides at various points. There were a couple other buildings nearby as well, Kayla figured these were for any live-in staff and the owners. Which, speaking of the owner, it was this sweet older lady named Gladys Abner. The Inn had been in her family for generations, and she was the most recent inheritor of the property. Kayla was looking forward to meeting her. From some of the reviews she had read online, she was a delight to talk to.

Stepping into the main lobby, Kayla was greeted by a young lady at the front desk. She was wearing a black sweater over a white button up shirt tucked into a black skirt. Her brunette hair was held back in a loose ponytail. A pair of thin glasses sat on her nose.

"Welcome," she said with her warm English accent as she greeted Kayla with a smile, "how was your travel?"

"It was great," Kayla said, "yeah, not bad at all."

"Lovely to hear. Please, you may set your bags down over there. When you're ready, I can check you in right up here."

"Awesome!"

Setting her bags down Kayla went through the check in process, getting her room assignment as well as her key. She was staying up on the second floor in the Studio Suite. Making a beeline up to the room, Kayla hurried her way in and for a moment just stood there taking it in. The vaulted ceiling made the space feel so much larger, and the skylights up above bathed the room in warm light. The first order of business after kicking off her sneakers was to jump onto the bed and just lay there for a minute. She didn't mind traveling, but for some reason she was feeling pretty tired.

For fear of falling asleep and really messing up her cycle, Kayla forced herself up and headed for the bath. It was rare that she would actually take a bath, but on vacation where a large tub was so readily available she just had to indulge herself.

"Oh yeah...that hits the spot," Kayla said as she lowered her body into the warm soapy water once the tub was full.

She sat there for a good while, letting the steam exfoliate her pores. However, she was not about to let herself get all pruneey from sitting in a tub full of water for too long. Being mindful of this, she got out just as she started to feel the skin on her fingertips wrinkle ever so slightly.

Wrapping herself in a towel, Kayla washed her face at the sink before conducting her nightly skincare routine and drying her hair. Sauntering back into the bedroom, Kayla was practically floating. She was so relaxed and at ease, even after a long day of travel. She changed into her sleepwear and crawled under the covers, allowing her body to just sink into the mattress. She laid there for a moment and just closed her eyes, breathing deeply as she did so.

This trip was all about relaxation, and so far Kayla was off to a great start. Grabbing her book from the nightstand she decided she'd round off the night by reading as much as she could before falling asleep. She hardly lasted even ten minutes! With each new line, Kayla's eyes grew heavier and heavier. Before long her head gently fell onto her pillow as sleep overcame her.

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The next day, Kayla awoke feeling very well rested and ready for a busy day of...well, not much really! The first thing she wanted to do was explore the grounds and go for a nice stroll. Maybe do some reading outdoors even. Basically, just take things easy. She had no real set agenda for her stay at the inn. The only thing she really wanted to do was go horseback riding and maybe take a canoe ride on the lake. Otherwise, she'd just stroll around the grounds and enjoy the countryside scenery.

Getting dressed for the day she put on a white t shirt tucked into black jean shorts. Dark nylons and lace up boots finished out the ensemble as well as a pink fluffy

coat. It was a bit chilly outside after all, thankfully the weather was supposed to improve tomorrow!

She quickly did her makeup and straightened her hair before heading downstairs to grab some breakfast. Locking the door to her room behind her, she turned to head down the hallway but was stopped as she bumped into someone.

"Oh my god," she said, "I'm so sorry, I wasn't even looking!"

The girl smiled, "no, please, I wasn't looking where I was going. My apologies for being in such a hurry."

From the looks of her she appeared to be a little younger than Kayla, but probably not by that much. She was from the area, or at least she sounded like it with her English accent. She was taller than Kayla too, but a good couple of inches. But she had a very kind and fair face, and Kayla could tell she was genuinely apologetic for their little collision earlier. Her outfit was super cute if Kayla did say so herself. She was wearing white shirt under a red jacket, light blue jean shorts, and red sneakers with black tights. Her medium length brown hair framed her face with one side swept over her shoulder. Kayla decided to be friendly and continue the conversation with the girl.

"You know, I'm sure the front desk would scold you for rushing around. Doesn't quite fit the relaxing vibes of staying at a countryside inn."

The girl smiled, her green eyes sparkled in the soft indoor lighting.

"I'm sure they would," she said, "but unfortunately I'm not here to relax. I wish I was though, this is such an adorable place! I could stay here for ages!"

"Right? Well, I don't want to get in your way any longer than I have to. Have a good day!"

"Thanks, you too!"

Kayla headed down the hall toward the staircase as the girl headed the opposite direction. She pondered for a moment what someone like her could be doing at the inn if she wasn't here on vacation. Was she one of the staff? No, not with the way she talked about the inn. She was here on some kind of temporary business. But what kind of business could that be? Kayla shook her head after realizing how much she was thinking about this. She wasn't here to snoop! But was the girl she ran into here to snoop...?

No! Kayla had to stop worrying about it. Whoever that girl was and whatever she was here to do it had nothing to do with Kayla. Yes, she was here to rest and relax and that was it.

Making her way down to the dining room now she was greeted by the girl who had checked her in.

"Good morning! How did you sleep?"

"Great! Yeah, I'm loving everything so far."

"We are just so glad to hear that. Please, have a seat over in the dining room. I'll bring you some breakfast."

Kayla thanked the girl as she sat down. Shortly after the front desk girl returned with a tray of assorted breakfast foods. It was quite the spread and smelled amazing! Kayla

dug in right away, her book propped up on the table so she could read as she ate.

"I didn't find anything, but then again I only conducted a preliminary search. Nothing too detailed. But so far, nothing out of the ordinary."

Kayla set her book down as she perked up and listened. She recognized the voice. It was the girl she had run into upstairs!

"Well, I do hate to trouble you but most of the problems have been occurring...at night."

A different voice had responded. It was older, much older, and Kayla's initial guess was that it belonged to Gladys Abner the owner of the inn. She continued to eavesdrop on the conversation. It was happening just down the hall and around the corner. Perhaps they didn't realize there was anyone in the dining room.

"Well, if it brings you peace of mind, I can stay around until nightfall to see if I find anything."

"I would be so very grateful if you did. This inn means the world to me, and I just...I want to get to the bottom of this."

"Of course, as do I! I'd hate to see such a cute little place go under."

"I appreciate you saying that. Well, if there's anything else you need, you know where to find me."

"Thanks, Mrs. Abner."

"Darling, what have I told you? Call me Gladys, you needn't be so formal."

"Sure thing, Gladys."

"That's the spirit!"

And with that the conversation was finished. The next thing Kayla heard was footsteps coming up the hallway, and so she quickly picked her book back up so as not to appear like she had been eavesdropping. Out of the corner of her eye she watched the girl from before walk by her and toward the front counter. Every fiber of Kayla's being was telling her to follow her and reveal that she was a reporter. After what she had just heard her first hunch about the girl had been spot on! Call it a reporter's intuition or what, but that girl was definitely here to look into something strange going on at the inn.

Kayla went back and forth in her mind as to whether or not to get involved. On the one hand, she could pretend she hadn't heard anything and just go on with her vacation. On the other hand, if there was something strange happening she would eventually get wrapped up into it anyway so she might as well get ahead of the curve. She let out a sigh as she came to this conclusion. It seemed that no matter where she went, some kind of adventure awaited her. Setting her book down she got up and chased after the girl. She knew she'd probably come to regret this, but throwing caution to the wind she dove headfirst into whatever she was about to rope herself into.

"Hey, wait up!"

The girl turned around stopping in the middle of the hall.

"Oh, hello," she said, "seems like we've crossed paths once again!"

"Yes, hey listen, I don't mean to be a lousy snoop...but I kind of overheard your conversation with the owner just now."

"I see...blimey, I knew it wasn't best to have that chat right out in the open like that."

"No, it's okay. My name is Kayla Grace, I'm a reporter from the U.S.."

"Well fancy that, eh?"

"Yeah, I'm here on vacation for the week. So, trust me when I say eavesdropping on your conversation was the last thing I intended to do."

"I can relate to that..."

"But now that I've heard what's going on...well, I can't help but offer to lend a hand."

"I see, well miss Grace, I can assure you that I am more than capable of handling this on my own. If you're here on holiday, then please, by all means go off and enjoy your stay!"

"I wish I could, but now that I know that somethings afoot...it's going to be awfully hard to truly relax."

"Well, from one 'lousy snoop' to another, I totally understand what you mean."

"So is it alright if I jump in and help you out?"

"Sure thing! I'll never say no to some good sleuthing company after all," Sara said with a wink.

Kayla smiled, "cool, thanks."

"By the way, the name's Sara, Sara Philips. You said your name was, Kayla, right?"

"Yep!"

"Well, Kayla, let's find a good spot to sit down and I can let you in on everything I know so far."

And so the two snoops did just that. Heading back to where Kayla was eating breakfast, Sara filled her in on what it was that was going on at the Marigold Inn. She was there looking into a haunting, or at least that's what Gladys Abner had called her up to look into. She was having quite a hard time keeping staff around, and the new ones she did manage to hire would quit in a few weeks. Guests were becoming harder and harder to come by as well. The reason being for all of this were the strange occurrences reported on the grounds of the inn. Strange sounds were heard late at night, lights would flicker and then be perfectly fine, and a few guests had even claimed to see a ghost walking out in the gardens!

These were all new problems for the inn. For years it had been an incredibly popular vacation spot out in the countryside, but with all the strange phenomenon happening it was at risk of going out of business! That's where Sara, and now Kayla were to come in. Gladys didn't want to believe that the inn was haunted, and was trying to see if there was some logical explanation for what was happening. It was up to Sara and Kayla to look into the matter and see if they could figure out just what was "haunting" the Marigold Inn.

"I spent some time looking around already," Sara said, "and so far everything seems pretty normal. Then again, it is daytime and the real spooky stuff seems to happen at night! I have an engagement this evening, otherwise I'd stay over!"

"Well, it's a good thing I'm around then!"

"I agree! If you don't mind, tonight, would you stay up a bit and be on the lookout to see if you notice anything strange?"

"Of course!"

"Excellent. I'll be around tomorrow again. You can let me know if you see anything past dark."

"Fingers crossed I do!"

Sara smiled as she got up from the table.

"Well, if you have things all squared away here, I think I'll head out early then. I really appreciate the help with this one. Sorry about your holiday though. I know this is probably the last thing you wanted to be worrying about."

"Ah, don't worry about it. I've come to realize that no matter where I go something like this seems to happen. Trouble just follows me around I guess."

"It's the same here for me!"

"How long have you been doing detective work for anyway?" Kayla asked.

Sara looked up as she did the math real quick, "for about five years now I reckon!"

"Wow, impressive!"

"How about you?"

"A little under a year," Kayla said sheepishly. Compared to Sara's five years of experience she felt super under-qualified to be helping her. Still, it would be nice to work alongside someone with that much experience. It was definitely a great opportunity to observe and learn from a veteran.

"I suppose a warm welcome is in order then," Sara said, "it's always a pleasure when I get to meet new and upcoming sleuths! I'd love to hear about some of your adventures. Perhaps when we wrap this all up you can tell me about some of them."

"Oh my god," Kayla said, "yes, I would love that! But, I really don't have too much to share. I'm sure you have way more!"

"Well, it's no contest, but yes I would love to swap stories over tea or coffee or whatever it is you're into. Let's hope we can solve this case quickly! It was nice meeting you, Kayla! I look forward to working with you!"

"Likewise! Take care."

Sara waved as she headed out, leaving Kayla to finish up her breakfast. Sara couldn't help but feel a little starstruck. She was very much looking forward to hearing Sara's many adventures. Kayla had only been at it a year now and had already encountered her fair share of perilous endeavors. She couldn't imagine what one was bound to run into over the course of five years!

For the rest of the day Kayla tried her best to relax before nightfall. That was much easier said than done though. The entire day she was just itching for it to be dark so that she could start poking around and looking out for anything strange.

After a not so relaxing day of waiting around, the evening finally arrived. Leaving her room with her phone and a flashlight in hand just in case, Kayla began her investigation. She walked around nearly every square inch of the inn listening for strange sounds or hoping that

maybe the lights would flicker or something, but sadly just like Sara had experienced earlier there wasn't anything to report. Disappointed, she sat down on a cushioned bench by a window and stared outside toward the garden.

That's when she saw it.

At first, she thought maybe her eyes were playing tricks on her, but after looking out long enough she was certain there was someone...or something, out there! She could just barely make out a figure walking slowly through the gardens. The strangest thing was that there was no bodily shape really. It was like someone was wearing a dark sheet over their body as they walked. Or, it could always be a ghost. Kayla of course didn't believe this for one second, and grabbing her flashlight she rushed outside into the night.

Storming toward the garden she kept her flashlight out in front of her as she carefully looked around the gardens, pointing it all around looking for any signs of life. Thankfully, the soft lights escaping from the inn behind her helped illuminate the night a bit, but it was still pretty dark.

"I know you're out here!" She said, "who are you and what do you want?!"

There was no reply, not even the sound of feet scurrying in the dark. Just silence. Whoever it was that had been roaming the gardens had split before Kayla could get out there. She cursed under her breath as she realized this. She was just about to head back when something behind her made her pause for a moment. The lights from the inn suddenly just all turned off...all at once!

Donning her flashlight, Kayla raced back toward the inn. Storming inside she aimed her light around the empty lobby.

click!

"What the hell?" Kayla said as the lights suddenly came back on.

She turned off her flash light as she walked slowly through the lobby. That's when she heard a faint sound coming from behind the check in counter toward the back office. Kayla crept over listening carefully as she did so. The closer she got, the louder the sound became until finally she was close enough that she recognized exactly what the sound was! Rushing to the back office where the door was already slightly ajar, Kayla pushed it all the way open.

"Mmmmmmmph!"

It was the girl that had checked her in the first day! She was hogtied on the floor. Her glasses were crooked on her face, and her hair was coming loose from its ponytail. Both her loafers had come off in her struggle, exposing her tights clad feet. She was gagged with a bunch of tape wound around her mouth holding what seemed to something stuffed in her mouth. Her skirt had been hiked up, revealing a pair of white panties underneath her tights. She looked up at Kayla as she entered the room and bounced around in her hogtie, her eyes pleading for help.

Kayla quickly hurried over to the girl's side and began untying her.

"Fmmmmph mmmmmph mmmmmph!"

"Sorry, guess I should remove that first."

Kayla paused her untying efforts and peeled back the many layers of tape from the girls mouth. She then carefully dislodged the large handkerchief that was stuffed inside and tossed it to the floor.

"Oh my god, thank you!"

"Of course, I can't believe someone did this to you! What happened?"

Kayla resumed her untying efforts as the girl described how she had ended up like this.

"It all happened so fast," she said, "I was just up here, and then all of the sudden the lights went out. That's when someone grabbed me and dragged me in here and tied me up! They didn't hurt me or anything, they just wrapped all these ropes around me and then...left."

Kayla looked around the room as she continued to untie the girl. That's when she spotted it. In the corner of the room there was a black safe. It had clearly been broken into with the door wide open and some of the contents spilled out onto the floor. That must have been what the intruder was after. It was hard for Kayla not to beat herself up over this! Had she not chased after that "ghost" outside maybe she could have been here to stop the inn from being robbed! Then again, she might also have ended up like the front desk girl. Still, it was frustrating that whoever had pulled off this heist had done so right under her nose! She didn't look forward to telling Sara about it...

After getting the girl untied, the two of them reconvened in the lobby. Kayla poured her a hot cup of tea as they sat by the fireplace. She felt bad for the girl, but thankfully she seemed to be doing okay! Her name was

Heather. Kayla had learned this after chatting with the girl whilst helping her get untied.

"Thanks again, Kayla. I really appreciate the help. How'd you know to find me?"

"Let's just say I have a good sense for things of this nature. I'm a reporter from the states. I'm supposed to be here on vacation, but things are taking a bit of detour I must say."

"Yeah, sorry about that."

"It's okay, I'm just happy to help. I feel bad for Gladys. This inn is adorable, I'd hate to see it go under."

"Oh my god, same here! That poor old lady works so hard to keep this place up and running. I've seen a bunch of folks quit since I started here, but I'm trying to stick it out on her behalf. I don't know how much longer me and the others are going to last though. If things keep up like this, it just won't be worth it for anyone to stick around."

"Who works here besides you?"

"There's a few other front desk workers, and then the maintenance crew. I say crew, but it's really just one guy. So I guess that makes like four or five of us. Yeah, kinda of a skeleton crew."

"I'll say! Well, hopefully I can get to the bottom of things before everything goes to hell."

"Yeah, I'm just glad you're here! It works out that we have a reporter staying with us to help investigate all this stuff. Seems like we're finally catching a break!"

"Oh, well, I can't take all the credit. I'm working with a girl from around here, Sara. She's how I found out about all

this. I saw her looking into things, and well, just couldn't keep my nose out of trouble I guess!"

The girl laughed, "that makes more sense I guess. I wish you and Sara the best luck in finding whoever it is responsible for all this ruckus!"

"Yes, at least we know it's not a ghost now. So we can rule out that possibility."

"Ah yes, I suppose that is a bit of good news."

Standing up the girl brushed off her skirt and waved goodbye to Kayla.

"I'm going to do a quick lockup and then head to bed. It's a shame that the intruders couldn't have waited just a bit longer until my shift was over! In any case, thanks again for rescuing me. I was in for quite a long night otherwise!"

"No problem! I'm glad you're okay. I'll see you around."

Kayla got up shortly after and headed up to bed herself. At least she'd have something to update Sara about even if she had failed to stop the inn from being robbed! She tried not to be too hard on herself and just get some good rest. She was anticipating a big day tomorrow. With Sara by her side, she had her hopes up that the two of them could get to the bottom of things!

.

The next day, Kayla planned to meet with Sara out in the main lobby. Before she arrived, Kayla sat down with Gladys. The old lady was quite the heavy sleeper and had missed all of the previous nights shenanigans!

"I just can't believe it," she said, "there was quite a bit of money stored away in that safe, you know. I just don't know

what I'm going to do at this point! If only my husband were here. He's way on a business trip right now."

"I'm sure that's why you were targeted," Kayla said.

"You think so?"

"It makes sense at least. I mean, is he an intimidating guy?"

Gladys smiled, "he does have quite the fiery spirit! We've only been married a little over a year now, but we've known each other for years. But yes, I guess it does make sense to target the inn while he's away. In any case, I'm really in the thick of it now. Without that money, and with all this still going on...I have no idea how I'm going to keep the Marigold Inn alive!"

"Don't worry," Kayla said as she laid a hand of reassurance on the old woman's shoulder, "Sara and I are going to get to the bottom of this. Don't worry!"

"You think so?"

"We know so!"

Kayla turned to see Sara walk in, hands on her hips and a confident smile donned on her face.

"God she's so cool!" Kayla thought to herself.

The British sleuth walked over to the table, her brown boots gently thumping on the carpet as she approached. Her outfit was super chic today with a black turtleneck tucked into a belted jean skirt with patterned tights even. She grabbed a seat next to Kayla, crossing her legs over as she sat down. Kayla was just so in awe of her presence. She was so confident, and just had this aura of experience around her. Thankfully, Kayla had dressed up a bit herself so she didn't feel totally out of place. Her snooping outfit

of choice for the day was maroon jumper with a argyle sweater vest pulled over the top. Her legs were covered in a pair of tights, and her white ankle boots rounded out the ensemble.

"Well," Gladys said as she looked at the two girls, "I really do appreciate the help. I'm going to go take care of some paperwork. Let me know if you need anything from me."

As Gladys got up and left, Sara turned to Kayla.

"So," she said, "any updates from last night."

Kayla let out a deep sigh.

"Blimey, was it that bad?"

Kayla told her everything that had happened as Sara sat there and listened, her eyes wide with intrigue.

"And yeah," Kayla said as she finished up, "all the money from the safe was taken. So it's not looking too good."

"Christ, I'm sorry, Kayla. At least you're okay!"

"Thanks."

"Did Gladys say anything else about it? Does she know who might be targeting her?"

Kayla shook her head, "no, she has no clue who could be doing all of this."

Sara crossed her arms as she bounced her foot around and stared off deep in thought. She finally snapped back after her quick brainstorming session and laid out a plan.

"Here's what we should do," she said, "if we're going to find anything from last night we should probably start with..."

"...the security tapes!"

Kayla didn't mean to interrupt, she just realized that she and Sara were thinking the same thing.

"Look at us," Sara said smirking, "on the same page and everything. I love it. Come on, we haven't a moment to waste. Let's go check the footage and see if that gets us anywhere!"

The girls headed off toward the maintenance room. After knocking on the door, it opened to reveal a young man on the other side dressed in a worker's jumpsuit. He smiled as he greeted Kayla and Sara.

"Thought I might run into you both today," he said, "come on in."

Stepping aside from the door frame he let them file in before shutting the door behind him. The room was small with a bunch of equipment and tools stacked away on shelves. At the back of the room was a desk with a bunch of monitors for the security cameras, exactly what Kayla and Sara were looking for.

"I poured over the footage myself," he said, "but didn't find anything. Then again, I am only one pair of eyes, so perhaps you'll see something I missed! But please, have a seat and check things over for yourself! I need to go do some work around the property, so I'll be out and about. Spend as much time as you need in here!"

They thanked him as he packed up his tools and left. Pulling up another chair, Sara plopped down next to Kayla as the two of them poured over the footage.

"I spy a nosy snoop," Sara said as she pointed out Kayla on the security footage.

Kayla blushed as Sara playfully elbowed her in the arm.

"Too bad I wasn't much use," Kayla said.

"Hey, don't be too down about it. I can't tell you how many times I've been in the exact same position. Just because you're around doesn't guarantee you'll be able to help. From what it sounded like this was a well orchestrated heist. So really, it's alright. No need to be down about it!"

Kayla was touched by Sara's kind words. Even though she'd told herself the same thing in her head, hearing it from someone else was extra reassuring.

"Okay," Kayla said as she carefully watched the timestamps, "the blackout occurs right around...here!"

They watched the footage carefully, but nothing eventful happened at all. The recording just kind of glitched for a second before going back to normal. The next thing they saw was Kayla rushing in behind the counter to rescue Heather.

"It jumped," Sara said, "the footage from the break-in isn't there."

"It must have happened during the blackout," Kayla said.

"Wait, but that doesn't make any sense," Sara said, "usually security footage has some kind of backup power separate from the main power to protect against this kind of thing."

"I mean, it is an old building," Kayla said, "maybe it's all connected?"

"I doubt that," Sara said, "come on, let's go check with Gladys."

Marching over to Gladys' office they headed in and inquired about the security cameras. She confirmed Sara's

hunch that the cameras were in fact on their own separate power supply. There was an old electrical closet outside that had a backup generator for the cameras.

Thanking Gladys for the information, the girls headed outside to find that closet! It took them a little bit, but they finally found it at the back of the building hidden by some hanging moss. Sadly, the door was locked shut! They'd need a key to get in.

"Blast," Sara said, "so many hoops to jump through. Guess we need to go find that maintenance guy."

"Sara, wait."

Kayla was getting an uneasy feeling. Something wasn't right here. If the cameras did in fact cut out, that meant the thieves had to have broken into this closet to shut off the generator. But the lock was still intact. There was no signs of forced entry at all. That meant...

As Kayla stared at the lock and put all the pieces of the puzzle together in her head, Sara watched and slowly connected the dots in her own mind. The finally looked up at each when they both realized what was going on. It seemed as though they had come to the exact same conclusion about what had happened!

But it came too late...

They were suddenly ambushed from behind as two figures grabbed a hold of them.

"Hey what the helmpph!"

A bag was pulled over Kayla's head as her attacker quickly spun her around and slung her over his shoulders. Sara was grabbed and scooped up too. Kayla heard her protesting all the while, but the people that had grabbed

them were strong and held on tight as they lugged the girls away. The bags on their head concealed where it was they were being taken, but from the sound of it they were going back inside and down some stairs. The air was dank and cold wherever they were, Kayla guess it was maybe some kind of cellar under the inn.

THUMP

She was tossed to the cold floor as she felt Sara land beside her. As they were about to get up and defend themselves, they were once again grabbed as their attackers began to tie them up with rope. Starting with Kayla's arms they forced them behind her back and tied them in a box shape so that her hands were nearly touching her elbows on either side. Rope wrapped around her forearms kept them in this shape. She then had rope passed above and below her chest so that her arms were really pinned in place. Shoving her bag covered face into the floor, her legs were grabbed as she felt rope being tied around her legs, digging in through her tights. Finally, after she was properly tied up, her attacker lifted her back up so that she was sitting now.

whoosh!

The bag was ripped away from her head, her glasses had managed to stay on during the whole encounter thankfully, but her hair was a mess now. She looked over at Sara who had quite the displeased look on her face, her body encased with rope in the same way that Kayla had been. She was already shifting around as she tested her bindings. Meanwhile, Kayla looked up at the people that

had grabbed them. Sure enough, her hunch right, but she was also shocked to see who else was also responsible!

Standing in front of her were two individuals. The first being the maintenance man they had run into encountered earlier. He had a much less friendly look on his face now, and seemed quite irritated. Then again, Kayla and Sara were getting in his way, so it was understandable. The second individual is who really surprised Kayla.

It was Heather.

"What the hell?!" Kayla said as she stared the girl down.

Heather's arms were crossed as she wore a smug grin on her face.

"I should be asking you the same thing," she said, "they the hell are you so damn nosy!? You wouldn't be in this mess if you just minded your own businesses!"

"Heather, cool it."

"Quiet, Marcus, I'm still mad at you."

"Me? Why?!"

"You tied me up WAY tighter than you needed to. I just know it."

"It needed to look realistic, I don't know what you want me to tell you."

"And you pulled my skirt up too you perv! Tell me how that was necessary, hm?!"

"Hey! Would you both cut it out!"

Kayla and Sara turned to see a third individual step out from behind them. It was an older man, probably around Gladys' age in fact. He walked between Marcus and Heather and folded his arms into his chest before letting out a long sigh.

"Just my luck," he said, "I thought I was only going to have to deal with one snoop, but no, she brought a friend! How delightful."

"Who are you supposed to be?" Sara asked.

"I am the rightful owner of this inn thank you very much. Or, I used to be, up until that old hag stabbed me in the back!"

Kayla thought for a second before realizing who this guy might be. She decided to go for it and give a guess and see if she was right.

"Are you her ex-husband or something?"

He smirked, "the name's Richard."

She'd nailed it! She found it odd to think that Gladys had only just married her first husband over a year ago, and went out on a limb in guessing that this was some disgruntled ex-husband. Turns out, her detective skills were as sharp as ever! Even Sara managed to steal over an impressed look at her sleuthing companion. Kayla tried not to let it go to her head. She had other things to worry about at the moment.

"Why are you doing this," she asked, "revenge?"

"Precisely! This inn belonged to us both. We ran it for years. But then, that nasty bitch decided she had grown tired of me and left me for some other schmuck."

"Gee, I can't imagine why," Sara quipped.

Kayla stifled a laugh at Sara's clever retort.

"Laugh it up, because in a minute I guarantee you won't be! I've had it with this place. It was supposed to be my retirement plan, but little did I know she hadn't written my into anything concerning the inn. I was no more than an

employee in terms of status. I lost it all in the divorce. I was planning to just sabotage it into the ground, but you two seem to be getting in my way! No matter, it's time for this inn to go anyway."

"Wait...what are you planning to do?" Kayla asked.

But she didn't need an answer. Out of the corner of her eye she spied a bunch of cans of gasoline. He was going to burn the whole place down!

"Hey, look," Kayla said as she tried to talk him down once she realized what he was planning, "it doesn't have to be this way. I'm sure we can talk with Gladys and work something out."

"You don't think I haven't tried that? She's unreasonable and doesn't even care to listen to me! She's forced my hand. If this is how she wants things to be, then so be it!"

"Come on, mate," Sara said, "is this really necessary?"

"Yes! And I'm tired of both of your yapping! Marcus, Heather, can you shut these two up for me?"

"Gladly, boss!"

Kayla rolled her eyes, as the two lackeys grabbed nearby rolls of clear packing tape and approached Sara and Kayla. Kneeling down by Kayla's feet, Heather grabbed her white boots and pulled them off, tossing them aside on the dusty floor. Kayla watched as Marcus did the same to Sara, tossing her boots next to Kayla's before reaching down and removing Sara's grey socks. Sara eyed Marcus with a great look of disdain as he scrunched both of her socks up in his hand. She knew what was coming, but fought to get in the last word anyway.

"Are you really just going to do whatever he says? It's not worth whatever he's paying you."

"I've had enough out of you! This was all going off without a hitch until you bloody messed it all up!"

"Right, because we're the ones to blame," Kayla added getting in on the fun now.

"You're damn straight you're the ones to blame if you hadn't..."

"Oy, Marcus," Heather said as she scowled at him, "just get on with it. They're only going to keep badgering you...let's just gag them and get a move on."

"Fine!"

Taking his free hand, Marcus held Sara's face, pinching her cheeks as he did so.

"Ouch! Do you really have to be so roummmph!"

Her speech was curtailed as he jammed both the socks into her mouth and packed them in past her lips before wrapping the clear packing tape around her head, trapping her brunette locks underneath it in the process. Kayla turned back around just in time for Heather to reach forward and crudely stuff both of Kayla's patterned socks into her mouth.

"Fmmmmph!" Kayla grunted as Heather forced them in, her mouth hardly able to close over the fluffy mass.

Like Sara, Kayla's lower face was encased in clear packing tape sealing both of her socks inside, her gaping mouth stuffed full of socks still visible behind the layers of tape.

"Mmmmmph! Hmmmmmmph!"

Kayla and Sara weren't about to let their gags stop them from giving an earful to Marcus and Heather. Ignoring their muffled protests, they grabbed more rope as if the amount they had already used wasn't enough!

Grabbing Kayla's tights clad legs with one hand, Heather used the other to shove Kayla backwards so that she fell back on her hands. In one swift motion, Heather flipped Kayla over onto her stomach and then grabbing her ankles pulled them up toward her hands.

"Mmmmmph!"

Kayla winced as heather pulled hard on the ropes as she connected Kayla's ankles to her wrists. Sara, while being spared a hogtie, was still being further trussed up by Marcus. He pushed her over onto her back, but instead of flipping her over he folded her legs and pushed them into her chest. Winding rope around her legs, he pinned them in that folded position before using rope to secure Sara's legs to her torso. Rolling her over, he propped Sara up so that she was propped up on her knees with her legs folded and tied underneath her. To add insult to injury, he even looped rope behind Sara's neck and tied it off around her knees, pulling the loop tight so that Sara's whole body was stringently balltied. She was very unhappy with this current arrangement.

"Ffffmmmmph mmmmmmmmmnnnnph!

Ggggggnmmmp! Mmmmmmp!"

She wriggled as much as her ropes would let her, shouting through her sock stuffed mouth all the while. As if on cue, Richard returned to the cellar, grinning as he watched Kayla and Sara struggle in their binds.

"Bloody hell," he said, "you both seem a little tied up, now don't you?"

"Mmmmmmmmmph!"

"What are you going to do with them?" Heather asked.

"Nothing, we leave them here while the whole place burns to the ground! That should tie up all our loose ends."

"Nnnnnmmmmph! Mmmmmmmph!"

"It's too late for that now," he said in response to the girl's muffled pleas, "you should have thought about that before you meddled in other people's businesses! I'm sorry it has to be this way...but you've left me no other choice. Marcus, Heather, are you ready to finish this?"

"Yes," Heather answered, "shall I go and begin warning the guests?"

"You remember what to tell them, right?"

"That there's a gas leak."

"Atta' girl, get on with it then."

Heather ran back up the stairs as Marcus grabbed one of the gasoline canisters and started dousing a large pile of newspapers and other burnable materials in the corner. Kayla met Sara's concerned gaze, the two snoops realizing the severity of their situation. If they didn't find a way out in time...well, Kayla didn't really want to think about that right now!

WHOOOOOSH!

The cellar lit up as the dry paper caught fire. Stepping back, Marcus tossed the gasoline canister into the flames for good measure. The fire roared as the flames nearly reached the ceiling.

"That should buy us just enough time to get everyone out safely, but not enough time to save the building."

"Excellent work, my boy! Now quickly, let's make our exit before anyone sees me. I'll be waiting at the agreed upon location. Once things are wrapped up here, meet me there with Heather. We can discuss payment then."

Marcus nodded before the two of them hurried up the stairs and out of the cellar. In the meantime, the fire blazed as sweat began to bead at Kayla's forehead.

"Nnnnmph!"

She rustled around in her hogtie, arching her back and trying to find any way she could pick at the ropes with her fingers.

"GGggggnmph!"

Sara was hard at work doing the same thing, but on their own neither could find a knot within reach. Kayla was so busy trying to get loose on her own, that she totally missed the fact that Sara was shouting as loud as she could through her gag trying to get Kayla's attention.

"PHnnnnnnnnmmph! Hnnnnmmnnnph!"

Finally realizing that Sara was desperately trying to get her attention, Kayla turned her head and acknowledged Sara.

"Mmhnph!"

Tipping her body onto it's side, Sara fell so that her back was now turned to Kayla. Her denim skirt no longer covering her rear as she flashed Kayla, her underwear clearly visible underneath her patterned tights. Trying not to stare, Kayla noticed Sara wagging her hands motioning for Kayla. She quickly realized what Sara was trying to

communicate, and rolling over onto her side she shuffled over so that her hands were within reach of Sara's. She was slightly embarrassed that she hadn't thought of this herself, but now was not the time to worry about that!

The fire was growing larger by the minute, the damp cellar turning into a furnace as smoke filled the air. Kayla's nostrils burned as she inhaled the fumes, her forehead now drenched with sweat. Together, she and Sara picked at each other's ropes, their window of escape getting smaller and smaller.

"Ggnnnnnnmph!"

Kayla focused as hard as she could, trying not to get frustrated every time her fingers slipped and she had to find the knot again. She could feel Sara's fingers working just as hard, the two girls fighting for their very lives!

CRASH!

A beam from the ceiling slammed into the ground, sending a wave of dust and smoke into Kayla's face. They were running out of time!

"Hnnnnnnnnmmph!"

"Nnnnnnnnnmmph!"

Kayla had managed to undo a couple of the knots holding Sara's arms in place, and could feel that Sara had managed to do the same. Surely they were almost there. It had to be only a couple more knots before...

"MMMMMPH!"

Sara jerked her hands away from Kayla. Was something wrong? No! She was free! Or, at least her hands were. She pushed herself up back onto her knees, and reached over to finish untying Kayla's arms. It took her a little longer to

get Kayla free from her hogtie, but once she was free Kayla rolled herself over onto her rear and started working on the ropes around her ankles.

The ceiling creaked and groaned above them, threatening to collapse any second now!

"Ggggnmph!"

Kayla grunted victoriously, finally freeing her legs. She would worry about that wretched gag later. There was simply no time to waste if she and Sara were going to escape. Springing to her feet, she quickly snatched up her boots as she bolted up the stairs, Sara following quickly at her heels.

Bursting through the cellar door, Kayla stumbled outside, the cool afternoon breeze bringing immediate relief after being trapped underground amidst the flames. She reached up and started to undo the tape around her head, watching as Sara did the same.

"Bleh!" Sara spat out her socks, drenched in saliva, onto the grass, "Kayla, are you okay?"

After spitting her own socks out, Kayla answered, "yeah, I'm fine. Holy shit, that was intense though."

"I'll say, but we're not out of it yet. We need to get that fire out as soon as possible. We'll worry about the rest later, but we can't let the inn burn!"

Slipping her boots back on, leaving her soggy socks behind, Kayla raced back into the inn with Sara. They worked together, making sure fire services were called before grabbing fire extinguishers and heading back to the cellar to try and keep the flames at bay.

Before long, help arrived, and Kayla and Sara stepped back to let the professionals take care of the fire. The damage was pretty bad, but the inn had survived. They had at least that to celebrate. Still, Gladys was really upset. They found her out front with the other guests, her face wet with tears.

Her expression quickly changed from sadness to anger once Kayla and Sara informed her of what had actually happened.

"Why that...that...that bitter, nasty, old man! I'll never forgive him for this! I knew he was upset about the divorce, but I never would have thought he would do something like this. How could anyone do something like this? It's just...why it's evil is what it is!

"Don't worry," Sara said as she gently clasped her hands around Gladys', "we've already talked to the authorities. They'll find your ex-husband, and if they don't so help me god, I'll track him down for you."

Gladys smiled, clearly comforted by Sara's kind words.

"Thank you," she said, "I'll need to assess the damage myself, but the Marigold Inn is still standing thanks to you."

Once again, Kayla was in awe as she watched Sara at work. She just always knew the right thing to do or the right thing to say. It was so inspiring watching her.

Noticing Kayla's admiring gaze, Sara smiled.

"You know," she said, "it would be criminal to take all the credit. If I hadn't had Kayla by my side, I'm not sure how I would have made it out."

Kayla blushed.

"Well, the two of you make a great team, I'll say. I really cannot begin to thank you enough."

But that was okay, Kayla wasn't in it for the thanks or personal recognition. She was just happy they had managed to save the Inn. Her vacation on the other hand...was not going to be so easily saved. She'd spend the rest of it in London, which was fine, but she was going to miss the Marigold Inn.

"Well now, are you all set?"

Kayla stood by the cab that Sara had called, the driver loading Kayla's luggage into the trunk.

"I think so," Kayla said, "before I go I just want to say thanks, for everything."

Sara tilted her head, "shouldn't I be the one thanking you? This was supposed to be your holiday!"

"Yeah, I know, I just...wanted to thank you for letting me be your partner. I learned a lot from you, and I just wanted to say thanks."

"Well, let me offer my thanks to you as well. You made a mighty fine partner."

"We're all set back here! You ready to go?"

Kayla turned back and responded to the taxi driver, "Yeah, be there in second!"

"So, this is where we part ways then."

"Yeah, hey is it too much to ask if we..."

"...keep in touch? Yes, of course we'll keep in touch!"

Kayla smiled, and without thinking she quickly lunged forward and gave Sara a hug. Sara returned the gesture, hugging Kayla back. Sure, her vacation had turned out to be vastly different than what she had planned, but she'd

made a new friend along the way, a snooping friend at that!

Finally pulling away from Sara's embrace, Kayla climbed into the back of the cab. She rolled down the window as she exchanged her final goodbyes with Sara.

"Enjoy the rest of your trip!" Sara shouted as, "and safe travels when you head back across the pond! I'll be in touch with you soon!"

"Sounds good! Thanks again for everything, Sara!"

And with that, the two sleuths parted ways. Sara was staying behind to make sure everything was squared away with Gladys and the police, and Kayla was headed to hopefully finish her vacation without any more peril! Then again, given her track record she wouldn't be surprised if a group of goons raided her hotel room and tied her up or something.

She shook her head and laughed for thinking such a thing, no, now was not the time to entertain such thoughts. Instead, she rested her head on the seat behind her and smiled thinking about the new friend she had made.

Peril aside, it really had been a great vacation.

10

"Sparky! I'm home!"

Claire shook her umbrella in the hallway of her apartment complex before stepping inside. Her cat, Sparky, sat on the counter greeting her with a single meow. She could tell he was hungry. After all, it was past his dinner time! Traffic was horrible on account of the rain, and Claire herself was starving after a long day of work.

Setting her umbrella by the front door, she slipped her nylon clad feet out of her high heels and into a pair of comfy slippers. She was definitely a heels girl, but after a long day of having them on her feet it was nice to finally get them off. Her fellow bank tellers were always telling her to switch to more comfortable shoes, but Claire wouldn't budge. Fashion over comfort was her way to go!

Heading into the kitchen she prepared Sparky's dinner for him. Meanwhile, she placed a food delivery order for herself. She was too tired to cook a meal and she'd been craving takeout anyway. Setting Sparky's dinner down on the kitchen floor, Claire shuffled over to the couch and sank into it, stifling a yawn as she did so.

Turning on the T.V. she opened her phone and scrolled through social media while some show played in the background. She really didn't care what was on, it was just

nice to have something playing in the background to
absolve the silence.

knock knock knock

Claire looked up from her phone toward the door. She then checked the time. Only fifteen minutes had passed since she placed her food order. Was it here already? If so, that was pretty quick! Perhaps she'd order from this place again if it was always going to be like this!

Without thinking twice she walked over to the door and swung it wide open in hopes of seeing a bag of food waiting for her on other side. Instead, she was greeted by two burly looking men clad in black jumpsuits and ski masks.

"What the mmmmmmph!"

They charged inside, scooping her up in the process. One of the men grabbed her arms from behind while simultaneously slapping a gloved hand over her mouth. The other hoisted her legs up and held them tight, both her slippers flying off as he did so.

"Mmmmmmph nnnmmmph!"

Claire tried to break free from their grip, but the men promptly dragged her further into her apartment carrying her all the way to her room. Throwing her down onto the bed, as the one man held her down, the other one who had been holding her legs grabbed her skirt and yanked it right off.

"MMMMMMMPH!"

Claire was terrified now. What the hell was going to happen to her?!

"Relax," the man said, "we're not going to hurt you. Your clothes are just in the way. Can't get you fully secured otherwise. We'll leave your underwear on...don't worry."

Claire was worried alright! But at least it didn't sound like they were planning anything too nefarious. Still, she thrashed around as the man continued to undress her, unbuttoning her blouse next. Just like he promised, they stopped there.

"Ggggnnnmmmmph!"

Claire kicked her nylon clad legs wildly into the air hoping to catch the man with a kick or something.

"Hurry, let's get her gagged so we can get to work!"

"On it!"

Gagged?! Claire stopped struggling so much for a moment as she watched the man digging through her dresser drawers. He returned holding a bundle of her own panties! At least he had bothered to grab ones that were clean. She kept her laundry hamper in her closet, and was grateful she did so. Most likely he would have fished something from there had it been out in the open!

With the undergarments in hand, the man balled one up as he prepared to shove it in Claire's mouth. She resumed her kicking and squirming, but this wasn't her attacker's first gig after all. Sadly for Claire, this was her first time in a situation like this, and as soon as the hand was removed from her mouth she opened it to scream for help.

"Somebody helmmmmmmmmmmph!"

In the underwear went as Claire coughed and sputtered into them. Following this first pair, the man shoved in at least two more! Claire's mouth felt like it was about to

burst, and with her attention now drawn to the massive wad of panties in her mouth she was much more calm and had almost stopped her struggling completely.

Grabbing a roll of tape from the little bag of goodies they had brought with them, the men wrapped a few layers around Claire's head before pushing her down onto the bed on her back.

"Ggggnnnnnnnnmph..."

Claire closed her eyes as she moaned into her gigantic gag. It really had rendered her quite helpless, which the men appreciated as it made tying her up a breeze. Starting from her nylon clad legs and moving up her body they began wrapping coil after coil of rope around it. She could feel 3, no 4, maybe even 5 places where they tied her legs. Her upper body was tied the same, with rope being wound above and below her breasts, and around her abdomen as well. Her arms were left straight down by her side and held in place with rope tied around them and connected to her body. As if that wasn't enough, the men made sure she was really held in place by tying her to the bed using rope connected from her body to the four corners of the bed frame. She was now completely and totally stuck in place.

"Ffmmmm mmmmmph gggnnnmph!"

Claire looked up at the men with a pleading look in her eyes. As soon as they had finished securing her, they went about grabbing up a bunch of stuff from around Claire's apartment before leaving without saying another word. Claire was dumbfounded by the whole situation. If all they needed to do was rob her, why the hell had they tied her up so tight?!

"Mmmmmmmmmph!"

Claire flopped around on the bed as it squeaked and groaned. There was absolutely no give in the ropes. She was going to be stuck like this for a good while.

knock knock knock

Claire looked up as another knock came from the door. Surely it was her food this time.

"MMMMMMMPH MMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMPH!"

She screamed as loud as she could, but with all those panties crammed in her mouth there was no way she was going to get anyone's attention. Her stomach let out a small gurgle as she laid her head down on the bed. It was going to be a very long night...

"And how were you found?"

Kayla sat across from Claire in the very apartment where all this took place a few days prior.

"Thankfully my coworkers are also good friends of mine and when I didn't show up for work the next day without saying anything they made sure to check up on me."

"Those are some good friends," said Kayla as she continued taking notes.

"So you said I'm not the first person this has happened to, right?"

"That's right. There's been at least 5 other cases in the last few weeks."

"And how do you know they're connected?"

"Well, so far all the other victims have reported the same thing: two intruders robbing the home of young single women living by themselves. Cash and other valuables are taken, and the real link is the fact that each

victim has been tied up beyond that which is even remotely necessary. So yeah, I think we're looking at a case of serial robberies.

"Wow...well I hope what I gave you helps."

"It does. I'm compiling testimonies from all the witnesses so I can put together a story in the Tribune. I'd like to see the thugs caught before I publish the story, but who knows. These guys seem pretty elusive. Anyway, thanks again for your time."

"Of course! Good luck with everything!"

And so Kayla headed back to the office with her notes in hand. It was a tricky case to be sure. Unless there was any way of knowing who was going to be struck next, she had no clue as to how she'd manage to catch these guys. Still, even without actually catching them it made for a good story. The police were already working on it anyway, and so maybe they knew more than Kayla did.

In any case, Kayla was finished for the day and ready for the weekend! She and Madelyn had plans to hang out and watch a movie together, and she was quite excited to see her best friend. It had been too long since they'd had some good quality time together, but tonight was the night!

Heading home to change first, Kayla slipped out of her work clothes and into something nice and cozy. Black leggings, green socks, and a fuzzy crop top sweater was her outfit of choice. Grabbing her bag, Kayla slipped her feet into a pair of slides and headed out.

knock knock knock

"Oh my goooooood!"

She could already hear Madelyn's voice coming from the other side of the door as her friend rushed over to open it. After fumbling over the lock, Madelyn threw the door open before jumping at Kayla and engulfing her in a big hug. Kayla smiled as she hugged her friend back.

"It's been wayyyy too long," Madelyn said, "come on in, I just made some popcorn!"

Kayla stepped inside as Madelyn skipped over to the couch, a bowl of popcorn and a bottle of wine rested on her living room table. Setting her bag aside, and slipping out of her sneakers, Kayla walked over to the couch and plopped herself down. Madelyn was dressed just as comfy as Kayla wearing a white button up sleep shirt, pajama shorts, and a pair of plain soft pink knee high socks.

"So tell me," Madelyn said, "how have you been?"

"Good, yeah...did Andrea tell you about..."

"Oh my god, yes! Kayla, I heard all about it! I can't believe you did that! Going undercover as a flight attendant? Exposing a corrupt drug smuggling operation? Insane!"

"I know, right? I kind of can't believe it myself. But hey, props to Andrea for coming up with the whole thing. She's a natural snoop!"

"Just like us!"

Kayla smiled, "exactly. But yeah I've been good. Haven't been up to much since then. How have you been? You do any recent modeling shoots?"

"You know it! Here, let me go grab some shots from my most recent stuff!"

Madelyn jumped up from the couch and raced to her bedroom. She returned with a folder in hand and tossed it onto Kayla's lap.

"Wow!" Kayla said as she flipped through the photos, "these are gorgeous! Love the outfits too."

Madelyn was such a natural. Kayla loved looking at her modeling photos, it was always such a treat. To Kayla Madelyn was this sweet, carefree friend always smiling and having a good time, but in these modeling photos she came across as mysterious and sexy. Not that she wasn't those things, it was just neat to see how well she could get into it like that. Kayla definitely didn't think she had it in herself to do anything like what Madelyn did.

"You know," Madelyn said, "the offer still stands if you ever want to come to a shoot with me. I'm sure any photographer would relish the chance to capture some good photos of the great Kayla Grace."

Kayla laughed, "no, I appreciate the offer as always, but I'm just not cut out for it."

"How do you know if you've never tried! Come on, girlie, have some confidence!"

"We'll see," Kayla said, "how about that movie though? You ready to start it up?"

"Let's do it!"

For the next few hours, the girls snuggled up on the couch together watching one of Kayla's all time favorite movies, Spirited Away. It was such a comfort classic for her and really brought back memories of when she was a kid growing up watching it. At around the midway point, Madelyn paused it for a quick bathroom break. Kayla took

the opportunity to get up herself and wandered over to the kitchen and grabbed herself some water.

She noticed another modeling folder resting on the counter by the fridge. Under ordinary circumstances she would have paid it no mind, but one of the photos was peeking out from the folder and there was something about it that caught Kayla's eye. It looked like...no, surely it couldn't be. Kayla tried everything in power not to snoop, but she just couldn't help her curiosity. She opened the folder and took a look at the photos inside.

CLANK!

Kayla set her glass of water down on the counter hard. She nearly spit out the water in her mouth at the same time, but managed to compose herself and get it down. She was correct in what she had thought she had seen. Inside the folder was in fact recent photos of Madelyn doing a modeling shoot, but it was unlike any modeling shoot Kayla had ever seen. As she flipped through the photos it was the same for each one too.

In them Madelyn was...

"Oh hey, Kayla...whatcha' looking at?"

Kayla slammed the folder shut and turned around hastily. Her cheeks red with embarrassment. She was usually one to keep fairly calm and composed, at least in the sense of not being embarrassed. Today was an exception from that norm given what she had spied in that folder. She could immediately tell from the look on Madelyn's face that she knew that Kayla had seen the pictures. Kayla wracked her brain trying to figure out how to move forward and what to say.

"Madelyn...I was just..."

"I...I was planning to tell you at some point," she said, "I just, couldn't get up the courage to do it."

Suddenly it hit Kayla. This must have been what she was so secretive about a few weeks ago! Yes, it had to be! She remembered it very clearly now. It had been when they were getting lunch together when Kayla was working on that jewelry store robbery case while simultaneously dealing with her new rival, Jennifer. She remembered Madelyn getting all weird when she asked about her recent modeling gigs, and this had to be why!

Kayla took a second to compose herself before responding. She could tell Madelyn was a bit embarrassed by the whole situation too. She had to choose her words carefully here. She didn't want to upset her friend or anything.

"Look, Madelyn, it's okay."

"No, it's not okay. I meant to tell you about all of this. I didn't mean for you to find out this way, I'm sorry."

"Madelyn, it's really okay. I'm not mad. I get it."

"You do?"

"Yeah, I mean, this is big news. I'm just glad it's out in the open now and we can chat about it, you know?"

"So...you're not mad that I kept this from you for so long?"

"Are you happy?"

"What?"

"Are you happy? Does doing stuff like this make you happy, bring you joy?"

Madelyn's eyes started to light up again as a smile formed at the corner of her mouth.

"Yeah," she said, "it does. It's hard to explain...but yeah. I think it's fun."

"Then that's all that matters. I want you to be happy, and if this is what makes you happy then I'll support you no matter what."

"Really?"

"Always and forever."

Madelyn ran over to Kayla as the two friends embraced each other in the kitchen. Madelyn buried her head in Kayla's shoulder.

"Love you, bestie."

Kayla laughed.

"Love you too, bestie. Now come on, I want to hear more about this. Do you feel comfortable talking about it?"

"Yeah, definitely. I want to tell you everything!"

"Cool, well then how about we move over to the couch, and you can tell me all about how you got into bondage modelling."

Moving over to the couch, the girls did just that. Madelyn told Kayla the whole story. It had all kind of started a while back when she and Kayla had been attacked by Peirce's goons while meeting with his receptionist. Madelyn didn't now exactly how to describe it, but having her body enveloped in ropes like that was strangely...comforting. She felt bad about it at first, and because of her and Kayla's constant run-ins with peril she felt super guilty about even the thought of enjoying it.

Her feelings were confirmed the second time they ran into trouble with Sasha's goons. Everything about the way being bound felt was just so exciting to Madelyn. She started by looking up some pictures online before eventually diving in headfirst and contacting a bondage modelling agency herself. She kept everything pretty low key. She didn't use her real name, and only did a couple of shoots.

In the pictures Kayla had seen, Madelyn was tied up really intricately. It was so much more rope than was necessary just to keep someone subdued for a bit, and after looking over the photos again with Madelyn who helped point things out and describe stuff a bit Kayla understood how someone might enjoy this. There were photos of her hogtied, tied in a chair, and tied in a few other positions too. The photos were gorgeous too. The studio she worked with did a really good job of keeping things tasteful and editing the photos to look very nice. Madelyn was dressed in a few different outfits ranging from super casual clothes to a few where she was in lingerie and stockings. Again, it was all done very tastefully, and god was Madelyn still so good at posing for the camera! At the end of the day, even if Kayla still was not a fan of being tied up, she had to admit that Madelyn made it look fun.

"So...what do you think?" Madelyn said as Kayla shut the folder after looking through all the photos.

"It's great," she said, "yeah, I mean you look super hot, let's just get that out of the way."

"Why thank you," Madelyn said as she flipped her hair in sarcastic fashion.

"But yeah, I mean these are really well done. I take it you're planning on doing more, right?"

"I think so. I'm waiting to hear back from the studio on what they want to do next, but yeah hopefully soon. They set me up for commissioned work too so if anyone commissions some photos or a video from me I'd go in and do that."

"Wow, you're like the real deal already!"

"I guess! Anyway, I'm just so glad you understand and all. I can't tell you how anxious I've been the last few weeks trying to figure out how I was going to tell you. And here you are sneaking around like the renowned reporter you are just ripping the band-aid off."

"Sorry, can't help being a lousy snoop after all."

Madelyn and Kayla shared a good laugh at that before hearing a sound come from the bedroom.

"Wait...did you hear that?" Kayla asked.

"Yeah, something must have fallen in my closet or something."

"No, it sounded like..."

"Don't move!"

Kayla and Madelyn froze in place on the couch as two men in black jumpsuits and ski masks barged into the living room and aimed handguns at them. Putting their hands up, the girls surrendered to the men before being ushered into the bedroom. They were met with a cold draft as Madelyn's curtains billowed in the night wind.

They were ordered to sit down on the bed as the men dug into their duffel bags and started producing bundles of rope. It suddenly dawned on Kayla. These were intruders

she'd been after! They had to be. They matched the description all the other girls gave, and to top it off the amount of rope they had come prepared with was incredibly excessive. It had to be them. To think that she would come so close to them, and yet still so far was a bit frustrating. Her phone was out in the living room, and she hadn't been able to call for help or anything. From the looks of it, she and Madelyn were going to be trussed up real good and that would be the end of it.

"We know you're looking into us," one of the men said, "miss Grace, let this serve as a reminder to you that continuing to do so would be quite unwise."

"Is that a threat?"

"Perhaps."

"Save your breath. You won't be able to intimidate me that easily."

The men looked at each other before looking back at Kayla.

"We'll see about that. Now, strip...down to your underwear!"

"What the...no way!"

Kayla was quick to protest, but judging from the fact that the men were still aiming their weapons at them it's not like she and Madelyn really had a choice. At least they weren't being asked to take everything off...

"Look, we don't want to have to hurt you, but if it comes to that, then so be it. We just can't have your clothes getting in the way of our work."

"Are you serious?" Kayla said, "I'm wearing leggings, and she doesn't even have pants on!"

"Just do it!"

Kayla sighed before complying with the men's wishes, tossing her clothes onto the floor as Madelyn did the same. She wasn't in any position to argue with the men.

"Could you at least close the window?" Kayla asked as she shivered with nothing but her bra and panties to keep her "warm" at this point.

Thankfully, the men granted her wish meaning that she and Madelyn wouldn't be freezing cold the rest of the night. That being said, she wasn't all too excited for what was in store for them. She glanced over at Madelyn though and wondered how she was feeling. The mischievous glint in her eye told her everything she needed to know. At least she was okay with this. Kayla felt bad roping her friends into her misadventures, but thankfully now she didn't have to worry about that with Madelyn. It was a dim light at the end of a long tunnel, but hey, she tried to focus on the positives.

After they shut the window, the men set to work making sure Kayla and Madelyn were properly tied up. At first, the men worked on securing Kayla and Madelyn separately. Madelyn was bound in a kneeling position on the bed with her arms pulled behind her back. She was essentially hogtied, but while sitting upright. Kayla was tied very similarly, but her legs weren't tied together. At least they hadn't been yet...

Once they had finished trussing her upper body with copious amounts of rope they sat her on top of Madelyn so that she was straddling Madelyn's bound legs with Kayla's legs on either side of Madelyn's thighs. After this, they

wound rope around each of Kayla's legs respectively before securing it to the rope around Madelyn's legs. They tied her this way with rope around her upper thighs, and once more with rope around her ankles so that at two separate places her legs was pinned to Madelyn's.

After this they connected their upper bodies with rope too. Kayla grunted as her they roughly forced her into Madelyn, their chests smooshing up against each other forcing. Kayla had no problem getting "close" to her best friend, but this was taking things to a whole new level! Their faces were now just inches apart. Kayla shot Madelyn a sympathetic glance as if to say: "I'm sorry you always get wrapped up in these kinds of situations with me!" However, she could clearly tell that Madelyn did not mind one bit and was very concentrated on watching the men tie her and Kayla together as if she was taking mental notes of each knot they used and all the places they were applying rope.

Finally, after what felt like forever, the men were finished and stepped back to admire their work. Well, Kayla knew they weren't finished just yet, but she wasn't holding her breath for them to forget the final step...

"Thanks for being cooperative. And like we said. We really hope this deters you from coming after us. We'd hate to have to escalate things you know. It's not really our style, so we would appreciate it if you take this warning to heart."

Kayla knew it wasn't worth it to argue with them. Obviously she would never allow herself to be so rudely intimidated, but she held her tongue for now.

"Would you just hurry up and get this over with," she said.

"As you wish!"

Grabbing the girls discarded socks from the floor, the men prepared to gag Kayla and Madelyn. It would have been courteous of them to remember whose socks belonged to who, but the men could not have been bothered with this. Instead, taking both of Kayla's green socks the men scrunched them up and stuffed Madelyn's mouth with them.

"Mmmmmmph!"

She gently moaned behind her sock packed mouth as her lower face was encased in duct tape

"Hm, probably could have fit more in there...oh well. At least you'll be getting a mouthful!"

Kayla turned her head to see the man holding up Madelyn's pink knee high socks as she gulped.

"I think one should suffice," Kayla said.

"Oh yeah? Then I take it we have your word you'll stop looking into us, right?"

Kayla stared daggers at the man as she gritted her teeth.

"That's what I thought. In we go!"

"Go to helmmmmmmph!"

As the one man held Kayla's head in place, the other jammed in the first sock as far in as it would go, which unfortunately for Kayla was pretty far! Her entire mouth was now filled with the pink fluffy mass as her mouth was spread wide open. The man looked the gag over trying to see if there was room to fit the second sock, but while

Kayla's mouth might have been big it wasn't that big. Instead, the man opted to tie the second sock around Kayla's gaping mouth and between her lips.

"There we go. Perfect!"

"Fnchhhhmph mnnnnnmph!"

Finishing up Kayla's gag with loads of tape wound about her head, the men grabbed their things and headed on their way without another word. Kayla shifted around in her ropes seeing if there was any point of give, but they were pretty damn tight! As she worked hard to try and get free, she noticed Madelyn just sitting there purring into her gag, her eyes closed.

"Mrnmrmnnp!"

Kayla tried to get Madelyn's attention and snap her back to reality.

"MRNMRMNNPH!"

Madelyn jolted back and looked at Kayla.

"PHnrrmmmmph," she responded back

"MMm nmmn phn gmph nphnmn!"

"MMhnp nnn mnn phnm?"

Kayla grunted as she prepared to try and communicate with Madelyn again. She was trying to say: "we need to get untied" but it was only coming through as muffled grunts.

"N phnnn, mmm nmmn phn gmph nphnmn. Cnn mnn nnnmrphphnnn mmph?"

But Madelyn wasn't listening at all. Something about the way Kayla's muffled speech sounded and the seriousness with which she was trying to communicate was amusing to Madelyn and caused her to laugh. Madelyn's own muffled giggles were pretty amusing to hear as well and caused

Kayla to follow suit and laugh with her. Pretty soon, the bedroom was filled with their muffled laughter. Once their giggle fit was over, Kayla sighed as Madelyn rested her head on Kayla's shoulder. It was going to be a long night, but there was no one in the world she would rather spend it with than her best friend.

11

"Hello folks and welcome back to 'On The Air With Danny Blair' I'm your host, Danny Blair. Joining me today is none other than one of Hazeldale's biggest up and coming celebrities. Well, not quite, but has been making quite the name for herself. She's a reporter at the Hazeldale Tribune, and the one who went after Peirce Enterprises and exposed Peirce for doing some shady stuff. She's here to talk about that and more, so without further adieu...Kayla Grace."

"Thanks for having me, Danny."

Kayla shifted in her seat, adjusting her headphones a bit and fidgeting with her mic. She'd be lying if she said she wasn't nervous for this. It was her first ever publicity appearance. She'd never heard of the radio show before, but then again that was probably why she was able to land this interview. She definitely wasn't any kind of celebrity or big name by any means, but this Danny Blair guy wanted to interview her anyway for his little talk show...for some reason.

Whatever that reason was, Kayla was at least somewhat excited to be interviewed. She was, after all, someone with her own aspirations and perhaps this would help her move up in the reporting world and add to her legitimacy.

She'd gotten all dressed up for it too. Well, not that dressed up, but she had definitely put some extra thought into what she was wearing. She'd paired a black long sleeve shirt, with a maroon colored skirt that hugged her rear and thighs just perfectly. Her legs were wrapped in a pair of sheer stockings, and her feet tucked into a pair of black ankle boots. What really completed the look was the stylish brown blazer she wore. She felt professional, but also chic and kinda badass.

"Alright," Danny continued, "let's keep it moving. I've got some questions here for you, of my own, and then we'll sprinkle in a couple of fan submitted ones how does that sound?"

"Fan submitted?"

Kayla was a bit shocked that she would have any fans. Who were these people submitting questions to a small radio show she'd never heard of?

"Yep, that's right, fan submitted. I put it out on my website that you'd be interviewing with me today, and had a couple of folks write in some questions for you."

"Wow, well, that's pretty cool I guess."

If anything, Kayla was a bit flattered. She tried not to let that word "fans" go to her head. These were just people with questions. Kayla Grace did not have any fans yet.

"Okay, to get things rolling, I'll lob you a softball right down the middle, you ready?"

"Yep."

"This one comes from username 'schamp17' and they want to know why it was you wanted to become a reporter?"

"Oooh, great question," Kayla said as she stared off and thought about her answer. "Well, it all started when I was a kid I guess. I grew up reading books about detectives and people who solve crimes and all that. I don't know what it was about it, but I always liked the idea of getting to solve a mystery or close a case. I remember when I was really little being out on the playground and solving the mystery of the missing snack bags."

"The missing snack bags?"

Kayla laughed, "yeah, one of my best friends kept having her snacks go missing at recess. I thought maybe it was some other kids bullying her, so I asked around and tried to figure out who it was that was taking them. When no one confessed I decided to do a little stakeout and see what was going on. Turns out it wasn't any of the kids. There was this squirrel that would sneak up and steal a bunch of food out of her open lunch box."

"You're kidding."

"I assure you I'm not. So anyway, after she started closing her lunch when she went off to play the snacks didn't go missing anymore."

"Incredible."

"All that to say I just really like helping other people, and I really like solving a good mystery."

"Aside from the case of the missing snacks, did you do any other rookie detective work?"

"Oh yeah, tons. In college I used to try and solve cases in my spare time. From missing persons to petty break-ins, I was always looking for some kind of story. It wasn't all just a

hobby though, I mean I was studying journalism at the time so it was like...extracurricular I guess you could say."

"Awesome, well, moving on to something a little more...light...I guess you could say, that same person who wrote in the last question also wanted to know if you have a favorite color and if you have a favorite food."

"Oooh, well my favorite color is pretty easy. Red. There's just something about it that's so...I don't know, strong? It makes me feel strong when I'm wearing something red, so yeah."

"Great answer."

"As for my favorite food...mmmmm...it really depends. If we're talking about like a full on meal, then definitely a steaming bowl of tonkotsu ramen. If we're talking like snack food, then I'll have to go with Korean corn dogs."

"I'm not sure I've ever had a Korean corn dog. How are they different from a regular corn dog?"

"Oh my god, well first off they're not even close to being the same thing. I mean well...technically, they are kinda similar. Instead of cornmeal batter, the hot dogs are dipped in a flour batter, and instead of just a hot dog most of them have mozzarella inside as well. And then they're like coated with stuff like pankos or crunchy potato bits. They're insane, and yeah one of my favorite snack foods for sure."

"Sounds like quite the snack indeed! I'll have to give it a try. Okay, moving on. These questions come from the username 'Golavus' and the first one is about your family. We all know Kayla Grace, intrepid young reporter hot on the scene and on the case, but tell us about your family. Do

you have any close family, and do they approve of your...adventures."

"I'm assuming by adventures you mean..."

"The whole being tied up part, yes."

There was almost a glimmer in Danny's eye as he said that, but Kayla just brushed it off.

"Yes, well as for close family, the only two I have really are my mom and big sister Chloe. My mom and dad grew up in Korea, and they came to the States a couple years before they had me. My dad was pretty sick, even when they moved. He was super smart though, and ended up getting a really high paying job. I barely remember him. He died when I was around six, but before he left he left us a bunch of money from his job and all his investing. I swear to god he's my absolute hero in every way. My mom is incredible too, don't get me wrong. I love her to death too, but I'd like to think of her as my role model instead. Even after he died she kept going in order to provide for Chloe and me. The two of them are just...the best people I've ever known."

"Wow, very high praise. I'm sorry for your loss though. I'm sure that must have been hard."

"Thank you, I appreciate that. And yeah it was hard at first, but I don't know...I don't think my dad would have wanted us to be all sad and stuff. He worked his ass off to make sure we had a good life, and having a good life means making the most of it in spite of tragedy. So yeah, I miss him for sure, but I'm trying to honor his legacy by being the best damn reporter I can possibly be. Even if it means...you know...getting into trouble from time to time.

Speaking of which, yeah, my family doesn't mind my adventures. I mean my mom worries about me like crazy, but she's understanding at least. Chloe always just gives me a hard time about it. She thinks it's because I'm not careful enough. But hey, Chloe, if you're listening to this, I dare you to walk a mile in my shoes one of these days! It's not as easy as you think."

Danny laughed, "let's talk about that for a second. Your propensity to find yourself in peril."

"Oh god, I guess this was coming sooner or later."

"Golavus wants to know what is the most frustrating way that you've been tied up."

"Most frustrating, eh? Hm, let's see here...I mean I'd have to go with this one time, and it was the silliest thing, but this one time when I was trying to bust some college kids for running this fake ID service I got nabbed pretty good."

"Here we go..."

"And it wasn't like they even tied me up that good...it was just the way I was tied."

"Do you mind describing it for us?"

"Yeah, so I was tied up on the ground, and my hands were tied in front of me oddly enough. Anyway, they were tied down to my ankles but in front, so I was kind of folded up in a ball. I thought it was going to be easy to get out of, but stupidly enough it was actually super difficult. I was stuck like that for hours..."

"Wow. Crazy."

"Yeah, and that's not even the craziest part they also...err...well maybe I shouldn't say."

"No please, do continue."

Danny sat up in his chair a bit.

"Nah," said Kayla, "I don't really know how much of it is...radio appropriate."

"I see..."

"Yeah, a story for another day I suppose."

"I suppose so. Alright well, moving on with more questions from our friend Golavus. Are there any other sleuths you happen to admire?"

"Fictional or real?"

Danny chuckled, "it doesn't say. Well, I guess you can answer either way really."

"I'll give you both," said Kayla.

"I love it."

"Okay," she said, "so starting with some real ones that I admire. Do you know Sara Phillips?"

"The name rings a bell..."

"Yeah, well she's pretty awesome. We met up once, and it was just...so much fun."

"Did you get into any trouble?"

"Oh yeah, big time. Still, it was really nice to meet up with her and I learned a lot really. Her vibe is just...I don't know she's just so cool. Um, and then there's Becky Carter. Do you know her?"

"Again, rings a bell but I'm not sure. Have you met her too?"

"Not yet, but I've read all about her. She's great too. One of my biggest inspirations for sure. She's got this arch nemesis kinda...Marta Alfonsi, and wow have the two of them gone at it. More so Marta going after Becky and stuff,

but Becky just handles it all like a champ! She's the real deal, for sure."

"Wow, sounds like you've got a lot of folks you look up to!"

"Yeah, I mean that's how you get better, right? Learn from some of the best?"

"That's definitely a great attitude to have for sure."

"I think so. Anyway, there's more, I'm sure, but I'll just go ahead and name drop the two of them for now."

"And you mentioned something about...fictional sleuths you admire?"

"Yes, and I've got loads of them."

"Let's hear it!"

"Okay," Kayla said, "where to start...I mean I gotta mention Nancy Drew."

"Solid."

"Um, April O'Neil."

"Who?"

"From the teenage mutant ninja turtles."

"Ohhh yes, her. Of course."

"Um, Paula Peril! I love her."

"Now I definitely haven't heard of her."

"She's great. I mean, she's literally always getting into trouble."

"It sounds like it's in the name."

Kayla laughed, "Yeah, that's kind of her thing. She's still a badass though, peril or not. Um, okay, just gonna rapid fire off a bunch here."

"Go for it!"

"Olivia Benson, Dana Scully, Daphne Blake, Jane Rizzoli...I mean I could keep going but those are some of my favorites."

"Fantastic list."

"Thank you!"

"Alright," Danny said shuffling through his notes, "let's see here...how about hobbies?"

"Oooh, okay well, I love watching anime and manga. I'm kinda a big K-pop nerd."

"K-pop?"

"Korean Pop. So groups like TXT, BTS, Aespa, Itzy, Aespa, Red Velvet...just to name a few."

"You've lost me."

Kayla laughed, "it's okay. Like I said, big nerd."

"Any other hobbies?"

"Yeah, I'm a huge foodie. So if you're looking for any good spots around town, I got you covered."

"Good to know."

"Is fashion a hobby?" Kayla asked.

"Hmmm," Danny said tapping his pen on the desk, "sure, I'll count it!"

"Cool, then yeah I love fashion. New clothes, new shoes...I love it all."

"Speaking of clothes, the last question we have from Golavus is whether or not you enjoy glamming up in fancy dresses for posh parties."

"From time to time, yeah. I mean dressing super fancy isn't totally my thing. That being said, when the time is right I love getting glammed up. There's a big gala coming up in

a few months that I've been invited to, and so yeah I'll definitely bust out a fancy dress for that."

"Very nice," Danny said as he set his stack of notes aside, "well, that's it for fan questions. I've got a couple more from my end and then we'll call it a day. How does that sound?"

"Sounds great!" Kayla said as she reached down and took a sip from her water. It was going great so far. She was really loving this! Danny was super nice, and the questions so far were great. She was still sweating bullets though, but she hoped that at least on the outside she was coming off as calm and collected.

"Okay," Danny said as he grabbed another handful of papers, "let's see here...tell us about this Peirce story. What's your next step?"

"Well, I don't know how much I want to divulge here, but basically I'm looking into some potential accomplices. I mean, we know he wasn't doing it all along, and were able to identify some people that might have helped aid and abet him in his crimes. So yeah, we need to figure out if we can get an angle on them, but for right now that's proving to be pretty tough."

"No news from Peirce or where he might be or what he might be up to?"

"Nothing. He's gone completely off the map. I'm sure he'll be back one of these days, and when he does...I'll be ready."

"Let's hope so. From the way you worded your story he sounds like quite the criminal mastermind!"

"Oh, he is," said Kayla, "but he's got people doing his dirty work for him. So we just need to go after them, and then hopefully the rest of the cards topple. Again, like I said I have a couple leads...or at the very least one really good lead. I just need to get them to crack, or find some kind of way to expose them and then we'll be back on the right track."

"Good to know. Well, I think that's going to be it from me. Ladies and gentlemen, thanks for tuning in, and Kayla Grace...thanks for coming on!"

Kayla smiled, "thanks for having me, Danny. This was fun."

Danny leaned over and pressed a button on his computer, and then took off his headphones. Kayla followed by removing her own headphones and standing up, smoothing out her skirt as she did.

"Good job," he said giving her a big smile, "you did awesome!"

"Did I really? God, I was so nervous."

"You didn't seem it at all."

Kayla breathed a sigh of relief, "well that's good to know."

"Okay, before you go, we just need to get a couple of photos for the website."

"Oh, nice! I'm glad I dressed up then."

"This way," Danny said as he motioned with his hand toward the door.

Leading Kayla down the hall, Danny took Kayla to another room with a big white backdrop setup and a

bunch of photography equipment. There were two other guys already there still setting things up.

"Here we are," Danny said as he introduced Kayla to the photographers, "they'll take care of you here. When you're finished up, just come meet me back in the recording room and I'll help see you out. Again, you killed it, so nice talking with you."

"You too!" Kayla said as she waved by to Danny.

"Alright," one of the photographers said, "let's get started. Go ahead and step over there on the 'x'"

Walking over toward the backdrop, Kayla stood on the mark on the floor. She felt kind of awkward, and had no idea what to do with her hands or her feet. She wished Madelyn were here to give her some tips. Thankfully, the photographers were nice and helped her pose. They walked her through all these different poses that felt kind of strange to hold, but when Kayla looked at the shots she was surprised at how good they made her look! There was a reason these guys were professionals after all.

"Looking great!" The one holding the camera said as he continued to snap shots of Kayla. "You're a natural! The camera loves you."

Kayla blushed, "thanks."

"We just need to get a couple more...action shots if that works for you."

"Oh, sure!"

The main photographer nodded to his partner who walked out of view.

"Alright," the main guy said, "now just go ahead and stand there...don't worry about the poses for these. We'll handle those."

"Oh, uh...okay."

Kayla wasn't sure what he meant by this, but all of the sudden the other photographer re-appeared behind her and yanked her arms behind her back.

"Hey, what the hell!?"

She could feel him lashing her wrists together with rope, making numerous passes before tying off a very tight knot.

"We need to get your signature look," the main photographer said as he set down his camera and walked over, producing a coil of rope from his back pocket.

"My signature...by tying me up?!"

"You got it."

Kayla huffed as she launched a kick behind her, hitting the guy right in the chest.

"Oof!" He said as he fell backwards crashing into the backdrop.

"Hey, chill!" The other one said as he took his partner's place and grabbed Kayla's arms behind her back.

"You chill," she shouted, trying to kick him too.

But he was ready for her, standing back so that her kicks didn't land.

"You good?"

"Yeah...I'm all good."

"Great," the one holding Kayla said, "let's hurry up and get her tied before she tries anything else."

"On it!"

Getting up from the floor, Ross took another bundle of rope and starting looping it around Kayla's ankles. Or, at least he was trying to. She was hard at work launching as many kicks as she could in his direction making it damn near impossible for him to grab her.

"Shit, she's feisty!"

"You think? Here, lets get her on the ground."

Lowering Kayla to the floor, the one in front of her straddled her with his legs, practically sitting in her lap now with his back facing her. By putting all his weight on her upper thighs, he was able to wrangle her legs up and get them tied. He even took extra measure by looping rope around her nylon clad knees too.

"God, what the hell is wrong with you guys? Are you even photographers? Was that interview even legit!?"

"Oh, the interview was legit, yeah. Danny is great. He's really going places."

"Agreed," the other guy said, "he's great at asking questions. And the way he dialogues with guests? So good!"

"I listen to his show every week."

"Me too!"

Kayla rolled her eyes.

"Anyway," the mook holding her said, "no, the interview was legit. This part on the other hand...is just for us."

"Yeah, we've been wanting to snap some photos of you for a loooong time now. When we saw you were gonna be on Danny's show...well the opportunity was perfect."

"Do you know how much money people are going to shell out for these photos?"

"We'll be rich for sure."

"You're icky creeps is what you are," Kayla lashed back.

"Hmmm, someone's being a bit too mouthy, eh?"

"Should we treat her to the Kayla Grace classic?"

"It's what her fans would want."

"It's only right."

Kayla groaned. She knew exactly what they were talking about...

"Just get on with it," she said.

"Yes ma'am!"

The one sitting on her reached down and yanked off her boots, throwing them aside.

"Cute socks!"

"Thanks," Kayla said through gritted teeth, "they were a gift..."

Madelyn had bought them for her. They were light pink with all these cute little Studio Ghibli characters on them like Totoro and Calcifer. She happened to quite like them, but wasn't sure after today if she'd be as fond of them anymore...

Peeling them off her stocking clad feet, the goon stood up and waved the socks around in Kayla's face. They were having way too much fun with this.

"Hey, let's get some shots of you stuffing them in her mouth. People love that shit."

"Great idea!"

The guy behind Kayla leapt up and grabbed his camera while the other rotated Kayla's body around so that she

was facing the studio lights and her back was pointed toward the backdrop. The goon holding her socks crouched down behind her.

"Ready?" He said, as the other one stooped down and readied his camera.

"Yep, go for it!"

"Alright, girlie...just give it up! We're gonna gag you whether you like it or not!"

"Are you for real right now?" Kayla said as she turned her head and shot a frown at the guy behind her.

He laughed, "just playing the part, that's all."

"Hey, hurry it up over there!"

"Sorry, here we go."

Taking the socks, he brought them up to Kayla's mouth and starting pushing them into her mouth.

"Mmmph..." She huffed as he packed the socks in.

CLICK! CLICK! CLICK

"That's it! Damn, you're looking great Kayla!"

"WRRMMMMPH!"

CLICK! CLICK!

"Yes, I love the pouty look! You're really selling it! Spot on!"

Kayla rolled her eyes as the guy continued to stuff the socks in until they were pretty much all the way inside.

"Okay, now let's get some shots of you wrapping tape around her head."

This went on for quite a while as the fake photographers continued to further gag and truss Kayla up. With each new edition of rope they took more shots, really making sure to get every angle of Kayla. Of course,

by now, thanks to all the tape wound between her lips and around her head cleave gagging her, she was quite incapable of saying anything about it. She just sat there, stewing on her socks, and groaning with practically every click of the camera.

"K, now let's get some shots of her in some different ties!"

"MMMMMPH?!"

Jesus, how many photos are these losers going to take?

The answer was a lot...gigabytes and gigabytes worth of photos of Kayla bound in every position imaginable. She was hogtied, frogged, balltied, tied in a chair, tied on a stool...the list when on and so did the photo shoot for at least another couple of hours. Was Danny still waiting for her? She really hoped he would have come in and checked on her by now...

"Okay, I think that should do it."

"WRMMMMPH MMMPH?!"

Kayla was rather incensed by the word of choice of "think." She knew they had gotten enough. More than enough really. They'd swapped SD cards numerous times even.

"Should we untie her?"

"And have her come after us? No way! We gotta bail! Danny should figure out something's up soon enough."

He should have figured it out by now! Where the hell was he?!

"Thanks for all that, Kayla. You're gonna be a star."

"FFMMMMPH!"

Packing up their things the photographers headed out, giggling like little school kids all the way. It was a great time for them, but not for Kayla! She was furious, and as soon as they left she started wriggling in her ropes trying to get free. They'd left her hogtied on the floor, which was quite the difficult tie to escape from. Thankfully, not much time passed before Danny finally reappeared.

"MMMMMMMPH!"

Kayla howled at him as he just stood there in the doorway, a shocked look plastered over his face.

"Oh my god, what happened?"

"FFFMMMPH!"

What do you think happened?! They tied me up! Now hurry up and get me out of here!

"I better call the police, you just hang tight Kayla!"

"WRRRRMPH!? MMMMMMPH! MMMMMMMMMMMMPH!"

"Oh, and let me just snap a quick photo real quick...you know...to show the police that something really serious has happened!"

"MMMMMPH!"

No more pictures, goddammit!

Danny took off, not before taking a few photos of course, leaving Kayla behind as she rocked back and forth in her hogtie.

"Mmmmmph..."

She sighed into her gag as she finally just settled down and relaxed her muscles. At least he was calling the cops who would rush to get her free...

Right...?

12

"Kayla, heads up!"

Ducking down, her head inches away from the flying disk, Kayla barely avoided disaster. She shot a disapproving look at Madelyn, who pretended not to notice.

"Nice throw, Mads!" Andrea said as she waved the Frisbee around. "Go long!"

Madelyn jogged away, sand flying up behind her as she ran to receive Andrea's pass. It wasn't even close...

"Sorry!"

Kayla laughed as Madelyn ran over to Andrea, showing her how to hold the Frisbee and get a better throw off. In the meantime, Kayla was busy setting up her spot as she laid a towel out and set her beach bag down. Facing the water she took a deep breath in, letting the fresh air fill her nose. She loved the beach, and even more so she loved spending a day at the beach with her best friends.

It had all worked out perfectly. Andrea was in town, Madelyn didn't have any modelling gigs set up, and Kayla was taking a day off from work. It was an impromptu trip, something Kayla wasn't usually a fan of, but she had made an exception under the circumstances. It was just too perfect of an opportunity to pass up. Plus, summer was pretty much over now, and nice days like these were about

to go away for the season. They were lucky it was even as nice as it was! It was the perfect day for a last minute beach trip to cap out the summer season.

Running over, Madelyn plopped down in the sand next to Kayla, out of breath. Her beautiful blonde hair shimmering in the sunlight. Kayla could already notice all the guys ogling Madelyn. One of them even stubbed his toe on a piece of drift wood and face planted in the sand. She didn't blame them, hell, she was even ogling her gorgeous friend! Madelyn had on this stunning two piece lilac colored swimsuit and it just hugged her body in all the right ways. She was a total hottie.

Andrea wasn't far behind Madelyn, she may not have officially been a model like Madelyn but she looked the part especially in that gorgeous two piece swimsuit she was wearing. God, Kayla had such attractive friends. She had to be careful not to trip on any driftwood herself...

"You getting the hang of it yet?" Kayla asked Andrea who plopped down in the sand with a dejected look, digging her toes into the warm sand.

Andrea sighed, "no...it just never seems to go where I want it too. I almost hit an old lady!"

"You'll get there," Madelyn said, "just give it time."

"I don't know...maybe I'll just stick to soccer."

"Or," said Kayla chiming in, "we can all just stick to relaxing. No games needed."

"That's no fun," Madelyn said jumping up, "come on, let's go dive in the water!"

"You two can go," Kayla said, "I think I'm going to dive into this book."

"Very punny. Have fun then!" Madelyn said as she took off with Andrea in tow.

Kayla smiled as she watched her two best friends sprint toward the shoreline, jumping into the ocean and splashing around. That was their idea of fun. Kayla on the other hand was just going to relax.

Or...well...at least her version of relaxing anyway. Instead of pulling out her book she reached into her bag and retrieved her notebook. Flipping it open she browsed her notes, refreshing herself on what was going on in town.

It's not like Kayla had lied to her friends, no, that wasn't the case. She had in fact wanted to spend a day at the beach, it's just that she had other reasons for being at the beach. Like looking into the local ice cream shop that was in danger of going out of business due to a bunch of recent bad reviews. Andrea and Madelyn could have their fun splashing around in the water. Kayla on the other hand was hot on the case! She found herself so buried in her notes that she didn't hear Madelyn and Andrea sneak up behind her.

"Whatcha' looking at?"

Kayla jumped and turned around to face her friends. Where the hell had they come from? Weren't they just down by the water?

"Nothing, I'm just reading...like I said."

"Kayla Grace," Madelyn said as she planted her hands on her hips, "don't think you can fool me. I can recognize your reporter's notebook from a mile away. Well...maybe not a whole mile, but you get the point."

"Wait," Andrea said, "oh my god, is there a case you're working on here?! That's so exciting! I want in!"

"Remember the last time you helped me out?" Kayla asked referencing when they had been bound and gagged by those flight attendant crooks.

"Like that was enough to keep me down," Andrea replied defiantly.

"Come on, Kayla," said Madelyn, "if there's a story to chase we've got your back. Only so that we can get back to beach day of course. Either way, we're coming as your backup whether you like it or not!"

Kayla sighed as she eyed her two pushy friends. They were really selling the whole thing too, glaring down at her like two disapproving parents that had just caught their child trying to steal snacks before dinner.

"Okay fine," Kayla said, "you can be my backup."

"Not like it was a choice," Madelyn said as sat back down next to Kayla. "So, fill us in."

"Well, it has to do with the little ice cream shop in town."

"Antonio's?" Andrea gasped, "no way...is he like some kind of drug kingpin?!"

Kayla laughed, "No, silly, just let me finish."

"Sorry."

"Anyway, so yeah, Antonio's has gotten a bunch of bad reviews lately. We're not talking like three star reviews saying it was just okay, we're talking one star reviews telling people to stay the hell away from that shop. And it's not just a few people either, it's like literally every single recent review."

"Jesus," said Madelyn, "what did they do? Or I guess, what are they supposed to have done?"

"The reviews claim that after eating there they're all getting really bad food poisoning. The trouble is that the health department supposedly just came like a month ago and didn't find anything wrong. So it's strange that they're having these issues out of the blue."

"That is strange," Andrea said, "sounds like the makings of a good story to me though!"

"It sure does," said Madelyn as she sprung up, "come on, let's go clear Antonio's name and save their shop!"

In record time they slipped on their heeled sandals, laced them up, and tied sarongs around their waists. Before Kayla even had a chance to react and gather her things they were ready to go and headed out.

"Wait," said Kayla as she called out to her two friends, "we need to check our bias and go in with an open mind."

"Too late," Madelyn called back as she and Andrea skipped off.

Kayla shook her head and sighed, picking up her towel and stuffing it inside her beach bag. She hurriedly pulled her white chunky cardigan over her red two piece swimsuit and slipped her bare feet back into her sandals.

By the time she had caught up with them they were already in town, making a bee line for the ice cream shop. Kayla had been to Antonio's before. It was a great little place that had some damn good ice cream. Every time she came there was always a line out the door, but today there was nobody. Literally nobody.

"God," said Madelyn as they walked up to the shop, "I've never seen it like this."

"Yeah," said Kayla, "they're really taking a hit."

Pushing the door open, Kayla and her friends walked inside. They were greeted by a college age girl at the front counter. She flashed a bright smile at them and welcomed them in.

"Hi, how ya'll doing today?" She said.

"Good," said Kayla taking the lead, "my name is Kayla Grace. I'm a reporter from the Hazeldale Tribune. Is Antonio around?"

The girl turned around and shouted toward the back.

"Dad! There's a reporter that wants to see you."

There was a loud clanging sound followed by the sound of shuffling feet as Antonio scurried his way to the front. He looked absolutely frazzled, and was less than excited to see Kayla.

"No reporters," he said to her waving his hands, "I've told them all a thousand times. Everything here is fine. I don't want any reporters or any fuss!"

"Sir," Kayla began, "I'm not here to write some kind of hit piece on you. I want to try and figure out what's been going on."

"Wait really?"

"Yeah," Kayla continued, "you've had this shop here for years..."

"Thirty five to be exact!"

"Right, so I find it hard to believe that after all that time...something like this is just randomly happening. At the very least I want to give you a fair shot, have a look

around, and see if I can get to the bottom of this. It may very well be some faulty batches of ice cream."

"Impossible."

"Or, it could be something else. That's what I'm here to look into."

Antonio sighed, Kayla could tell he was hesitant to accept her help, who wouldn't be? This was his family business that he'd been running for years. He knew the ins and outs of the operation better than anybody. Which is why Kayla had a hunch something fishy was going on. If he was convinced there wasn't a problem, she was inclined to believe him.

"Fine," Antonio said finally caving, "you girls can have a look around."

"Thank you," Kayla said as she turned to Madelyn and Andrea and motioned for them to follow her.

"So what exactly are we looking for?" Andrea said as she poked around the back prep kitchen.

"I don't know," Kayla said, "just keep your eyes peeled for anything strange or out of place."

"I have been," Andrea replied, "I'm not seeing anything."

"Well don't give up so quickly," said Kayla, "just keep at it."

"I don't know," Madelyn said, "I'm with Andrea on this one. I really don't think there's anything here. I mean we've been looking for like ten minutes already."

"Only ten minutes," Kayla said, "there's plenty of stuff to look into."

"All this ice cream is really making me crave some though," said Andrea as she eyed one of the giant tubs and pretended to pout. "What if we ask Antonio for some. You know, to help fuel our search!"

"I don't think that's a good idea," Kayla said, "I mean unless all those people were lying about getting sick, there's something wrong with this product. I would steer clear of it for now."

"You know," Madelyn said, "there's another shop on the edge of town. Andrea and I can go run and get some while you finish looking around here."

"Wow," said Kayla, "so you both are throwing in the towel then? What happened to being my backup?"

"We still are," said Andrea defensively, "we're just stepping out for a quick snack. Besides, you've got this covered."

"Yeah," said Madelyn as she linked arms with Andrea, "we'll just be right back. Here, toss me your purse!"

Kayla rolled her eyes, unslinging her purse before tossing it over to Madelyn. She wasn't actually upset that they were abandoning her so quickly, besides, it was her fault they were spending their beach day doing this anyway. So if anything she was the one who owed them! As soon as they left she got back to work looking for anything suspicious or out of the ordinary. So far, there was no signs of anything strange or in violation of health code or anything like that. Kayla wondered if she had hit a dead end, but shaking her head she re-focused herself and kept looking. There had to be something here...somewhere!

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"Will that be everything?"

"Oh, and one of the lemon lavender scoops please."

"Would you like that in the waffle cone too?"

"Yes, please!"

Andrea was giddy with excitement. She loved indulging in sweet treats, and was thrilled to finally get to eat some ice cream after talking about it so much over the last hour. She handed Kayla's cone to Madelyn before grabbing her own.

"Kay," she said to Madelyn, "now I can focus on helping, Kayla."

Madelyn smiled, "good. We should probably get back then. I want to help Kayla wrap this thing up so we can get back to the beach! We gotta work on your frisbee skills you know."

Andrea sighed, "can we just give up on that? I think I'm doomed."

"Nonsense! Just trust your teacher. I'll turn you into a pro, don't worry."

"Fine, but next time we're bringing a soccer ball."

"Deal."

Leaving the shop, the duo headed back to Kayla. They made it about halfway before Madelyn stopped realizing she'd forgotten Kayla's purse!

"Shit," she said looking at her two hands full of ice cream cones. "I was so busy making sure I grabbed the cones I think I left Kayla's purse on the counter. Here, take Kayla's ice cream and bring it to her. I'll go grab the purse and meet you back at Antonio's."

"Are you sure?"

"Yeah, she'll kill me if I lose that thing!"

"No she won't..."

Madelyn laughed, "you're right, she won't. But she'll be all disappointed and frowny. I hate it when she's all frowny."

"Well then hurry up, Mads! I'll see you back at the shop."

Turning around, Madelyn rushed back to the other shop as Andrea continued on back to Kayla. Arriving at the shop, Madelyn made a beeline for the counter. Sure enough, there was Kayla's purse just sitting there. She grabbed it, smiled at the guy behind the counter who immediately started blushing, and then headed out.

"Are you sure this is okay?"

"Yes, we're in way too deep now to be asking questions like that anyway."

"But the shop is going to go completely under!"

"Who cares? Think about how rich we're going to be once we're the only ice cream shop in town. Have you seen the lines outside Antonio's? That'll be Sweet Treats once we get rid of them."

"But is it right what we're doing? People are getting really sick..."

"Look, just don't think about that. It's fine. What we're putting in their ice cream isn't going to kill anybody. It's just going to cause them some mild discomfort. That's all."

Madelyn put her hand to her mouth, stifling a gasp. She had overheard two guys talking behind the ice cream shop as they tossed trash bags into the trash bin. They weren't even trying to hide their conversation, they were just

having it out in the open daylight. How dumb were they? Either way, she had figured out what was really going on. Antonio's was being sabotaged! Pulling out her phone she started typing out a text to Kayla and Andrea informing them of what she'd discovered.

"And just what do you think you're doing?"

Madelyn spun around, it was the two guys she'd been eavesdropping on! She'd been so quick to judge them for having a conversation out in the open, and yet here she was snooping out in the open herself! Kayla was bound to give her an earful about this...

"Hey guys," Madelyn said chuckling nervously, "what's up?"

"You tell us," one of them said as he glared at her, "you were spying on us weren't you?"

"Who? Me? No, I'm just enjoying this super delicious ice cream," Madelyn said as she gave it a seductive lick.

"Nice try, you're coming with us!"

A hand shot out and grabbed Madelyn's wrist yanking her forward and causing her to drop her ice cream.

"Ouch, let go of me, asshole!"

She struggled to break free of the worker's grip, but he held on tight. His friend rushed around behind Madelyn and looped his arms around her waist scooping her up.

"What the helmmmmph!"

He slapped a hand over her mouth as he hoisted her into the air, his friend grabbed Madelyn's legs and lifted her up so that she was high up off the ground now. She kicked and screamed, but the hand gagging her muffled her cries for help as she was dragged away...

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Meanwhile, Kayla was still hard at work looking for...well anything really! She was starting to lose hope herself having investigated pretty much every nook and cranny of Antonio's shop. Just when she was about to throw in the towel, a totally unexpected visitor showed up.

"Oh...my...god...what the hell are you doing here?!"

Kayla knew that bitchy voice from a mile away. It was Jennifer, her rival from the Tribune. What was that skank doing here? God, and she looked amazing too. She was a grade-A bitch, but her body was a ten. She had on this black designer two piece swimsuit, with a black cover up tied around her waist. Her feet tucked into a pair of super high heeled sandals strapped around her ankles.

"I see you've already run out of original leads and you're just following me around," Kayla said as condescending as possible.

"So what you beat me to the punch. I'm sure your story is gonna' suck anyway. Besides, I bet you think Antonio is innocent, don't you?"

"I don't have any reasons to think he's guilty that's for sure. Why...do you know something?"

Jennifer laughed mockingly, slapping her knee in jest.

"As if I would ever tell you," she said, "all I know is what you know and that is that Antonio has been running this shop for thirty five years and lately, he's gotten sloppy and it's making people sick and forcing him out of business."

"You would take that angle," Kayla sneered, "that's just like you to see the worst in people in not give them a fair chance."

"Well, we'll see who's story gets picked up. Now, if you'll excuse me, I have an interview scheduled with Antonio."

"What? How'd you get an interview?! When we walked in here he said no reporters."

Jennifer flicked her ponytail back and shook her head, a devious smirk painted across her face.

"I'm not a reporter today. I'm here for an interview. Now if you'll excuse me, I have important work to be done. Unlike...whatever it is you're doing here."

If this were a cartoon Kayla would have steam coming out of her ears. That scheming little bitch was always coming up with some kind of shady way to get what she wanted! Jennifer strutted off past Kayla, purposely bumping into her shoulder as she waltzed by, her sandals clicking on the floor as she passed. Behind Jennifer's back, Kayla stuck her tongue out in addition to sticking out her middle finger at her. She really could not stand Jennifer. Not one bit. She was always getting in Kayla's way and making life harder for her. Today was no exception...

A few minutes after Jennifer left, Andrea arrived holding two cones of ice cream in her hands.

"God," she said eying Kayla, "you look a little pissed...we didn't take that long, did we?"

"No, it's not that," said Kayla, taking one of the cones, "it's my stupid rival, Jennifer."

"Who?"

"Have I not told you about her?"

Andrea shook her head, "no, oh my god, is she the worst? Do we hate her? I'll totally be like super mean to her for you."

Kayla smiled, "it's whatever. She's just here and trying to write her own story on what's going on. She thinks Antonio is being negligent and that the food poisonings are really his fault."

"But you don't think that?"

"I'm not sure what to think," said Kayla.

She looked around for a second noticing that Madelyn wasn't with Andrea.

"Hey," she said, "where's Mads?"

"She forgot your purse at the ice cream shop so she ran back to get it."

"Typical..."

"She should be back though. I'm not that fast of a walker!"

Bzzzzzz!

Just then Kayla's phone chirped with a new text message. It was from Madelyn and it read: "Found something interesting. Meet me at Sweet Treats. Come around back and meet me by the storage room."

"Is that Madelyn?" Andrea said peeking over Kayla's shoulder.

"Yeah," she said, "it sounds like she found something. She wants us to meet her at the other store."

"She found a lead?!"

"Sounds like it," said Kayla, "let's go check it out."

.

Arriving at Sweet Treats, Kayla glanced around looking for Madelyn. She was nowhere in sight, but then again she did say to meet her out back. Right away, Kayla was starting to get bad vibes from the situation. For starters, the shop was closed already.

"Weren't you guys like just here?" She said gesturing to the unlit open sign.

"Yeah," said Andrea, "that's so weird...they must have just closed."

"Something's not right," Kayla said.

That's when she saw it. An ice cream cone, melting on the ground beside the shop. It wasn't fully melted yet indicating that it had been dropped fairly recently. Kayla bent over and took a closer look at it. Sure enough, it was mint chocolate chip: Madelyn's favorite flavor. In addition to the cone, there were a couple cardboard boxes haphazardly laying around as if someone had kicked them over in a struggle.

"Something's not right," said Kayla as she stood back up and turned around.

But suddenly, she found herself alone. Andrea, who had just been standing right behind her was gone.

"That's odd.." Kayla said as she looked around, "Andrea! Andmmmmmmph!"

Kayla was grabbed from behind as two strong arms wrapped around her body, one around her waist and one across her mouth. A second attacker appeared in front of her, scooping her bare legs up as she was dragged away. Kayla kicked and screamed, her screams coming out as

muffled grunts though thanks to the hand slapped over her mouth.

"MMMMMMMMPH!"

She was carried over to a storage room behind the ice cream shop. The storage room that Madelyn had asked them to meet her at...

As the doors flung open she was greeted by the sight of her two friends, only they weren't alone. Two other people were also inside the room. They were currently busy with two rolls of duct tape, wrapping it around Andrea's arms and legs.

"GGGGGNNNMPH! MMMMMMPH!"

Her yelling was reduced to grunts and moans given the rag stuffed in her mouth. Her long sheer sarong had been fashioned into a makeshift cleave gag and was pulled between her teeth keeping the rag buried inside her mouth.

"NNNNNNMPH!"

Beside her, Madelyn writhed in her own tape bonds, her mouth equally stuffed with another rag held there by her own sarong. She was backed up to one of the support beams in the room, her legs folded underneath her so that she was sat in a kneeling position. Her arms were raised above her head and connected to the beam via tape. More tape was wound around her upper body connecting to the beam and severely limiting her movement.

As if her swimsuit didn't accentuate her breasts enough, the tape wound above and below her chest really pushed her boobs out so that they were practically bursting in her

swim top. Kayla said a silent prayer hoping it would hold. This situation was already bad enough...

Kayla was lowered to the floor beside Andrea, her attackers laying her face down before ripping off her cardigan and tossing it aside. The floor was cold and slightly damp. Kayla's swimsuit was great for a day at the beach but it made for some pretty terrible snooping attire! Wrenching her arms behind her back, the goon crossed Kayla's wrists and lashed them together with tape. Her mouth was free for the moment, and so taking advantage of what little time she had left before she was eventually gagged, Kayla decided to sound out the pieces of the puzzle.

"You're jealous," she said, "Antonio's been the main ice cream shop in town with lines out the door every day and you're jealous. So you've been sabotaging him in hopes of his store going out of business so that you can swoop in and set up your own ice cream empire."

The Sweet Treats mook wrapping tape around her bare ankles laughed.

"That's a neat little story there. Got any evidence to back it up?"

"Uhhhh, how about what's happening right now? Why the hell would you need to tie us up if nothing shady was going on. Admit it, you're the ones that have been messing with Antonio's in order to put them out of business!"

"So what if we are, that lousy old man has had his fun. There's a new king of ice cream in town, and it's Sweet Treats!"

Kayla rolled her eyes, "the only kings you'll ever be is kings of crime. Not only are you harassing poor Antonio, but now you're adding kidnapping to the list. You're all going to be in some real deep shit if you don't cut this out right now."

"Can it! You're nothing but a lousy little snoop! You three should have minded your own goddamn business! This is your own fault."

"So it's my fault you decided to kidnap the three of us and tie us up? Do you thin the judge is going to agree with you on that?" said Kayla.

"God, you don't know when to shut up do you? Hand me those rags!"

Kayla rolled her eyes and sighed, preparing herself for the inevitable. Grabbing a handful of her hair, the mook gave a good tug causing Kayla to yelp. In that moment he took two large rags and jammed them straight into her open mouth.

"NNNNNNNNNNMPH!"

"One rag was enough to quiet your friends, but with how loud you are I think two will work better."

"FFFFFMPH!"

Kayla coughed and sputtered as he packed the rags in as roughly as humanly possible, making sure to fill them into her cheeks so that he could get both inside. It was a tight fit, but he did manage to stuff them each in. Kayla's mouth was left wide open, but that just made it easier to wrap a bunch of tape between her lips and around her head.

She stole a glance at poor Andrea, who was just about all taped up now. They hadn't secured her down to anything like Madelyn, but with how strictly she was taped up it's not like it mattered. She was currently on her side, her arms pulled behind her back and taped together in a box shape. Her legs were folded up in such a way that her heels were pushed into the back of her upper thighs with tape wound all the way around her legs so that they were pinned in that position.

Her bust had been similarly framed like Madelyn's, her already generously sized breasts straining against her swimsuit top. Her long brown hair was a hot mess as it tumbled all around while Andrea writhed on the floor. She wiggled her bare toes, her shoes joining Madelyn's on the floor.

To Kayla's surprise, she had incurred the least strict treatment compared to Madelyn and Andrea. The sound of more tape ripping was an indication that was about to change...

A bunch of tape was wound around Kayla's bare feet all the way up to her mouth placing her in a tight tape hogtie. She wasn't sure how secure it would be, but as it turned out it was just as snug as a regular hogtie. The tape was plenty strong, especially with the way it had been reinforced too. After making a few passes around her feet and back up to her mouth, she felt the tape being wound around the main loop behind her back so that instead of a flimsy band it more so resembled something like thin rope. It was quite restricting, and quite uncomfortable as well.

"Mmmmmmp," Kayla grunted through her mouthful of rags, eying her captors as they gathered up after finishing their work.

"What do we do with them now?"

"I don't know...I mean they've seen and heard everything."

"Right, so it sounds like we've got to get rid of them."

"Probably, but not right now. We need to figure out a plan. I don't want any loose ends."

"Good call."

"Let's just leave them here and come back later when we've figured something out."

"NNNNMMMMPH!"

The girls chorused through their muffling gags as the four Sweet Treats employees filed out of the storage room leaving them behind. Beside her, Madelyn flopped around in a vain attempt to get free. Madelyn was working hard as well, flexing her wrists and pulling at the tape that bound her trying to break free. Kayla was busy looking around the room trying to see if there was anything sharp that they could use to get free.

They were going to need that if they wanted to escape. It was either that or someone come and rescue them.

Which, speaking of that...

CREEEEEEEAAKKKK!

The girls put their struggling on pause as they all turned and watched the door to the storage room open. Kayla rolled her eyes to the ceiling and let out the longest muffled sigh as she watched Jennifer casually stroll in chuckling as she did so.

"My, oh my," she said, "just what do we have here?"

"FMMMPH YYMMMPH!"

Jennifer bent down near Kayla's face, giving her a rough pat on the rear.

"You know," she said, "if you weren't such a crummy reporter, you wouldn't end up like this so often."

"MMMMMPH!"

It had nothing to do with being a crummy reporter! God, Jennifer was the worst! If Kayla's mouth wasn't stuffed so full with those rags she'd give her a piece of her mind!

"Well, I do suppose I should help you out...eventually. Although, I must admit it is very fun watching you struggle all taped up like that. In fact, why don't I take some photos to remember the occasion by!"

Jennifer stood up, taking out her phone and snapping a few photos of Kayla.

"MMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMPH!"

Kayla roared into her gag, bouncing around in her hogtie.

"That's the spirit! Thanks for really hamming it up. I'm getting some great shots!"

Kayla continued to shout at Jennifer, but it had nothing to do with playing to the camera. Instead, she was trying to warn her that there was somebody coming up behind!

"Alright I'm just going to take a few mo...hey! Get off of mmmmp!"

Jennifer was grabbed by two of the Sweet Treats workers as they wrestled her down to the floor. Kayla just sighed, watching as her rival was overpowered by her two attackers. They quickly worked two rags into her protesting

mouth before sealing them in with her sarong that they'd pilfered from around her waist. Kayla watched in awe as they put Jennifer in quite the bind.

She was taped up on her side, her arms pulled up over her head and folded down so that her elbows were pinched together near the top of her head and her wrists rested in the small of her back. Her legs were folded up and tied separately, much like Andrea's had been. Only with Jennifer, one of her legs was folded back so that her ankle was brought near her hands. They wound tape around her wrists and connected it to that ankle so that she was essentially tape hogtied, but one with one leg. Her other leg was folded up into her chest, and secured with tape wrapped around her body.

"LLLLLMPH MMMMMPH!"

Needless to say Jennifer was quite unhappy with her predicament. Only there wasn't much she was able to say about it. Her many shouts and screams were nothing but grunts and muffled groans now behind her massive gag. If there was anything positive to take away from this situation...this was it. Seeing her rival bound and gagged like this was always a plus for Kayla. Jennifer deserved it too! If she hadn't been such a bitch she could have gotten Kayla free and they'd be out of this mess by now!

The two guys left once again, the storage room now nothing but the sounds of moans and squeaking tape. Kayla sighed as she once again resumed her search for anything around the room that might aid in their escape. Some beach day this had turned out to be! Then again,

with Kayla Grace on the case, there was always some kind of mischief waiting around the corner...

13

"Welcome to the big city!" Madelyn skipped into the air and spun around, her arms raised high.

Her beautiful blonde hair billowed in the city wind. Even in her casual travel apparel, she was still gorgeous as ever. She could make almost any outfit look good, and today she was just rocking a t-shirt, leggings, and sneakers and yet somehow she still looked stunning.

Kayla trailed behind, wearing a similar casual outfit, smiling as she watched Madelyn dance around. While not as outwardly expressive, Kayla was equally as excited to be in New York. Not for the same reasons as Madelyn who was mostly looking forward to the shopping and food. Kayla was excited for the Annual Journalism Conference.

Reporters, detectives, journalists, etc, were all invited to this conference for a weekend of seminars and other activities. It had been Kayla's dream to go for a long time now, and she finally had the perfect excuse to go: the Hazeldale Tribune was paying for it! That's right, she was on an all expenses paid trip to New York for the conference and she could not have been more thrilled.

Even though Madelyn wasn't getting a free flight, she decided to join Kayla anyway. She loved New York and always jumped at any opportunity to visit the Big Apple. Kayla was thankful for the company too, it was nice to travel

with someone and there was no one in the world she'd rather travel with than her best friend.

"What should we do first?" Madelyn asked.

"Well," said Kayla, "we should probably drop our stuff off at the hotel. Then do you want to grab some dinner?"

"Do I ever! Hey, when can we go shopping? There's a couple places I want to hit up if we have the chance."

"Well, I'll be busy with the conference most of the time, but maybe on Sunday. Remember, I'm here for business technically, but please don't let that stop you from shopping 'till you drop."

"Oh, it won't."

Kayla smiled. It was great having her best friend join her on this trip, and from the looks of it so far Madelyn was already having a blast. As much as Kayla wanted to join Madelyn in being a tourist, she was indeed here for business. She still had plans to make the most of her trip and find times to hang out, but the conference was definitely top priority.

That being said, up first on her agenda was to check into the hotel and get herself situated. She and Madelyn were staying right in the heart of Manhattan alongside all the other journalists and reporters. As she and Madelyn entered the hotel lobby, they were greeted by dozens of other folks either checking in or hanging out. Kayla took a deep breath in of excitement. Getting to surround herself with this many like minded people was always a rush.

Kayla made a beeline for the front desk. She was offered a friendly greeting from the man behind the desk.

"Hello, and welcome! I assume you're here for conference?"

"Yes, that would be correct."

"Excellent, if I could just see some i.d. that would be great.

Fishing around in her bag, Kayla grabbed her driver's license and handed it to the man. He started typing up some things on the computer, followed by some more logistical questions, but after a few short minutes everything was taken care of and he handed Kayla a pair of room cards.

"Alright, thank you miss Grace, you're all set! The elevators are to your right, and you'll find your room located on the fifteenth floor. Just head down the hall once you get off the elevator, and after you take the first right it will be a few rooms down on the left. Enjoy your stay!"

As Kayla and Madelyn grabbed their bags and headed up to their rooms, Madelyn stifled a laugh as she glanced back at the man that checked them in.

"For a New Yorker he was super nice!"

Kayla raised an eyebrow, "not everyone here has to be an asshole. You know that's just a stereotype."

"Wait...do you like him? Oh my god, you totally do! I'll have to go back and grab his number for you."

Kayla shook her head, giving Madelyn one of her famous exaggerated eye rolls as she strode off toward the elevators. Madelyn just snickered as she skipped behind Kayla.

Arriving at their room, Kayla plopped her bags down on the bed as Madelyn plopped herself down onto her own.

"So, where we getting dinner?"

"Not sure, I've got a bunch of stuff bookmarked on my Yelp though so probably something off that list."

"Ooooh, let me see!"

"Here," Kayla said tossing her phone to Madelyn, "you can pick a place. I'm going to unpack first. I'm getting hungry though so don't take too long figuring out what you want."

Kneeling on the bed, Madelyn sat up straight and saluted Kayla before plopping herself down again and scrolling through Kayla's phone. In the meantime, Kayla opened her suitcase and laid out her clothes on the bed. She was a textbook over packer, and always had WAY too many clothes with her when she went away for vacations and the like.

In her defense, being tied up and gagged around every corner was quite taxing on her wardrobe. Countless pairs of tights and cute dresses had been ruined thanks to all the tape and rope that was so often applied to her. Not to mention all those pairs of socks that had been...repurposed for other things. So yeah, she definitely had developed a habit to pack heavy.

Not that she was planning to get into any trouble on this trip, but hey...at this point in her career she just never knew.

"Okay," Madelyn said as she sat up in bed, "I think I found a spot."

"Great, you ready to go?"

"Let's do it!"

Heading out, the girls made their way uptown to the place Madelyn had chosen. It was this cute little Thai

restaurant that Kayla had actually been dying to try. Most of the places on that list she gave Madelyn were places she'd been wanting to try. Kayla never traveled anywhere before scouting things out ahead of time. Even if she was just in New York for a weekend, she was going to make the most of it! Especially when it came to getting good food.

They rode the subway there, which for Madelyn wasn't the most fun of experiences given how dirty parts of it were. Kayla on the other hand didn't mind too much, and thought it was a pretty neat way to get around town. There was almost something magical about going underground and then getting "teleported" across the city to a brand new part of town. Sure there was lots of trash and funny smells, but besides that it made getting around super easy!

After enjoying their meal the girls headed back to their hotel and started getting ready to turn in for the night. The conference started first thing tomorrow, and Kayla wanted to get as much rest as she could beforehand. She planned to make it to as many seminars as she could, which meant she had a full day ahead of her.

Madelyn was going to join her for the first part of the morning, but then after lunch she was going to hit the city while Kayla continued onward. Madelyn wasn't a reporter, but she had done her fair share of snooping and detective work alongside Kayla so perhaps there were some things for her to learn.

"So," Madelyn said as she and Kayla crawled under their respective covers, "are they going to teach us to like...untie knots and get out of sticky situations?"

Kayla laughed, turning over to face her friend, "it's not like that. It'll be a little more...professional."

"Are you saying getting tied up isn't professional?"

"I just mean it's not technically part of the job."

"Sure seems like it!"

"Well, they don't have any sessions like that. It's mostly about how to craft a good story, and how to chase after the right leads, and stuff like that."

Madelyn pretended to yawn prompting Kayla to toss a pillow at her.

"Hey! What was that for?"

Madelyn tossed the pillow back as the two girls laughed.

"Look, you'll only be there for like a couple of hours. If it's unbearable you can dip out early. You'll miss the free lunch though."

"Can't you like...save me some?"

"Nope, gotta earn it, girlie!"

Madelyn huffed as she rolled over.

"Fine...but if I fall asleep you have to wake me up! Don't let me snore during the session or anything."

"Deal."

"Alright, goodnight, Kayla!"

"Night 'mads."

.

With a good night's sleep under both of their belts, the next morning Kayla and Madelyn were ready to go for the first day of the conference! It was a great day for it too. The forecast said it was supposed to be overcast, which at least meant the sun wouldn't be bearing down on them. It would

still be humid, but the cloud coverage meant cooler temperatures for sure. Kayla was thankful for this, as she was not a fan of the heat by any means! Plus, cooler weather meant skirts and tights, and she was a huge sucker for such a combo.

She smoothed out the remaining wrinkles in her plaid dress, adjusting her tights too so that there weren't any bunches. Strolling over to the mirror she took a look at herself, spinning around ever so slightly so as to see herself from all angles. This was one of her favorite looks, and it was so easy to put together too. All she had to do was throw on a turtleneck, pull her dress over that, slip into some tights, and she was good to go! Simple, and yet quite stylish.

"Are you ready to go?" Kayla asked Madelyn, heading toward the bathroom to check in on her friend.

"Yeah, ready when you are!"

Madelyn was wearing one of her signature looks as well. A black jean jacket over a maroon sweater, with jean shorts and patterned tights. A once again simple outfit, and yet so chic. Then again, with Madelyn's looks she could make anything look good!

"I just need to put my shoes on and then we can take off."

"Same here," Madelyn said as she walked over to her side of the room and started rummaging around her suitcase. In the meantime, Kayla made her way over to her own side, her nylon clad feet softly thumping into the carpet. Pulling open the little dresser next to her bed she fished out a pair of black socks and slipped them over her

tights followed by her favorite pair of white booties. Grabbing her purse she joined Madelyn by the front door, who had just finished putting on her ankle boots.

"Ready?" Kayla said.

"Let's do this!"

And so they were off. The conference was being held at the Jacob Javits Convention Center in West Manhattan, so not too far from where they were staying. The conference didn't officially start for another couple of hours, but upon their arrival they were already greeted by throngs of reporters and journalists all arriving early. Kayla wasn't the least bit surprised by this. It was kind of a stereotype to be pretty "Type-A" if you were going to be a reporter after all.

Making their way through the crowds they headed into the main hall and grabbed programs for the weekend. Madelyn looked hers over, but Kayla immediately places hers into her purse. She had already read the online program and knew exactly which sessions she wanted to attend.

"Come on," she said, linking her arm with Madelyn's, "let's head to the first session room. This way!"

Together, they walked arm in arm through the crowds and over to a nearby room, which was massive by the way, and found seats smack dab in the middle of the room. Madelyn insisted they sit farther back, but Kayla wanted a view up close. So they compromised and snagged seats right in the middle.

The room was already starting to fill up, with more and more seats being taken by the minute. They were lucky to grab the seats they did, otherwise they'd be stuck clear in

the back as most of the front half of the room was already filled up.

"How long 'till this thing gets started?"

"Well," said Kayla as she checked her phone, "we've got a good twenty minutes. If you need to go to the bathroom or get snacks or anything now's your chance."

"Great, I'll be right back!"

As Madelyn got up to go do...well, whatever it was she needed to do, Kayla pulled out her phone and opened up her notes app. She had made sure to make separate folders for all the sessions in advance. Pulling up the folder for this particular section, she made sure everything was still there and ready to go.

"Excuse me..."

Kayla turned to see two girls standing next to her in the aisle.

"Hi," she said, "sorry, am I in your way?"

"No, not at all. We were just wondering if you were saving any of these seats for anyone."

"Nope, they're all yours!"

"Thanks!"

The pair sat down, not directly next to Kayla but a few seats over. That didn't stop Kayla from leaning over and making conversation with them though. She'd planned to make a few friends over the weekend anyway, and these two girls seemed friendly enough that she might as well give it a shot!

"I'm Kayla, by the way," she said leaning over toward them.

The girl who had originally spoken to her, turned and introduced herself as well.

"Grace," she said, greeting Kayla with a kind smile.

The other one, leaning over her now perturbed friend introduced herself next.

"I'm Baleigh!"

"It's nice to meet you both," said Kayla, "are you both journalists or..."

"Private investigators, actually," Grace said.

"Wow, that's pretty cool!"

"How about you?" Grace asked.

"I'm a reporter for my local tribune, but I've only been doing it for like a year now. So I'm pretty new to the game! But, I'm looking forward to learning some good stuff from this weekend."

"Hey, new to the game or not, it's always good to keep learning!"

As they were talking, Madelyn came back holding some snacks. Not missing a beat, she immediately jumped into the conversation.

"Hey guys," she said as she sat back down.

"Madelyn, this is Grace and Baleigh, they're private investigators."

"No shit," Madelyn said, "that's super cool."

Grace laughed, "it can be."

"Oh, Gracey-poo," said Baleigh chiming in, "don't be so modest. We love it. It's a lot of fun."

"Well," said Grace, "I was just referring to...the occupational hazards...of the job."

"Let me guess," Madelyn said, "you've run into goons who've tied you up, yeah?"

"Madelyn!"

Kayla gently elbowed her over eager friend for asking such a prying question. Not that it was that personal, but it was definitely not something Kayla enjoyed talking to everyone about. They'd only just met these two! And here Madelyn was asking if they'd been bound and gagged! Granted, Madelyn was a lot more comfortable with this topic than Kayla was. What with her whole bondage modeling on the side and everything.

"It's okay," Grace said, "but yes, I was referring to that."

"Oh yeah?" Madelyn said as her eyes lit up, "well I'm sure you and Kayla have lots to talk about then because boy has she found herself in that position soooo many times already!"

Kayla's face turned bright red. She shot a disapproving look at Madelyn, who just kind of smirked and shrugged. Clearly she had no shame in this matter, but Kayla on the other hand was proper embarrassed. The only solace she had was that Grace and Baleigh didn't seem to mind at all.

"You know," Grace said, "it's nice to meet someone else that has the same...propensity for trouble as us."

"Same!" Kayla said.

"Wow, what are the odds," Baleigh said, practically sitting on Grace's lap now, "I can't believe out of everyone here, the four of us managed to run into each other."

"The odds are pretty high," Grace said as she gently nudged Baleigh back into her seat, "I mean this is a

convention for reporters and journalists after all. Seems like this happens to folks like us more often than not."

"It's almost like it's part of the job," Kayla said with a smirk.

"Still," said Baleigh, "it's pretty neat if you ask me. Hey, we should all go grab lunch together after this!"

"Lunch is being provided for us," said Grace, "did you forget?"

"Drat...yeah I did. Still, we should sit together while we have it! I want to swap stories and all that!"

"Swap stories?" Said Kayla, "how do you mean?"

"Like of all the times you two have been tied up and everything! I want allllll the juicy details."

Baleigh rubbed her hands together with a fiendish grin. She was clearly very into this. Her partner on the other hand...

"Baleigh..." Grace said as she rolled her eyes, "we just met these two..."

"It's fine by me!" Madelyn said.

"Great," said Baleigh, "then it's settled!"

Grace and Kayla exchanged puzzled glances wondering how they had both been roped into this lunch date. It seemed that both of their companions were much more eager to dive into this topic than they were. Still, as red in the face as it made Kayla having to talk about her bondage adventures, it was nice to meet other people just like her. And when she meant just like her...

"God, and let's not even start about how resourceful some of these thugs are."

The four of them were sitting inside the convention center with their lunches now exchanging stories about their numerous misadventures. Grace was currently ranting about the many times her own undergarments had been used against her.

"I think they get a kick out of it," she said.

"They must," said Kayla, "I can't tell you how many times I've been in the same exact position. You don't want to know how many pairs of socks I've gone through...nylons too! Those things get shredded by all that rope and tape!"

"Just don't wear them, then!" Madelyn said butting in.

"No way," said Kayla, "I will not let the way thugs and brutes treat me dictate the fashion choices I make."

"You tell 'em!" Baleigh said, causing the group to laugh.

Kayla had learned a lot about Grace and Baleigh through their conversation already. They were both older than her and Madelyn, by about three years. Their business was run out of an office above a local bar in a wealthy New England college town. And just like Kayla and Madelyn they were big believers in looking chic and fashionable. Their outfits definitely reflected that too.

Grace was dressed in a light grey turtleneck sweater tucked into a brown skirt. Her legs were encased in a pair of thin nylons, and her feet were tucked into tall brown boots with a pair of grey knee high socks poking out over the tops of them.

As for Baleigh, she was wearing a fitted black long sleeve shirt over a mustard skirt with dark tights, and black ankle booties.

"This is great," Kayla said, "I wasn't sure about talking through all this stuff...it's just a little awkward...you know? But I've really enjoyed this! It seems like we do have a lot in common!"

"For sure," Grace said, "it's always nice running into some fellow...snoops, if I can be so crass as to call us that."

"Did you just use the 's' word!?" Baleigh asked with feigned outrage.

Kayla laughed.

"Hey, as much as I love this," she said, "I think the next sessions are about to kick off. Mads and I should probably get going."

"Before you go," Baleigh blurted out, "let's grab drinks tonight! Right, Grace?"

Grace shot a look at Baleigh, "why do I have to approve? I mean, obviously, yes, that sounds like a great idea."

"Agreed," said Kayla, "let's all swap numbers and then we can just text about it later. You two probably know the city better than us, so just let us know where to meetup."

"Will do. It was nice meeting you both," Grace said as she stood up with Baleigh, "see you both soon!"

After they were gone, Kayla turned to Madelyn who was just beaming from ear to ear.

"What's that look for?" Kayla asked.

"We made friends!" Madelyn said, practically shouted actually.

Kayla laughed, "that we did. Come on, let's get going. I don't want to miss this next session!"

The rest of the day flew by as Kayla and Madelyn made their way from session to session. Surprisingly, Madelyn was able to hang with Kayla the whole time! She almost dozed off a couple of times, but other than that she powered through! Perhaps the thrill of drinks with friends was enough to keep her going.

Speaking of which, as the evening rolled around, Kayla and Madelyn made their way back down to the lobby to meet with Baleigh and Grace. The plan was to ride the subway together to a little bar in lower Manhattan.

Stepping out from the elevator and into the lobby, they spied Grace and Baleigh across the way. There was somebody else with them, however. An older woman, probably in her seventies, and looking rather distraught. She was motioning with her hands to the two private investigators as they nodded their heads and listened.

"Let's go see what that's about," Kayla said as she and Madelyn walked over.

"Those pearls have been in my family for years, please you have to do something!"

"Hey," said Kayla, "everything okay?"

"Not quite," said Grace, "this poor lady's had her pearls stolen from her room."

"Oh no," Madelyn said, "has anyone called the police?"

"She doesn't want to," Grace said, with a pained smile on her face.

"How come?" Kayla asked.

"I'll tell you," the lady said as she wagged a finger in Kayla's face, "the police here are incompetent fools! I'm a woman that comes from much wealth you see, and I've had

countless things stolen from me over the years! Do you know how many times the police have helped me recover my possessions? It's a grand total of zero! So, no, I won't be contacting the police. Instead, I thought I might enlist the help of someone here instead. I didn't realize there was such an event happening this weekend, but it seems that lady luck is on my side."

"Isn't that something," Grace said as she rolled her eyes.

"Look," said Kayla, "we'll help you search for them for a little bit, but my friends and I were going to grab drinks tonight. I know you don't like the police but you really should be calling them about this."

"Kayla, it's okay, you don't have to help us," Grace said, "Baleigh and I can just go up, poke around a bit, and meet you guys back down here."

"Are you kidding me?" Madelyn said, "and sit by while you two get all the credit for helping this charming young woman find her precious jewels."

Kayla and Grace scrunched up their faces in bewilderment over Madelyn's statement. The old woman on the other hand was more than flattered.

"It seems someone here understands me," she said.

Kayla joined Grace this time in rolling her eyes.

"Fine," Grace said, "let's go check it out."

Together, the group made their way upstairs to the old woman's room, which was absolutely massive by the way! She wasn't kidding when she mentioned she came from wealth. Her suite was enormous! It was literally a two bedroom apartment, minus a kitchen. Even the furniture

was way nicer than what Kayla and Madelyn had in their own room.

"Wow...check this place out," Madelyn said as the girls all stepped inside.

"Jeez, this is nuts!" Baleigh said.

"Alright," said Grace, taking charge, "I don't want to be here all night. Now let's fan out and look for any clues."

"I'll just wait here," the old woman said taking a seat on the couch, "you kids have fun and let me know if you find anything."

"Gee, thanks," said Kayla.

She walked into the main bedroom, Grace following behind her. The room, just like the main area, had been utterly trashed. All the drawers had been pulled open, and the bed totally taken apart.

"Was any of this carnage even necessary?" Kayla asked.

"Doubt it," Grace replied.

Meanwhile, in the other room, Madelyn and Baleigh conducted their own investigation.

"Looks like a tornado blew through here," Madelyn said.

"And left the rest of the room in tact? No, I don't think this was a tornado. My guess is that there was a robbery."

Madelyn opened her mouth to reply, but then noticed Baleigh giving her a sly look. Instead she just chuckled.

"Good one," she said.

Baleigh curtsied.

"Why thank you."

So far, neither sets of investigations were proving fruitful. Kayla had no idea what she was even supposed to be looking for. Grace was equally as stumped.

"There's nothing here," she said throwing her hands up in defeat.

"Yeah, this is turning into a waste of time," said Kayla, "sorry for even agreeing to it in the first place."

"No worries, I mean at least we tried right?"

SLAM!

Kayla whipped around to see the door behind them now suddenly closed. She exchanged a worried glance with Grace before springing into action. She rushed over, grabbing the handle and trying to pull it open. It was locked! Or at least jammed in some way.

"What the hell?"

She kept jostling the handle but it wouldn't budge. Were Madelyn and Baleigh playing a prank on them?

"Oh shit..." Grace said.

"What is it?" Kayla said.

"There was never any stolen jewelry," said Grace.

Kayla felt a lump form in her throat when she realized it too. She hadn't seen it at first, but now that she thought about it in light of their current circumstances it was clear that this was a total setup.

"This is why she was insistent on not calling the police and having us 'help' her instead. It was all a trap." Grace said.

"Seems like it," said Kayla, "but why? What does this old woman want from us?"

"Not her, she's just a decoy. There's someone else behind this. There has to be."

"You think so?"

BANG! CRASH!

It was coming from outside, from the other room. It had to be Madelyn and Baleigh, and it sounded like they were in trouble! Kayla started banging on the door.

"Hey! Let us out of here!"

Grace, on the other hand, started looking around the room again.

"Hey," she said, "we don't have much time. Find something to defend yourself with."

"What?"

"I don't think their plan...whoever they are...is to just keep us locked in here forever. It sounds like they're rounding Baleigh and Madelyn up, and when they're done they'll come for us next. So get ready."

"Excellent thinking," said Kayla as she began searching for some kind of weapon.

"This isn't my first rodeo," said Grace as she readied the wooden dowel she'd found in the closet.

Kayla wielded one of the lamps that she'd taken apart and stood by the door ready to strike. There was still a lot of commotion coming from outside the room, but then all of the sudden it was quiet. She nodded to Grace, who nodded back, tightening her grip on the dowel. They could hear footsteps approaching their door now. At any minute they would be under attack, but they were ready for anything.

Well, anything except sleeping gas! After shoving a black tube under the doorway, the thugs outside started flooding the room with the foul smelling vapor. It was so strong and so potent. Both Kayla and Grace began coughing and wheezing as the chemicals filled their lungs.

Grace collapsed onto the floor while Kayla hobbled her way toward the bed.

With both girls impaired and unable to fight back, the attackers breached the room and dragged Kayla and Grace out. Kayla's vision was blurry, and everything was spinning. She was dumped onto the ground, Grace beside her. She could feel rope being looped around her wrists and ankles, but there was little she could do to stop it. The gas had really put her out of it!

"MMMMMMMMMPH!"

She looked up to see what had become of Baleigh and Madelyn. They were all trussed up, and slung over the shoulders of two absolutely ridiculous looking individuals. They were women, for one thing, and they were wearing these shiny green latex dresses that hugged tightly over their bodies. Their legs were encased in equally shiny black latex boots, and covering their faces were black latex hoods that were attached to the dress.

To be kidnapped by thugs dressed like this was all the more humiliating...

"FFMMMMPH MMMMPH!"

They hadn't gassed Baleigh or Madelyn, but they'd made sure to gag them well. Large red ballgags were wedged in their mouths, totally muffling them.

"Hurry! Get them tied and then let's get out of here."

"We're working on it! Go stash those two in the cargo box and get moving. I'll come behind you with these ones in a second."

"You got it!"

"MMMMMMMMMMMMMPH!"

Baleigh and Madelyn moaned through their jaw stretching ballgags as they were carted off. There was nothing she or Grace could do to stop them. They were both far too woozy, plus equally as trussed up now. The only thing left was to shove those nasty ballgags into their mouths too.

"In we go!"

Grace's mouth was stuffed first, the large rubber ball forced into her mouth and strapped behind her head. Before Kayla had her own mouth stuffed, she licked her lips one last time knowing it would be a while before she could do so again.

WHUMPH!

"Mmmmmmmph!"

The ballgag was slammed into her mouth, forcing it wide open. Her teeth bit down into the hard rubber material, which tasted awful, and her jaw found itself stretched to the absolute max. She could already feel drool beginning to form at the corners of her mouth....

"Nnnnnngph!"

Grace was seething behind her ballgag, her face scrunched into a disapproving frown. Kayla was equally as unhappy, especially given how excited she was for the weekend and how certain she was she'd be able to stay out of trouble like this! Seems like someone else had other plans for her and her new friends...

"Alright girls, time for a nice little nap."

"LlllllllmpH!?"

Suddenly, Kayla felt a sweet smelling cloth be pressed into her face covering her mouth and nose. She kicked and

squirmed, but with all the rope encasing her arms and legs she wasn't going to be able to break free. With each breath in, the fumes began taking effect as once again everything started to become fuzzy before eventually, everything went dark...

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When Kayla finally came to, she was somewhere completely different. It was some kind of storage room inside a warehouse. Tall metal shelves lined the room, stacked high with boxes. The air was cold and musty, and the room was dimly lit with only a few lamps overhead to light the space.

Kayla was sat in a chair. Her arms and legs still thoroughly tied. More rope had been used to secure her to the chair, around her chest and waist. Her legs had been pulled underneath the chair and her ankles attached to the crosspiece.

The horrendous ballgag was still strapped behind her head, her blouse and skirt ruined by all the drool that had fallen on them. It was just impossible not to, no matter how hard Kayla tried it just continued to form and fall out of the corners of her mouth.

"Llllllllmpf..."

Her head was heavy. The chloroform had done its job and really put her out.

Beside her, she heard Grace starting to stir. She was tied and gagged like Kayla all the same. Baleigh and Madelyn were nowhere to be seen though. Kayla just hoped they were okay. She had no idea what these crazy women had planned for them.

Speaking of which, the sound of heels clomping on the concrete floors grew closer and closer as two of the latex clad ladies approached Kayla and Grace.

"Glad to see you both awake! How was your nap."

Llllllllmmmmmmph!"

Kayla grunted at the woman who laughed in response.

"Here," she said, "perhaps this will help."

To Kayla's surprise, she reached down and unbuckled the gag pulling it free from her mouth.

"There you go," the woman said, "is that better?"

Kayla glared at the woman.

"What do you want with us?" She said.

"Ah, ah, ah, I'll be asking the questions around here. I hope that's alright with you, yes? If not, I can always just shove this gag right back in that pretty little mouth of yours."

Kayla scowled at her, but knew she had to comply. She really didn't want to have to chew on that gag again, although she feared perhaps she might be anyway...

"Anyway," the woman continued, "let me just start by saying that I have no personal business with you or your pretty little friend. The blonde one."

"They're both blonde, boss."

The woman turned to her lackey who waved their hands apologetically.

"Like I was saying, you're not even who I was interested in. It's Miss Summers, and her bratty partner that I'm after. That being said, after rifling through your belongings, your purse more specifically, I found out exactly who you are: Kayla Grace, an intrepid young reporter."

"Yeah, that's me. So what?"

"Well, at first I felt bad roping an innocent bystander into all of this, but you're no innocent bystander. No, you're a lousy, no good reporter that ruins people's lives!"

Kayla rolled her eyes.

"Isn't that a bit dramatic?"

"Perhaps, but even still, the truth remains that you're in the business of sticking your nose where it doesn't belong. Just...like...Miss...Summers."

"Llllllllmp!"

"That's why I brought her here anyway. To teach her a lesson. You see, she and Miss Sommers."

"Isn't she Miss Summers?" The lackey called out.

"No, I said Summers, not Sommers."

"I don't understand."

"It's...they have the same...ugh, would you just sit there and let me do this!?"

"Right. Sorry."

The woman took a moment to compose herself before carrying on.

"Like I was saying," she said, "Miss Summers and her partner have a nasty track record of getting involved in matters that have nothing to do with them! So, to teach them to mind their own business, I devised this little ruse to trap them, bring them here, and deliver to them the consequences of their actions."

"Llllllllmp!"

"As for you..." the woman said leaning close into Kayla's face, the smell of latex filling Kayla's nose. "It seems like you are in need of a little lesson yourself."

What was it with all these thugs and teaching lessons!?

"Look, whatever you're going to do to me, that's fine," Kayla said, "but just don't hurt my friends."

The woman stepped back and laughed, cackled even.

"I appreciate you being willing to...take one for the team, so to speak. It was a noble gesture, and yet a vain one unfortunately. Besides, I have no plans to harm you, rest assured. Perhaps...humbled is a better word. In any case, I hope it teaches you all a valuable lesson."

"We'll see about that," Kayla mumbled under her breath.

"I'm sorry?"

"Just...whatever you're going to do, just get on with it and get it over with."

The woman smiled as she gripped the straps of the ball gag with both hands.

"If you say so!"

Without warning she jammed it back into Kayla's mouth.

"Nnnnnnngh!" Kayla yelped as the hard rubber ball once again filled her mouth up.

She was not looking forward to what was coming next...

.

Meanwhile, as Kayla and Grace were currently being...taught a lesson...Baleigh and Madelyn were hard at work attempting to get free of their own binds. For as much of a bondage fiend as she was on her own time, Madelyn quite despised being tied up in a setting like this. As such she was working furiously to get free.

"LLLLLLLLlmpH!"

Baleigh assisted Madelyn's escape efforts by helping to pick the ropes around her wrists. They'd managed to scoot around in their chairs until they were facing back to back, and from here the rope picking had begun. Slowly but surely, Madelyn felt the ropes coming loose from around Baleigh's wrists. She too could feel more slack around her own bindings, until finally they had managed to pick themselves free!

Well, just from their wrist restraints. There were still many more knots to get through.

"Cmmmmph nnnnnmph!"

Madelyn focused as hard as she could, a bead of sweat trickled down her forehead from all her effort. She was determined to break free before those loony women returned to do whatever it was they were planning to them.

Her focus and her hard efforts paid off though. After painstakingly undoing all the knots holding Baleigh's arms in place, the final knot came loose. Baleigh returned the favor and untied Madelyn's last knot around her arms, and in no time the rest of the ropes were lying on the floor as the girls reached up and undid the ballgags from their mouth.

"Bleh!" Baleigh spat as she tossed the dreadful thing to the floor. "How awful was that?"

"Eh," Madelyn said as she held the gag in her hands and looked it over, "I'm usually a size up, but yeah no good."

Baleigh's interest was more than piqued.

"Does that mean you're like...into kinky stuff?"

Madelyn laughed, "I dabble in some bondage modeling here and there. I'm pretty new though, but yeah...I guess you could say that."

"Wowzers! That's pretty cool!"

"It's a lot cooler when it's in a controlled environment and the people tying you up are just going to take your picture and set you free. Getting tied up by these thugs...no thanks."

"I'm sure. God, I can't believe these creeps nabbed us...again!"

"Again?"

"Yeah, we got caught by them trying to stop a robbery of theirs. They were only just novice's back then, but it seems like they've really stepped up their game as of late!"

"Seems like it."

"Okay, well, can't stand around and gab for too long now. It's time to save the day!"

"Wait," Madelyn said as she grabbed Baleigh's arm just as she was about to take off running, "shouldn't we like come up with a plan or something? Kayla's usually the better one at that than I am."

"Yeah, and so is Grace..."

"But they're probably still both tied up right now..."

"I say we just wing it! That usually works out for me anyway!"

Somehow Madelyn didn't believe that...and yet she let Baleigh take the lead anyway. Perhaps her overwhelming confidence would be enough to save them in a pinch. Or it would just get them in worse trouble than they already were in...

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"There we go, now that's more like it! You girls comfortable?"

"Nnnnnnnnggggmph!"

Kayla and Grace were in fact not comfortable. Not one bit.

"Ggggnnnmph!"

They were still chewing on those god awful ballgags, and they were still tied down to their chairs. Their positions had been modified though. Flipping the girls around, their captors had sat them facing backwards so that their stomachs were pressed against the backs of the chairs. Their legs were spread apart and tied down to the chairs via rope around their upper thighs and ankles. A loop of rope tied around the back of their neck and to the back of the chair kept their bodies folded over and pressed in

As for their arms, they were still tied behind their backs but rope connected from their wrists to hooks in the ceiling forced their arms upwards behind them so that they were practically perpendicular to their bodies. Kayla was flexible, but having her arms held up like this was quite straining. The beads of sweat all across Grace's forehead indicated that she was probably experiencing the same thing.

"I apologize if it's a bit drafty in here. Hopefully you two won't mind."

"Lllllmmph!"

To top it all off, before they had been retied, their captors had stripped them of their clothes leaving them clad in just their bras, underwear, and tights. Both Kayla and Grace were flush red with embarrassment, Grace's face

perhaps even more redder than Kayla's. Her eyes would occasionally wander over in Kayla's direction before sharply being averted elsewhere.

Was Grace...?

Kayla shook her head. Now was not the time for that. She had to stay focused.

"Now," the lady in latex said as she brandished a wooden paddle, "time for a little fun, yes?"

"Nnnnnngph!"

"LlllllllInph!"

They way Kayla and Grace had been tied had left their rears rather exposed. Their bodies were positioned in the chairs in such a way so that their bottoms were hanging off the front edges of the chairs. The perfect position for paddling unfortunately...

WACK!

"NNNNNNNGPH!"

Kayla yelped as the woman smacked her ass with the paddle.

"Oooh, listen to that sound. Phenomenal."

SMACK!

"LLLLLLLMPH!"

Grace's rear was targeted next. She was so over this. She sighed into her gag and rolled her eyes as the latex lady continued to paddle her rear. She was taking it like a champ! Then again, compared to Kayla, she had a little extra...cushioning...back there to help absorb the blows.

"Boss!"

The woman paused her paddling as she turned to the latex clad grunt that had just rushed into the room.

"What is it?"

"The other two...they've escaped!"

"What?!"

"When we went to check the room, they weren't there. I don't know where they've gone!"

She turned back to Kayla and Grace and groaned.

"You snoops don't know when to just sit there and take your medicine, do you?!"

Kayla smiled behind her ballgag. Leave it to Madelyn to create a little chaos!

"Well don't just stand there!" The latex lady shouted, "hurry up and find them!"

Taking off with her lackey, Kayla and Grace were left alone in the room. Looking at each other, they both nodded silently before furiously struggling in their binds and attempting to get free before their captors returned.

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"Are you sure it's this way?"

Madelyn trailed behind Baleigh who was confidently taking the lead, plowing through the creepy abandoned warehouse like it was nothing.

"No clue, but let's keep going. I'm sure we'll find them eventually."

"But what if we get caught," Madelyn said.

"That's a risk we have to take," she said.

Madelyn was about to open her mouth to speak, but then all of the sudden someone grabbed her from behind!

"Mmmph!"

Her attacker's immediately plunged a rag into her mouth as they pulled her arms back and began tying them

together. As for Baleigh, well, she was too busy prattling on that she didn't even notice what was happening behind her.

"Besides," she said continuing her train of thought without even missing a beat, "you're with me, after all. I have a natural talent for staying out of trouble you know. Grace is the trouble prone one after all. So relax, everything is going to be..."

She turned around to see Madelyn, eyes wide with a mouth full of cloth and two thugs holding her back.

"...okay."

"MMMMMMMMPH!"

"Bummer..."

These were Baleigh's last words before a new set of goons pounced on her, plugging her mouth with a rag and tying her arms as well.

"Mmmmmph!" she squealed as she was once again, thrown over the shoulder of one of the latex goons.

Madelyn was getting a serious case of deja vu...

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"Nnnnnngph!"

"LLLLLLLLlgph!"

Kayla and Grace had been struggling as hard as the possibly could, but to no avail. With their arms pulled up behind them, it was incredibly difficult to pick at any of the knots. These latex ladies were goofy, but damn could they tie a knot! Hearing footsteps approach their room again, Kayla sighed. Time was up, and they had made zero progress. Their only hope now was that Baleigh and

Madelyn had found a way out and contacted the authorities.

BAM!

The doors to the room burst open as a posse of latex clad ladies stormed in. Madelyn and Baleigh were slung over two of their shoulders, kicking and struggling with all their might.

Kayla and Grace both sighed before rolling their eyes into the backs of their heads. There went their hope for escape.

"Seems we've caught a couple of loose snoops," the leader said as she waltzed over to Kayla and Grace, leaning in close to both of their faces and smirking.

"Girls, let's get them tied up."

"You got it boss!"

"Oh, and if someone wants to fetch my bag of feathers."

"On it!"

Feathers? Kayla didn't like the sound of that...

"FFFfMMMMPH! MMMMMMPH!"

Madelyn and Baleigh were set on the ground as two sets of thugs held them down. They were fighting ferociously to break free from their captor's grip, but as seeing how their fights were both two against one, the odds were not in their favor. These latex ladies were strong!

"Your outfits are so cute," one of the girls chided.

"Yeah, super cute."

"But you know what would look even cuter?"

"WRRRRMMMMPH?!"

After a few minutes of tumbling and tearing, Baleigh and Madelyn had joined Kayla and Grace in their

underwear. Their clothes laying in a pile next to their partner's. Baleigh was very unhappy with this...

"FMMMMMPH MMMMMMMMMMMMPH
NNNNNNNNNNNNMPH!"

"Ooooh, you're just as feisty as I remember you. I love that."

"Fffffffmph!"

For as feisty as she was, she was no match for the two women pinning her down and looping rope around her arms and legs. It took the ladies a while to fully subdue their captives, but pretty soon Madelyn and Baleigh were properly trussed up on the concrete floor.

They'd been hogtied on their stomachs, the cold floor sending shivers down Madelyn's back. She was impressed with the rope work. Her hogtie was super snug, and they'd even managed to push her elbows together. Her hands were currently wresting on her behind with her ankles pressing down into them. The connecting rope of her hogtie had been cinched so tight that her chest was lifted slightly off the ground.

There was so much rope applied to her body too, it was damn near professional level work! To keep her arms in place, they'd tied rope around her waist so that they could attach rope between that and her arms pinning them behind her back. There wasn't just one connecting rope for her hogtie, but rather a series of rope work attached to the rope framing her chest and wrapped around her shoulders. The ropes they'd used were soft too, they felt like some kind of braided nylon. If Madelyn's mouth wasn't crammed full with that rag she'd ask what brand of rope it was. Or

would that be too inappropriate? Either way, she was really digging the way it felt. Now...if only they'd added a crotch rope...

Madelyn shook her head and forced herself back to reality.

"There we go, that's more like it! You girls look gorgeous all tied up like that!"

"Nnnnnnnnnngph!"

The girls mewed and moaned through their gags as they scowled at the latex lady. She stood there triumphantly over her captives, her hands planted on her hips. A suspicious looking bag sat at her feet. Kayla gulped knowing it was most likely her bag of feathers she had requested.

"Bleh!"

Baleigh had managed to push the rag from her mouth and spat it onto the floor.

"You'll never get away with this!" She said defiantly, "just wait until we get out of here!"

The latex ladies laughed.

"Oh, you're just the cutest," the boss lady said, bending down and giving Baleigh a pat on her pantyhose clad rear.

"Girls," she said motioning to her squad of lackeys.

"Would you please finish off the gags on these other two?"

"They left the ball gags in the other room. Want us to go fetch them?"

"No, that won't be necessary. I know just the thing that should work even better."

Strutting over to the pile of clothes on the floor, she bent down and scooped up each of the girl's socks. Kayla

sighed underneath her ball gag. At the very least she'd get a reprieve from that obnoxious thing.

"I've got tape here!"

"Good, as you saw with our spunky little friend, making sure a gag is properly secured is key."

Kayla, Grace, and Madelyn all glanced toward Baleigh, who just kind of shrugged.

"Whoops..." She said sheepishly as a latex thug approached her with both of her grey socks in hand.

Stuffing as much of them into Baleigh's mouth as would fit, the thug packed both of the socks in before grabbing a roll of silver tape and around Baleigh's head.

"Mmmmmmmph!" Baleigh mumbled under her shiny new gag.

Madelyn was up next. The rag was plucked from her mouth and cast aside, and before she had a chance to utter any sort of snarky retort, the goon crammed her black ankle socks right into her mouth and pushed them all the way in following it of course with loads of tape.

Kayla and Grace were next, their ball gags unbuckled and tossed to the ground. Kayla took a deep breath in and out, preparing herself for the inevitable.

"Hey," said Grace while the thug behind her was busy scrunching up her long grey sock, "sorry about all of this. These ladies are a bunch loons."

"It's all good," Kayla said, "It's nothing I'm not used to at this point."

"Hey, quit your yapping! Now, open up!"

Kayla sighed, parting her lips ever so slightly.

"I said, open...up!"

"I ammmmmmph!"

Kayla sputtered as her black crew socks were jammed into her mouth. It was quite a lot to fit in, but somehow the latex lady managed to fit them both no problem. Albeit Kayla's mouth was held wide open, but there was hardly any sock leftover. Grace's captor was having a much more difficult time fitting the entire knee length sock into her mouth.

Grace stared forward with an irritated look as the woman tried as hard as she could to push the massive sock in.

"Hey boss...you're gonna have to show me how to do this. I can't seem to get this in!"

"Ugh, do I have to do everything myself? Alright, gather 'round ladies. Let me show you how it's done."

She changed places with the thug behind Grace, and started by pulling the sock out.

"It's all about filling the space in the cheeks, like this."

Taking the sock, she used both hands as she worked the thing back into Grace's mouth. She did just like she had said, and pushed as much of it as she could into both of Grace's cheeks which were now bulging out. After this, she worked what was left of the sock straight into Grace's mouth, and by the time she was done it was practically all inside.

The other ladies clapped their hands in applause as Grace moaned through her enormous gag.

"Mmmmmmmmmph..."

"That's why you're the boss!"

"Thank you, dears. Now, finish up and seal that sock in place! It's time to have a little bit of fun."

"You got it!"

"Mmmmmph!"

Grace huffed as her pouting lips were buried underneath the many layers of tape wrapped around her lower face, a permanent scowl painted across her face. Kayla shot her a consoling glance. In the meantime, the thugs were busy fishing around their bag of goodies. They produced from them a bunch of feathers, approaching the girls and wiggling them around menacingly.

Baleigh and Madelyn thrashed around on the floor in their stringent hogties, desperately trying to get free. Kayla and Grace on the other hand remained calm and collected, understanding that their fate had been sealed (along with the socks in their mouth) and that resisting would prove futile.

"Well then," the boss lady said, feather in hand, "who's up first?"

"Wrrmmmmph..."

Kayla tutted at her beneath her gag, but the woman's attention seemed to be elsewhere, namely on Baleigh and Madelyn who were flopping around like two fish out of water. She smiled as she bent down and grabbed Madelyn's chin with her hand.

"Let's start with you, yes?"

"MMMMMMPH!"

Madelyn yelped as the lady began dragging the feather across her nylon clad soles. She scrunched and wiggled her toes, laughing underneath her gag all the while.

Twisting and turning she tried to get away from the feather, but the ropes provided no escape. The woman continued to drag the feather all across Madelyn's body as she hollered into her gag. With her clothes removed, and nothing but her underwear and tights left there was lots of bare skin showing just ripe for tickling.

"Well don't just let me have all the fun," the boss said, "get to tickling the others!"

On cue, the other lackeys in the room pounced on Baleigh, Grace, and Kayla, bearing down on them with the feathers and subjecting them to the same relentless tickling that Madelyn was forced to endure.

"MMMMMMMPH GGGGGGNNNNNNMMPH!"

Kayla squealed and moaned as the tickling sensations shot up and down her body. Closing her eyes, she tried to relax but it was damn near impossible with that god forsaken feather dancing across her stocking clad feet and her bare arms. In the midst of the fray, she caught a look at Grace across from her whose chill demeanor had all but evaporated due to her own tickling assault.

The whole room was just filled with the sounds of the muffled laughter as the girls were tickled for a good while! It did eventually end though, and Kayla was finally able to take a deep breath and collect herself. She was a sweaty mess, and her three companions were in the same state. It was quite the ordeal...

Their only salvation came due to the fact that the warehouse they were in wasn't all that abandoned. From off in the distance, the distinct sound of large garage doors being flung open rang out as the latex ladies, and Kayla

and company turned in the direction that the sound had come from.

"What the hell?!" The boss lady fumed.

"Whoops, seems like someone's here."

"Ya' think? Hurry and pack everything up! We need to bounce!"

"You got it, boss!"

The ladies scrambled around the room, scooping up their supplies and scurrying away. The girls on the other hand took the opportunity that the universe had given them and began shouting as loud as they could through their stuffed mouths.

Soon enough, the door to the storage room opened again and a couple of men walked in. Their jaws nearly hit the floor at the sight before them. They just kind of stood there for a second, ogling the four underwear clad snoopers. Kayla rolled her eyes.

"MMMPH!"

Snapping back to reality, the men called out behind them.

"Hey, fellas! You're gonna want to get in here and check this out..."

.

"God...what a mess," Kayla said as she leaned against the back of one of the police cars.

She was once again fully clothed and grateful to not be tied up anymore.

"We really lucked out this time," Grace said, "I have no idea what else those creeps were planning."

"Oh, I have a couple of guesses," Kayla said as the group laughed.

"Sorry you got roped into that," Baleigh said, "and sorry for that terrible pun."

"No you're not," Grace said.

Baleigh snickered, "I'm not."

Kayla smiled, "well, I'm just glad everyone's okay."

"Same," said Grace.

"You sure weren't kidding when you said trouble follows you around," Madelyn said.

"And neither were you guys," Baleigh replied.

"Guess it's all just part of the job," said Kayla.

"Well, we're all off the clock now," said Baleigh, "and the night is still young! Drinks?"

"Baleigh...I think we should head back and shower."

"Right," Baleigh said as she wrapped her arms around Grace's waist from behind and leaned her head on Grace's shoulder. "Let's go shower...and then head out for some drinks!"

Grace sighed, "you're not going to give up on this I take it."

"Nope!"

Grace rolled her eyes as Kayla laughed. She hadn't accomplished her goal of staying out of trouble, far from it in fact. That being said, she had managed to make some new friends. So all in all, not a bad weekend. She and Madelyn waved by to Grace and Baleigh before the four girls went their separate ways. As she and Madelyn walked off, she noticed something out of the corner of her eye...

"Wait, Mads. What is that you're holding?"

Kayla was referring to the bundle of rope Madelyn was trying to discreetly hold behind her back.

"Nothing! It's just...a little souvenir if you will. To remember the trip by."

Kayla paused as she and Madelyn held eye contact for a few seconds, followed by the two of them bursting into laughter. One thing was for sure, it was definitely a very memorable trip!

14

"You didn't start without me, did you?"

"Of course not, Kay! Work hold you up?"

"God, did it ever."

Kicking off her slides, Kayla made her way into Madelyn's apartment. Her best friend was lounging on the couch in her lounge wear consisting of a loose white tank top, pink shorts, and black thigh high socks. She had a bag of popcorn in her lap that she was snacking on, but from the looks of it she was almost done! Kayla felt bad being so late, but it's not like she'd done it on purpose or anything. Work was just a bitch. Walking over to the couch, Kayla plopped down next to her and let out a long sigh.

"Sounds like it was a long day." Andrea said as she entered the room. The gorgeous Latina girl was dressed in her own set of comfy clothes consisting of a green top, leggings, and cozy socks.

"I mean, it wasn't terrible," Kayla said, "just long. I was trying to get this exclusive interview with the men's soccer coach about all the recent drama surrounding the league..."

"Oh yeah, I heard about that," Andrea said interrupting as she took a seat on the floor in front of the coffee table, "something about the women's team not being paid as much as the guy's team."

"Yeah," said Kayla, "and it's total bullshit. We looked at the numbers, and sure, the girl's don't bring in as much money, but they're grossly underpaid when you look at the ratios and stuff. Anyway, long story short, I was trying to get this interview with the coach and it was just such a pain in the ass trying to get him to commit to a sit down."

"Sounds lame," Madelyn said tossing a handful of popcorn into her mouth.

"Yeah, but that's behind me now, and it's time to just kick back and relax."

"Helllll yeah," Andrea said jumping up, "let's start with cocktails!"

"Oh, I'm so down," replied Kayla.

Migrating to the kitchen, Madelyn and Kayla took a seat at the counter while Andrea arranged all the alcohol and ingredients

"What's on the menu tonight," Madelyn asked.

"Well," said Andrea as she placed three glasses on the counter, "you've all had a sangria, yeah?"

"Duh," Madelyn said as Kayla chuckled.

"Well, have you ever had a strawberry mint sangria?"

"Ooooh," said Kayla sitting up in her seat, "that sounds amazing!"

"Damn straight," Andrea said with her head down, hard at work putting the drinks together.

In no time, she had three glasses filled with delicious looking light pink liquid, strawberries and mint floating on top. Taking two of the glasses she put one in front of Madelyn and Kayla each. They clapped their hands enthusiastically as Andrea took a dramatic bow.

"Okay," she said, "drink up and let me know what you think!"

Diving in, Kayla picked hers up, swirling it around in the glass before taking a big sip.

"Goddamn," she said, "that's amazing!"

"Oh, fuck me," Madelyn said, "that's so good."

Andrea spun around, "Yay! I'm glad you like them. There's plenty of rosé left too, so drink up. I'll make us a second round here in a second."

"Second round?" Madelyn said, "I'll be needing like four or five rounds please."

"God," Kayla said as she elbowed her friend, "take it easy."

"Hey, it's girl's night," said Madelyn, "what better time to get shit faced, right?"

Andrea raised her glass in agreement, "hell yeah, girly!"

Kayla sighed, raising her glass too.

"Atta' girl!" Madelyn said as the trio clinked their glasses together.

A few hours went by, and with them so did many drinks...

"Wait, wait, wait," Madelyn said trying to hold in her laughter, "so it was his idea to take you out."

"Yeah," Andrea said, also on the brink of hysterical laughter.

"And he picked the restaurant."

"Yeah!"

"And then he had the nerve to ask you to pay for your own meal?"

"Right?!" Andrea said, "I mean, don't get me wrong, I'm all for shit like that. But he should have said something beforehand. Like, if it's your idea for the date, and you pick the spot...you should be the one paying. Is that crazy to think that or what?"

"Totally reasonable," Kayla said, "so what did you end up doing?"

Andrea sat back and stuck both of her middle fingers up.

"I gave him two of these," she said, "and dipped."

"Damn straight," Madelyn said as they all burst out laughing.

After catching their breaths, Kayla started up the conversation again.

"So, Mads," she said, "tell me about your bondage gigs. Anything new and exciting?"

There was a glimmer in Madelyn's eye as Kayla asked her this. Kayla knew that look...and it meant Madelyn was definitely up to something.

"Well," said Madelyn as she sat back into the couch, "I mean nothing too crazy...there was this fun thing I got to do though."

"Oooh," Andrea said as she leaned her elbows onto the coffee table, "do tell."

"Okay, so it was my first time shooting with another girl. At first, it was a little awkward I guess? I don't know, I just wasn't sure what her vibe was and all that. Anyway, the shoot turned out to be great, and we might be doing another one soon!"

"What'd they have you do?" Kayla asked.

Once again, there was a devious sparkle in Madelyn's eye, a bit of a smirk on her face too. Kayla was starting to wonder what she'd gotten herself into...

"We did these like challenges," said Madelyn, "and with each one the winner got to pick their...prize, while the loser was stuck with the other option."

"That sounds like fun!" Andrea said.

"Oh yeah?" said Madelyn.

That was it, there was no more questioning it anymore, she was definitely plotting something and Kayla had a hunch what it was...

"Tell you what," Madelyn said, "if you want, we can give it a try."

"Give it a try...oh my god you mean like do some bondage stuff?!" Andrea said excitedly.

"Yup, I'll show you guys what we did in the shoot. Hang on, I'll be right back!"

Madelyn jumped up and skipped away to her room. Kayla eyed Andrea, who seemed to be pretty eager to try out whatever bondage Madelyn had planned. Grabbing her drink, Kayla downed the rest of it real quick and took a deep breath, preparing herself for...how did Madelyn put it?

Bondage challenges?

"Okay," Madelyn said returning with an armful of white cotton ropes, tape, and...

"Oh my god, are those ball gags?!" Andrea asked as Madelyn dumped the contents onto the coffee table.

"Yup," she replied, picking one up.

"Are they...used?" Kayla asked.

"I mean, yeah, but I always sanitize them thoroughly. Don't worry!"

Oh, Kayla was worried alright!

"Tell us what the challenges are!" Andrea said.

Madelyn grabbed her phone off the couch and started typing away. After about a minute she knelt down on the floor next to Andrea, and placing her phone on the table she pulled up the first set of notes she'd typed. Andrea read them out loud for the group.

"Round one: relay race. The goal of this challenge is to be the first to retrieve the stuffed animal, and bring it back across the starting line. The winner gets to choose which gag they get to wear for the next round. The gag choices are as follows: ball gag, or gagged with the other player's socks!"

Kayla shot a disapproving look at Madelyn.

"No way," she said, "I am not playing this."

"Oh come on," Madelyn said, giving Kayla her best pouty face.

"Yeah," said Andrea, "it sounds fun!"

"Chewing on your socks doesn't sound like fun," said Kayla.

"Well then don't lose the challenge," Andrea said.

"She's right," said Madelyn, "besides, between you and Andrea you clearly have way more experience being tied up. You already have a leg up in these challenges."

Madelyn did have a point there. That being said, Kayla was still hesitant to accept based on the fact that Madelyn

had only revealed the challenge for round one. How many rounds was there supposed to be?

"What are the other challenges?" Kayla asked.

Madelyn smiled and rubbed her hands together deviously.

"That's part of the fun," she said.

Kayla could hardly imagine any of this was going to be fun, but she also didn't want to be a wet blanket and ruin the vibe. Andrea and Madelyn were clearly very excited, and so against her better judgement Kayla decided to indulge them.

"Fine," Kayla said, "I'll play."

"Yay!" Madelyn said as she scooped up a bundle of rope. "Okay, Andrea, I'll tie you up first."

Stepping around behind Andrea, Madelyn grabbed her friend's arms and gently pulled them behind her back. Taking the soft cotton rope, she started at her wrists, crossing them and lashing them together with rope. Lowering Andrea down onto her stomach, Madelyn took her ankles and tied them together as well. She stopped here, keeping things super simple. Then again, this was only the first round...

"You're up, Kay!"

Kayla slid off the couch and knelt down next to Andrea who was rolling around on the ground, giggling as she flexed her wrists and wiggled her sock clad feet. Kayla brought her arms behind her back and allowed Madelyn to tie her wrists together. Joining Andrea on the ground, Kayla laid on her stomach as Madelyn tied her ankles. The rope was quite different from anything she was used to. It

was really soft and even though Madelyn had tied it pretty tight, it didn't irritate Kayla's skin. Perhaps that was the difference between bondage level rope, and just random ass rope you find laying around in a warehouse.

"Alright, girls, are you ready?"

Madelyn walked across the room and placed two little stuffed animals near the window. Kayla was ready. She was ready to win the challenge, and not have Andrea's sock stuffed in her mouth. She glanced over at Andrea who had a determined look on her face. She was eyeing her stuffed animal with sheer determination, ready to beat Kayla to it. Kayla was starting to think maybe this wouldn't be so easy after all...

"As was stated in the rules," said Madelyn, "the first to bring their stuffed animal back across the starting line is the winner."

"Prepare to eat my dust," said Andrea, taunting Kayla, "and then be prepared to eat my socks!"

"We'll see about that," Kayla said as she readied herself.

"On your marks...get set...go!"

Wasting no time at all, Kayla started scooting herself toward the window. It was a lot more difficult than she had anticipated, but little by little she made progress toward the stuffed animal. Andrea was not far behind her though, the feisty Latina using every ounce of strength as she wriggled her way across the floor. The race was neck and neck. Madelyn sat nearby on the coffee table, kicking her legs up and down cheering the girls on.

"You got this! Almost there!"

Finally reaching the stuffed animal, Kayla shifted her body over so that she could grab the stuffy with her hands. She was in the home stretch now. All she had to do was cross the finish line. She could see Andrea keeping up with her though, and pretty soon she had pulled ever so slightly into the lead.

Kayla groaned as she continued the tedious journey back toward the start line. It seemed that for every inch she traveled, Andrea would travel two! What once was a close race was starting to turn into a blowout! Pretty soon, Andrea was a good distance ahead of Kayla, and if Kayla didn't kick it up a notch she was going to lose!

"Ooooh, Kayla, it looks like Andrea is going to win!"

Kayla did her best to ignore Madelyn as she concentrated all her efforts on winning. Andrea was definitely slowing down, and Kayla finally found herself gaining ground. Could she do it? Could she pull off the comeback victory?!

"Oh my god, it looks like we have an upset, folks! Andrea Acosta has beaten Kayla Grace! What an upset!"

Kayla had just crossed the finish line, but unfortunately for Kayla, Andrea had crossed it just a hair before she did.

"Yay! I won!" Andrea said as she rolled around in celebration.

Kayla sighed as Madelyn walked over and untied her bonds. With her hands no longer behind her, Kayla rolled over onto her back and laid her arms out as she caught her breath.

"Well done you guys," Madelyn said, "that was fun to watch! I'll give you both a break and then it's on to round two!"

Kayla stood up and headed to the kitchen for a glass of water. Andrea may have bested her in the first competition, but she'd get her in the next one! If she was being honest with herself, she had let her guard down a bit in the beginning. She didn't think Andrea would be so nimble while tied up without much experience, but she had proved to be quite the skilled opponent. Kayla was about to pay the price for that...the price of having Andrea's socks wedged in her mouth!

"Kayla, you ready for the next round?" Madelyn asked from the living room.

"Yeah, just give me sec," Kayla said as she finished her water and wiped her mouth on her sleeve.

Walking back over, she was greeted by Andrea peeling off her socks and handing them to Madelyn.

"Sorry, Kayla," Andrea said, "at least they're clean!"

"I suppose that does help," Kayla said as she sat down on the couch.

"Alright," said Madelyn as she placed her phone back onto the coffee table, "here's what we have for round two."

Kayla and Andrea leaned in as Andrea read the rules again.

"Round two: scavenger hunt. The goal of this challenge is to be the first to retrieve the three items on your scavenger hunt list. The winner of this round gets to choose between a sitting lotus tie, and a hogtie for the final round."

"Can the winner get to choose neither?" Kayla asked dryly.

Madelyn laughed, "what would the fun in that be? Okay, now are you both ready for your second round ropes?"

"Yeah!" Andrea said as she sat up straight, submissively putting her arms behind her back.

For the second round, Madelyn definitely went harder with the rope work. At least Kayla got to watch Andrea get tied up first so she had an idea of what to expect for herself. With Andrea's arms behind her back, Madelyn pushed her elbows together and looped rope around her arms right above her elbows. She followed this up with more rope below her elbows and around her wrists too. She then framed Andrea's chest with rope, bringing it above and below her breasts before passing some between them as well.

"This is called a chest harness," Madelyn said as she continued to envelop Andrea's body with rope, "it's super sexy, plus it makes your boobs look great!"

"I love it!" Andrea said as she giggled. "You're gonna love it too, Kayla!"

"Oh, I've been tied like that before," she said, "many times..."

It was true, she totally had been. You name the type of tie, and Kayla Grace had probably experienced it on one occasion or the other. With Andrea's upper body thoroughly tied, Madelyn helped her up off the floor and had Andrea sit next to Kayla on the couch. From here, she tied her legs together with rope wound around her thighs, above and below her knees, and around her ankles.

"Is all of this necessary?" Kayla asked, eyeing Andrea's trussed up body.

"Of course!" Madelyn said as she retrieved more rope in preparation for Kayla's bindings. "It's your turn now. You ready?"

"As ready as I'll ever be..." Kayla said as she turned slightly and put her hands behind her back.

Madelyn was very gentle as she applied the ropes around Kayla's arms. Kayla had taken up yoga recently, and as such her already flexible body was becoming even more limber. The reason she'd started yoga was to help give her body more bend so that when she was in positions like this it took less of a toll on her. Her classes were paying off, because as Madelyn cinched the ropes tight pushing her elbows toward each other she felt no pain. In fact, the feeling of the rope around her arms was...kind of nice. It hugged her body in all the right places, plus the way the chest harness pushed her boobs out did look pretty good.

Kayla shook her head. She wasn't about to admit to Madelyn that she kind of liked this...who knows what other kinds of games Madelyn would try and play with that kind of information!

Madelyn applied the same rope work to Kayla as she had done to Andrea, and before long the two girls were sat there on the couch totally trussed up with rope. It was definitely way tighter than last round. Thankfully the challenge involved hopping around, but still!

"Okay, and now for the fun part."

Madelyn snatched up the ball gag from the table and brought it over to Andrea. Licking her lips, Andrea opened

her mouth wide allowing Madelyn to gently push the rubber ball inside. Lifting Andrea's hair up, Madelyn buckled it behind her head and then stepped back to admire it for a moment.

"Damn...you're so fucking hot," she said as Andrea danced around, grinning behind her gag. "Okay, and now for you, Kayla."

"Just get it over with..."

Grabbing Andrea's socks, Madelyn approached Kayla and held them up to her mouth. Pushing them in one by one, Madelyn worked each sock in pushing them into Kayla's cheeks in order to fit them all the way in.

"Is that okay?" She asked as she poked as much of the socks in with her fingers as she could.

"Mmmm hmmph." Kayla responded.

Okay was definitely not how Kayla would have described it, but if okay meant that the gag wasn't too much then sure. She was not enjoying having Andrea's socks in her mouth at all. At the very least, they were clean and they didn't leave much of a bad taste in Kayla's mouth. Hell, she'd experienced worse being gagged with her own!

Taking a roll of white tape, Madelyn pulled a band between Kayla's lips and wrapped a few layers around her head completing her gag. She then stood back and admired her "captives" beaming down at them with a big smile.

"You two look adorable!"

"Nnnngph!"

"Mmmmph..."

Andrea was having the time of her life next to Kayla. She was giggling and fidgeting, just having an absolute blast chewing on her ball gag. Kayla on the other hand was just ready to get this challenge over with. She needed to win this one. She hated hogties and would much rather be tied in the lotus position if given the option. She felt good about this one. She had hopped her way out of trouble many a time now. Although, Andrea had surprised her last round, so really it was anyone's game.

"Okay, now, for each of your scavenger hunt items. Andrea, your goal is to retrieve a pair of socks from my drawer, a spatula, and a tube of lipstick. Kayla, your goal is to retrieve a pair of my tights, a slipper, and my house keys. Oh, and the last rule is, you can only bring back one item at a time! Just place it on the coffee table and go get the next one. Other than that, you can grab whatever item in whatever order you want. Sound good?"

"Mmmph!" Andrea nodded letting out a muffled grunt.

"Okay! On your marks...get set...go!"

Kayla stood up from the couch and started hopping toward the bedroom. Beside her, Andrea hopped along too, giggling all the way. Her laughter was infectious, and as much as Kayla tried to fight it, she was laughing a bit too. It was a pretty silly challenge after all, the two of them just hopping around all bound and gagged.

Kayla was the first to reach the bedroom. She made a beeline for Madelyn's dresser and putting her back to it she reached out with her hands and pulled one of the drawers open. Sadly, it wasn't the right drawer. Trying another one, she opened it up and looked inside. Another

dud! Finally, upon opening the third and lowest drawer, Kayla found Madelyn's extensive hosiery stash. Grabbing a pair of tights she headed for the door. To her surprise, Andrea was already on her way out with a pair of socks in hand.

Kayla looked to the side of Madelyn's bed and spied a pile of laundry sitting on the floor. There were plenty of socks and tights mixed in with it all. She'd totally missed it on her way in! Because of this she was already behind, and by the time she'd dropped of the tights, Andrea was already hopping her way to her next item.

"Uh oh, Kayla," said Madelyn from the couch, "better hurry and catch up!"

"Mmmmmph!"

Kayla groaned as she started hopping toward the front door. This was where Madelyn kept a little bamboo shoe rack along with her slippers that Kayla had been tasked to retrieve. They were resting on the top rack which made it easy for her to bend down and pick up. Hopping back to the coffee table, she was the first to arrive this time. Andrea was still on her way back, which meant Kayla had taken the lead! All she had to do now was snag Madelyn's keys.

Hopping her way back to the front door, Kayla looked for the keys on the little table by the entryway. She thought that was where Madelyn usually kept them, but the little bowl was empty!

"Mmmmmmmph!"

She signaled to Madelyn through her sock stuffed mouth, shouting at her from the entryway.

"What is it?" Madelyn said as she skipped over.

"Mmmm mmmmmmph mmmph!"

"Oh, you're looking for my keys, yeah?"

"Mmmph!"

"I thought they were here...oh! I think they're in the kitchen!"

Kayla rolled her eyes as she hopped past Madelyn and into the kitchen. Sure enough, there they were on the counter. Kayla placed her back to the counter, and stood up on her sock clad tiptoes in order to get the height she needed to reach around and grab the keys. After snagging them she hopped back to the living room as fast as she could, but it was too late. Andrea had just arrived with her last item and dropped it onto the table. Kayla had been bested...again.

"Mmmmmph..." She groaned as she tossed the keys onto the table and flopped down into the couch.

"And it looks like we have a winner," Madelyn said motioning to Andrea.

A few minutes later, and Madelyn had untied both of the girls. Kayla massaged her wrists as she glared at Madelyn.

"It would have been nice to know your keys weren't by the front door," she said.

"Sorry," Madelyn said, "I wasn't trying to make it harder for you on purpose! I promise."

"You can choose what position you want to be tied in," Andrea said, "I don't mind."

"No, no, it's fine," Kayla said, "besides, this is the last round, right?"

She looked at Madelyn who had that damn glimmer in her eye again.

"Yeah, just about," she said.

"What does that mean..." Kayla asked.

"Well, this is the last round of challenges. The winner of this round takes home the grand prize!"

"And the loser?" said Kayla.

"Gets a...not so grand prize."

"Which is...?"

Madelyn held a finger to her lips, "that's all part of the fun!"

"Right," Kayla said as Madelyn started grabbing more ropes, "of course it is."

"Alright, Andrea, you get to choose between a lotus tie and a hogtie."

"Hmmm," she said pondering the two options, "I don't think I've ever been tied in a lotus position before. I'll give that one a try!"

"Perfect! You're gonna' love it. Come sit on the floor over here."

Sitting on the floor, Madelyn helped Andrea cross her legs in a seated position as she started applying ropes around her body. By the time Madelyn was finished, Kayla couldn't help but be impressed with just how many ropes were wound about Andrea's body. Kayla kept this all in mind in case they ever ran into someone they needed to subdue. Madelyn would definitely come quite in handy should that ever happen.

"How is that?" She asked Andrea, "not too tight or anything?"

"Oh, it's tight alright," she said fidgeting a little, "but I love it."

"Yay! I knew you would! Okay, Kayla, you ready for yours?"

"I guess..."

"Great, come lie down next to Andrea!"

Walking over, Kayla followed Madelyn's instructions and lowered herself down onto the ground so that she was laying down on her stomach. About ten minutes later, and plenty of rope later too, Kayla was thoroughly hogtied. Madelyn had even taken the liberty of using some shoe string to tie Kayla's big toes together through her socks. It was unclear what the purpose of this was for, but then again was there a purpose for any of this silly little game?

"Okay, now for the last part..."

"The gag!" Andrea exclaimed excitedly.

"You got it!"

"Hey," said Kayla, "while you do that, do you mind telling us what the challenge for this round is?"

"Did I not?" Madelyn said, "god, was I that distracted? Jesus, my bad. Okay, well it's pretty simple, but give me one second I'll be right back!"

Madelyn rushed away, returning a few moments later with a bundle of...goodies in her hands. It was an assortment of her own socks, and strangely enough a mechanical toothbrush. Kayla knew what the socks were for, unfortunately, but the toothbrush...she wasn't sure what Madelyn had planned, but she had a few guesses.

"Okay, here's the deal," Madelyn said, "I'm going to give each of you a two minute timer. During that time, I'm

going to be using this toothbrush...to tickle your feet!
Whoever squirms the least wins!"

That was it, Kayla knew she was done for. Her feet were SO ticklish. Then again, she wasn't sure about Andrea. Maybe she had really ticklish feet too! Besides, Kayla did have an advantage considering her socks were still on compared to Andrea's bare feet. Either way, she wasn't looking forward to this challenge one bit...

"So, are you two ready for the final challenge?"

"Let's do it!" Andrea said.

"Great! Let me just get these gags in and we'll get started!"

"Speaking of which," said Kayla as she looked up from the floor, "what exactly do you have planned for...that."

Madelyn chuckled, scooping up not only a pair of socks but the ball gag again. Kayla eyed them both suspiciously. Surely she wasn't going to use both...

"Wait...Madelyn," Kayla said as her best friend approached her with the items in hand.

"The stakes have to be raised with each round you know," she said balling up her ankle socks.

Kayla sighed. They definitely did not, but she was in no position to argue with Madelyn. Besides, the game was almost over. She just had to win this round and that was that. She could do this!

"Fine," Kayla said parting her lips, "in they go I guess..."

"In they go!"

Madelyn worked both of the socks into Kayla's open mouth, pushing them in so that both were completely inside. They were small socks, leaving plenty of room for

the ball gag which Madelyn pushed into Kayla's mouth along with the socks. It was quite the mouthful, that was to be sure, but Kayla was handling it well. She'd endured worse after all...

"How's that?" Madelyn asked.

"Mmmmph." Kayla responded behind her combo gag.

"Perfect! Okay, Andrea, you ready?"

"I...yeah I think so."

"Don't worry," Madelyn said, "it looks like a lot, but the socks actually help provide a bit of a cushion against the ball gag. If it's too much, just let me know!"

"Okay, let's do it!"

Andrea opened her mouth as wide as she could, allowing Madelyn to work in the socks followed by the ball gag.

"Oh my god, look at you! See? That was super easy."

"Mmmm mmmmp!" Andrea smiled behind her gag as she bounced around happily.

"You could definitely even fit more in there!"

"Mmmmph?!"

"Not right now of course, but...well, anyway, let's get this challenge started! You girls ready?"

"Mmmmmph!"

Grabbing her phone and the toothbrush, Madelyn sat down in front of Andrea. She was up first. Setting the timer, Madelyn switched on the toothbrush. The very sound of it caused Andrea to fidget and start to giggle a bit. Yeah, Kayla felt pretty good about winning this one.

BZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZ!

"MMMMMPH MMMMMMMMPH!"

Andrea squirmed and squealed as Madelyn ran the toothbrush over her feet. It was pretty much impossible not to do so in that kind of situation.

"Okay, you've got one minute left!"

"Mrrrrrrgggph!"

Andrea took a deep breath and focused. As ticklish as she was, and as hard as it was not to react to that toothbrush vibrating all over her feet she dug deep and summoned every ounce of strength she had.

"Wow, Andrea, look at you go!"

Suddenly, there was hardly a peep from Andrea even as Madelyn continued to assault the bottom of her feet. Pretty soon, the timer went off and Madelyn sat back, turning off the toothbrush.

"Well, you definitely reacted a lot at first, but my god...that last minute you barely even flinched! Holy shit!"

"Mmmmmph!"

Kayla sighed...so much for an easy win.

"Alright, well, Kayla, you ready for your turn?"

"Mmmmmph..."

"I'll take that as a yes! Okay, you've got two minutes on the clock. Here we go!"

Madelyn switched on the tooth brush, pushing it into Kayla's sock clad feet. Kayla closed her eyes, biting down hard on the ball gag in her mouth. Her entire body lit up with tingling sensations as the vibrations from the toothbrush shot up from her feet all the way up her legs. She was doing good though. She hadn't let out so much as a peep!

That being said, her entire body was on the brink of explosion. She couldn't keep holding things in for much longer before...

"MMMMMMMMMPH MMMMMMMMMMMMPH!"

Kayla burst into laughter as her entire body was overcome with the tickling sensation. She squirmed around on the floor, trying as hard as she could to get away from Madelyn and the toothbrush. The challenge be damned, her instincts were kicking in now and all she wanted to do was just get away from that god forsaken toothbrush!

"MMMMMMMMMMMMPH!"

Madelyn laughed, "uh oh, Kayla. You're really squirming!"

"FFFMMMMPH!"

Of course she was! How could she not? She needed to get it together. If she kept this up there was no way she was beating Andrea. All she had to do was just take a deep breath and concentrate. Yes, that was it. Just keep her eyes closed, and take a few deep breaths...

"And time!"

"WRRRRMPH?!"

Her time was up already?! There was no way...how had it already been two minutes?

"Sorry, Kayla, you were doing so well at first I thought you had that. The last minute and a half you were pretty squirmy though. I'm gonna' have to give this one to Andrea.

"Mmmmmmpgh..."

"And speaking of Andrea, congratulations! You're the winner!"

"Mmmmmph!" Andrea giggled.

She'd earned her victory, that was for sure. She'd really surprised Kayla with how resilient and capable she was while tied up! Perhaps Kayla shouldn't have underestimated her so much. Either way, what's done was done and Andrea was the winner. The winner of what though? That was Kayla's burning question. She'd won the challenge but what was her prize? What was Kayla's "prize" for losing? She had a sinking feeling she was about to find out...and judging from how the night had gone so far she had a feeling she wasn't going to like it.

"Alright, Andrea, let's get you out of those ropes."

"Mmmm mmph!"

There was no such reprieve for Kayla. She was left hogtied on the floor while Andrea was untied.

"Wow, that was actually a lot of fun," Andrea said.

"Right?! I'm glad you liked it!"

"I mean, it's always nice to come out the winner too, but I genuinely had fun."

"Well, congrats. As for Kayla..."

"Mmmmmmmph!"

"Don't worry," Madelyn said smirking, "it won't be that bad."

"Wrrrrmmmmph?!"

It shouldn't be bad at all!? What the hell was she planning...

"Here, Andrea, help me get her up onto the table."

"Can do!"

Together, Madelyn and Andrea lifted Kayla up onto the coffee table, making sure to set her down gently. From

here, Madelyn actually undid the string around Kayla's toes and set it aside. She did however follow this up by removing both of Kayla's socks before re-applying the toe tie.

"Because I'm nice," Madelyn said, "I'll tell you exactly what I have planned. I'm just going to add a few things to that gag of yours, throw on a little blindfold, and then Andrea and I are going to tickle you some more!"

"Mmmmmmmgph!?"

"Look, Kayla," Andrea said, "we don't have to do any of that. I'm fine just winning as is."

"Mmmmmph," Kayla said shaking her head.

That wouldn't be fair. Besides, she hated it when people went easy on her. No, she'd lost fair and square and it was time to...take her punishment.

"Seems like she's fine with it," Madelyn said.

"Well, in that case," said Andrea, "let's get to it!"

"Mmmmph..." Kayla grunted.

Setting Kayla's socks onto the table, Madelyn reached down and pulled off her own thigh highs. Picking Kayla's socks back up she folded them up and pressed them over Kayla's mouth, smooshing them against her nose slightly. She passed one of her thigh highs to Andrea who took it and then tied it around Kayla's head trapping her socks in place over her mouth. Madelyn took the other thigh high and used it as a blindfold, plunging Kayla into darkness.

"Mmmmmmmgph." Kayla mewed through her thick gag, but by now with how many layers had been added there was hardly a sound to be heard from her.

"Wow, look at you," Madelyn said standing over Kayla and admiring her work, "you doing okay down there?"

"Mmmmph!" Kayla responded.

"Good, because it's time for some more tickles!"

"MMMMMMMMPH!"

Without warning, Madelyn reached down and started tickling Kayla's sides causing her to burst out laughing. Soon after, Andrea bore down on Kayla's bare feet and started tickling them as well.

"HHHHHHMPH MMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMPH!"

Kayla's body was once again overcome with the tickling sensations, tingles and sparks flying up and down her legs and all throughout her torso. Thankfully there was no challenge this time and she didn't have to hold herself back. Which, speaking of holding back, Andrea and Madelyn sure weren't! Madelyn's fingers relentlessly attacked Kayla's sides, her hands running up and down Kayla's body sending shivers every time they made contact. Andrea was doing a number on Kayla's feet too, not giving her any respite.

"Okay, I think that's enough," Madelyn said finally stepping back and giving Kayla a break.

Hours could have passed by and Kayla wouldn't have known. Her entire body was numb having endured all those sensations. And yet...there was an almost euphoric feeling she was experiencing too. Was it the adrenaline? Or deep down, was there something...exciting about what just happened? How could there be? Kayla hated getting tied up, especially by creepy thugs. Yet it wasn't a pair of goons tying her up this time, it was her two best friends. Being so

helpless at their hands was...well, Kayla couldn't quite put her finger on it. All she knew is that even at the end of this wild night, despite having spent most of it bound and gagged, she felt good, relaxed even. It was strange, but she'd sort out those feelings later.

About fifteen minutes later, Kayla was untied and sitting on the couch with Andrea and Madelyn at her side. The trio drinking some hot tea and finally relaxing for the night. The remnants of their little game spread all over the coffee table with bundles of rope and socks laying around.

"So," Madelyn said, setting her drink down and sitting up, "what did you guys think?"

"I loved it!" Andrea said, "although I did come out the winner...what did you think, Kayla?"

Kayla set her drink down too, sitting back and folding her arms.

"It was definitely interesting," she said, "where did you learn all that rope work, Mads?"

"Oh you know, from practicing on myself...reading blogs online...that sort of thing. I've never really tied anyone else up though, before tonight that is."

"Ah," said Kayla, "that explains why everything was so over the top."

"I guess so, I hope it wasn't too extreme," Madelyn said. "Thanks for playing by the way! I know it was kinda a silly request and all, but I think it was fun! I wish I could have played..."

Kayla looked over at Andrea who returned the look. They were both thinking the same thing. Without

hesitation, they scooped up a bunch of rope and pounced on Madelyn.

"Hey...what the..."

Kayla pulled Madelyn's arms behind her back and quickly lashed them together with rope while Andrea grabbed her ankles and wrapped rope around them. There was still plenty of rope to use, and Kayla was going to make sure most of it ended up around Madelyn, but first they had to subdue her before really getting into the finer details.

"Oh no," Madelyn said pretending to be opposed to what was happening, "don't tie me up, please!"

She said this while giggling, clearly amused by her own joke. Kayla rolled her eyes as she continued applying ropes to Madelyn's arms.

"You're really something," she said, pulling the knot around Madelyn's elbows tight.

"Help, help, oh will somebody please help me," Madelyn's voice was dripping with sarcasm as she continued to giggle, trying her hardest to stay in character even though she was laughing the whole time.

"You know," said Kayla, "this would be so much more rewarding if you weren't enjoying it."

"You said I'm enjoying it?"

"You know...okay...Andrea, hand me her sock."

"The long one?"

"Yeah, the long one."

Kayla flipped Madelyn around so that she was sitting on the couch now

"Are you really just going to cleave gag me?" Madelyn asked with pouting lips.

Kayla smirked as she held up the thigh high sock.

"Open wide, and you'll see."

"Wait what does that mmmmmmmmp!"

Kayla plunged the sock into Madelyn's open mouth, working more and more of it in with her fingers.

"MMMMMMMPH!"

Madelyn's eyes were wide with shock as Kayla continued to cram the long thigh high sock inside. She really had to work to get it in, but with enough time and effort she was able to get most of it inside. Madelyn's mouth was absolutely packed!

"Mmmmmmmmm..." she moaned, her cheeks bulging under the mass of sock.

Kayla might have felt bad under normal circumstances, but after the last hour of what Madelyn had put her and Andrea through...this was definitely fair retribution!

"Here, Andrea, hand me the other one."

"Yes, ma'am!"

Taking the other sock from Andrea, Kayla wrapped it around Madelyn's head as a blindfold. Kayla then took her own socks and pressed them into Madelyn's face, making sure they were wedged up against her nose, just like Madelyn had done to her.

Tit for tat, right?

She made sure her socks were held in place by wrapping loads of white tape around Madelyn's head. She was quite the sight to look at, all gagged like that. And yet, Kayla could tell underneath all those layers Madelyn was

smiling and happy as ever, the giveaway being her little dimples showing just above the tape.

Grabbing more rope, Kayla and Andrea continued tying Madelyn up, putting her in just as tight of a bind as she had put them. Setting her on top of the coffee table, they not only hogtied her but also secured her down to the coffee table itself using the plenty of rope at their disposal. Madelyn could hardly move a muscle.

"There," Kayla said, eying her and Andrea's captive.

She was rather impressed with herself. Typically she was always on the receiving end of treatment like this, but to be dishing it out for once...felt pretty damn good, she had to admit.

"How you doing, Mads?" Kayla asked, prodding Madelyn's side with her foot.

"Mmmph!" Madelyn squealed, fidgeting ever so slightly.

"She looks like she's enjoying it," Andrea said.

"Oh, I'm sure she is," said Kayla, sinking back into the couch.

"Mmmmmmmph!"

Madelyn gently purred through her massive gag, indicating that yes, indeed, she was enjoying herself. Kayla and Andrea laughed as Kayla turned on the T.V..

"There's a new episode of Spy Family out," Kayla said, "wanna watch that?"

"MMMPH!"

"I don't know," Andrea said, "shouldn't we wait for Mads?"

"Meh," Kayla said, "instead of tickling, this will be her punishment, how about that?"

"MMMMMPH!"

Kayla laughed, poking Madelyn again with her foot.

"Don't worry," she said, "I'll watch it with you again."

"Well, in that case," Andrea said, "then yeah, let's go for it!"

As promised, when the show was over, Kayla and Andrea helped Madelyn out of her ropes. Pulling the long sock free from her mouth she took a deep breath as she sat back and grinned from ear to ear.

"What's that for?" Kayla asked.

"God that was fun," Madelyn said, "you're ruthless, Kayla Grace."

Kayla laughed, "sorry."

"No, no, don't be! I wished you would have left me tied up for longer!"

The three girls sat there for a second before all three bursting into laughter.

"Get over here," Kayla said, motioning for Madelyn to join her and Andrea on the couch.

She gladly obliged, jumping in between them as the three girls snuggled up together. The perfect end to a perfect...well...at least eventful night.

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"So...how'd you hear about this haunted house again, Kayla?"

"I saw it on a flyer," she said, "someone passed out a bunch in my neighborhood. It's supposed to be the real deal."

"What does that mean?" Andrea chimed in from the back seat.

"Well," said Kayla, keeping her eyes peeled on the road as they wound up and around the windy hills, "it means that this isn't just some carnival constructed venue with a bunch of fake props. It's an actual ancient house...like hundreds of years old, and the people putting this event on set it up with a bunch of scary stuff."

"It won't be too scary...right?" Andrea said, concern in her voice.

"No, it won't be that bad," Kayla said, "besides, with the three of us together it'll be a breeze! Sure, it'll be a little spooky, but just stick by us and you'll be fine."

"This won't take all night, will it?" Madelyn asked from the passenger seat.

"It shouldn't," Kayla responded, "we should have plenty of time to hit that party afterwards."

"Good," Madelyn said, "I love a good haunted house and all...but the party's gonna have booze!"

Kayla smiled, "yes, you'll have plenty of time to drink if that's what you're worried about."

"Hey, look up there...I think we're here!"

Andrea was right, they'd arrived. Passing through the large iron gates, Kayla continued up the gravel driveway before parking out front in a little dedicated zone for vehicles. There were only a couple other cars parked there, and so far nobody else in sight.

"Are you sure about this?" Andrea asked as the trio stepped out of the car.

"I mean, we're here now," Kayla said, "doesn't make much sense turning back at this point. Come on, just follow my lead."

Together, the girls made their way up to the large front doors of the house. It was Halloween and so they were dressed appropriately for the occasion of course. Kayla had gone as Yor Forger, or rather, her assassin alter ego "Thorn Princess." The costume had taken a lot of effort (and money) to put together, but she quite liked the final look. She was planning to take it to a couple anime expo's too.

Madelyn was dressed up as Mercury from Sailor Moon, minus the blue hair. She'd tried on a couple wigs but just couldn't quite get down with that look. So instead she just wore her natural hair down. She looked gorgeous either way! Madelyn could make any look work truthfully. Andrea had gone as Lara Croft from Tomb Raider, and she looked like a total badass too. It was funny though, because out of the group she was definitely the most easily frightened.

Arriving at the front doors there was a sign hanging up that said: "Please, come in!" Pushing the large doors open,

Kayla stepped through with her two friends following close behind. They were greeted by a well lit, immaculately taken care of front lobby. There was hardly anything spooky about this so far! Then again, this was probably just the check in.

"Hello and welcome!"

A tall, beautiful woman dressed up as a Morticia Addams came floating down the staircase, her long dark hair billowing behind her along with her long black dress.

"Hi," Kayla said, "we're here for the haunted house."

"Yes, yes of course, welcome! I'm so glad you're here! This is going to be just a...fantastic experience for you all. Please, follow me this way!"

The girls followed the lady down the hall and into a small side room. There were a bunch of cozy chairs inside, as well as a lit fireplace. The total opposite of what Kayla was expecting. But then again...this was all just a part of the check in process.

Shutting the door behind her, the lady turned to the girls and clapped her hands together.

"Well then," she said, "let me lay the groundwork of how this experience will go and what to expect. Don't worry, I shan't take long. We'll get you on your way very soon! Please, in the meantime, do have a seat while I explain how tonight is going to work."

Sitting down, Kayla and her friends settled in while the lady began explaining the rules for the night. Apparently, there was going to be small glow in the dark lines marking the path. The path would take them all throughout the house before bringing them back to the front door. In all it

was supposed to take around twenty minutes or less to complete. So not bad at all, and it left plenty of time to attend the party afterwards.

"Does anyone have any questions?"

"Nope, I think we're all good," Kayla said, "thank you."

"No, thank you for joining us this evening. Remember, when the lights start to dim, that's when you should leave the room. Have a great time tonight, ladies!"

Leaving the room, she shut the door behind her as Kayla, Madelyn, and Andrea settled down into the chairs by the fire place.

"This is nice," Andrea said, "this room is nice. I can see myself just hanging out in here while you two explore the house."

Kayla laughed, "no backing out now! We're doing this together."

Just then, the lights began to dim as the three girls exchanged a mixture of eager and worried glances.

"That's our cue," Kayla said, springing up and heading for the door.

Pulling it open, she stepped through, Andrea and Madelyn following closely at her heels. The house was dark now, and it was pretty hard to see. The glow in the dark lines though were very visible, marking a clear path down the hallway.

"Alright," Kayla said, leading the way, "let's do this thing!"

The three girls carefully began their journey through the haunted house as they stuck close together, bracing themselves for whatever spooky ghouls and ghosts

awaited them ahead. The house creaked and groaned with every step they took, the ancient wood just barely holding together beneath them. Even if there didn't end up being any jump scares waiting for them, the atmosphere of the house was creepy enough to make your skin crawl and your spine tingle.

"Can we hurry it up?" Andrea whispered as she clung to Madelyn's dress.

"You're doing great," Kayla said as she continued to lead the way.

Rounding a corner, the group found themselves in another long hallway. The lines leading the way though didn't just keep going straight, but rather they snaked around a bit and headed into one of the rooms before continuing back down the hall.

"Look over there," Madelyn said, "I think we're supposed to go into that room."

"Seems like it," Kayla said, "are you ready?"

Andrea sighed, "ready as I'll ever be."

The trio carefully entered the room and looked around. It was some kind of library with bookshelves lining the walls. So far, there was nothing scary about the room at all. It was just a normal looking library with a bunch of cobwebs in the corner.

"Hm...is this it?" Kayla said. "Doesn't really strike me as being that..."

"BOOOOOOOO!"

The girls are whipped around and collectively screamed as ghost popped out from behind them! Well, not really a ghost, just a person with a sheet over them, but it was still

scary nonetheless. After giving them a good fright, the person ran off and down the hall. The girls just kind of stood there for a moment, huddled up together and clinging tightly to each other.

"Okay, I gotta hand that one to them," Madelyn said, "that was pretty good."

"How you doing, Andrea?" Kayla asked.

"I'm...fine...but goddamn that scared the shit out of me!"

Kayla laughed, "same here. But if that's all it's going to be, then I think we can make it through here. Come on, let's keep moving."

Following the lines back into the hallway they kept walking until once again they reached a point where the lines led them into another room.

"Ready for another scare?" Kayla whispered back at Andrea and Madelyn.

"Oh god," Andrea said, "let's just get it over with!"

Stepping into the room, they found themselves in a bedroom, a child's bedroom at that. The decorations were all very juvenile with lots of dolls and stuffed animals lining the shelves on the wall. The bed was covered in pink frilly sheets, and it rested on top of a colorful pink rug too. There were more dolls on the bed too, in addition to something else...

"Wait...is that...?"

Before Madelyn could finish her sentence a figure shot up from the bed and screamed. The girls all followed suit, letting out loud screams themselves. The person in the bed was dressed up like a little girl, but their face was covered

in makeup making them look like a zombie of some kind. It really didn't matter what they looked like, sitting up like that and screaming was scary enough!

Jumping up from the bed, the person scurried out of the room and ran down the hall like the last one had leaving the three girls to slowly catch their breath and recover from the jump scare.

"Is that all they're going to do?" Madelyn asked with a a disappointing tone.

"Hey, don't you complain about it not being scary enough," Andrea said, "it's already plenty scary!"

"So far it's just been a bunch of cheap jump scares," said Madelyn. "I mean they are scary, I will give them that, but it's kind of cheap, you know?"

"I agree," Kayla said, "but hey, we just started, maybe they'll switch things up as we get further in."

"I hope so," said Madelyn.

"Come on," said Kayla, as she headed for the door, "let's keep moving. Who knows what's waiting for us around the..."

WHOOSH!

All of the sudden, the floor beneath Kayla opened up, sending her flying down a dark tunnel. Madelyn and Andrea rushed over in an attempt to save her from falling, but by the time they got there the floor had closed back up and Kayla was long gone.

"Kayla! Kayla are you okay?!"

Madelyn shouted down at her friend, but there was no response. Kayla was gone, disappeared beneath the floor

and carried off to who knew where. Madelyn got a sinking feeling this wasn't part of the haunted house experience.

"This isn't right," she said, "I really don't think that's supposed to happen."

"Sure as hell seems not!" said Andrea, "but what do we do? Go try and find that lady and get help?"

"No...we don't go to her," said Madelyn.

"Why not?"

"What if she's behind this? It's either that or someone else set up this trap without her knowing."

"It does make the most sense for her to be behind this," Andrea said.

"Exactly," said Madelyn, "What we need to do is just stick together and find a way out of here. There's got to be some way to get downstairs. We need to find that, rescue Kayla, and get the hell out of here."

"You don't have to tell me twice!"

"Great," Madelyn said, "then let's go. Stay close. That way if we activate any more traps, it'll take both of us. Better we get nabbed together than split up even further."

"Agreed."

Carefully making their way out of the room, the duo continued down the hall, arm in arm with cautious eyes darting around. There was no telling how many more traps and perils awaited them, but as long as they stuck by each other's side they'd be okay...sort of.

Meanwhile, below the ancient estate, Kayla Grace was fighting hard against a group of thugs that had her in hand. The trap door had led way to a slide that sent her flying down to some kind of cellar. Thankfully her attackers had

been nice enough to place a mattress at the bottom of the slide, but that was extent of their pleasantries. As soon as she'd landed, and before she even had a second to react, they'd pounced on her grabbing her arms and legs and hauling her off.

"What the hell?! Get off of me you crmmmmph!"

A gloved hand was slapped across Kayla's mouth as she was carried toward one of the support beams in the cellar. Dropping her in front of it, the thugs, clad in all black with various Halloween masks covering their faces, grabbed a bunch of rope and started to tie Kayla up. They spared no expense in making sure she was thoroughly trussed and hogtied on the floor with networks of rope all around her body and joints.

"Who put you up to this? What's going on?!"

Kayla got no reply from the trio, instead one of them produced a large yellow sponge from their pocket and started scrunching it up as small as it would go...which really wasn't that small! One of the other goons grabbed the corners of Kayla's mouth and gave a tug.

"Owwwmmmmph!"

Wasting no time, the goon with the sponge plunged it into Kayla's open Mouth and worked as much of it in as would fit.

"Fffffffmmmmmmph!"

She screamed into the sponge as the monstrosity was worked all the way in followed by a bunch of clear duct tape wrapped around her lower face. The goons weren't done though and still had more planned for Kayla. Taking a bunch of longer strands of rope now they started attaching

it to the joints of rope on her back. With how she was tied she couldn't look up, but she could feel them feeding the rope through something above her. She had a bad feeling about what was coming next...then again, there wasn't anything she could do to stop it.

Getting on both sides of her, two of the goons scooped Kayla up and hoisted her into the air. They held her there while the third goon, after feeding the rope through a hook in the ceiling beam, secured it off to the beam behind Kayla. It took him a while to make sure everything was tight and tied off, but finally he was finished and the other two goons let go of Kayla as she just...hung there.

"Hmmmmph!"

She grumbled through her enormous gag as she hovered a good three or so feet off the ground. Could they have tied her in a more unnecessary way? Well, Kayla would never ask that question as she was sure they'd manage to come up with something! This was still pretty bad though, but she had to hand it to them...they knew how to tie a knot! They'd strung her up in such a way that weight of her body was evenly distributed on the ropes and there wasn't any uncomfortable pressure in any one particular spot.

The fact that Kayla was basically admiring her kidnapper's ropework was evidence that she had been tied up one too many times...

"Gggggnph!"

"Well, well, well...it seems like you've fallen right into my trap!"

It was the woman dressed as Morticia again!

"FFFFFMPH!"

The woman laughed as she sauntered up to Kayla, bringing her face right up to Kayla's.

"How's it hanging, darling?" She asked with a wry smile.

"Ffmmph yymmph!"

"You're adorable," the woman replied, "but apparently looks aren't everything. After all, you fell for my trap, didn't you? And here I thought I was going to have to do a lot more to trap the great Kayla Grace!"

"MMMMMMMPH!"

Kayla was fuming. She hadn't being taunted like this, but at the same time the woman did have a point. Kayla did fall for her trap pretty easy. She didn't really look into the flyer she saw advertising this place, neither did she do much research on this haunted house in general! Had she done so, perhaps she would have noticed something fishy? Well, that didn't matter anymore, what's done was done and she was in a real bind because of it...

"I bet you're dying to know why I brought you here, aren't you?"

"Nnnmph!"

Kayla tried to pretend like she didn't care, but deep down of course she wanted to know!

"Let's just say I was approached by a...client...who wanted to teach you a lesson about a little story you wrote the other week. Seems like you have a nasty habit of going after other people at your little Tribune."

"MMMMMMMPH MMMMMMMMMMMMMMPH!"

Kayla shouted as loud as she could manage through her sponge stuffed mouth. She was a reporter for crying

out loud! It was her job to report on what was happening around town. It wasn't her fault there was so much shady business to report on. Maybe if people stopped engaging in bad business practices and actually did the right thing there would be nothing for her to go after them for! It didn't matter though. Criminals would never listen to reason like this, no matter how many times Kayla had to say it.

"In any case, they asked me to...teach you a little lesson in response to what you wrote. So I hope this does the trick."

"FFMMMMPH!"

Like Kayla had never heard that one before.

"Well, I suppose my work here is done. Oh, and thanks so much for bringing those two gorgeous friends of yours along for the fun tonight too! Don't worry, I don't plan on hurting any of you...just having a little fun!"

"GGGGGNNNMPH!"

Fun was one way of putting it...

"Alright well...hang in there!"

"MMMMMMMMMMMPH!"

Morticia and her trio of goons packed up their things (it was amazing how they still had rope left after all that), and headed up the the stairs and out of the cellar. Kayla of course was left behind, suspended off the ground and chewing on a mouthful of sponge. She wasn't really doing her costume much justice! The Thorn Princess would have never found herself in such a compromising position.

Well, at least Kayla wasn't all by herself. Madelyn and Andrea were still out there. Maybe they could stop this

crazy woman and come save the day given they weren't already bound and gagged themselves!

Thankfully, they weren't, and were still on the hunt to try and figure out where Kayla had gone. They needed to find some way to get to the floor beneath them. They'd deduced that it probably wasn't a brand new floor but rather some kind of basement or cellar. With that in mind they were on the hunt for a door with a staircase behind it that took them down.

The only problem was they hadn't had any luck finding such a thing. Then again, with the speed at which they were moving it's not like they'd covered that much ground yet. Andrea was still pretty on edge and clinging tight to Madelyn who was leading the way as fearlessly as she could given the fact that she was starting to get a little spooked herself.

"It's got to be here somewhere," Madelyn said after opening another unsuccessful door.

"Maybe we should check the kitchen," Andrea said.

"The kitchen?" Madelyn replied.

"Yeah, I mean, if we're looking for some kind of cellar...maybe it's near the kitchen and stuff. Right?"

"You're a genius," Madelyn said, "come on, let's get moving."

Together they continued onward to the kitchen, the old house creaking and groaning with each and every step. Reaching the kitchen, Madelyn and Andrea looked around for a door that might lead down to the cellar. Up until this point Andrea had been glued to Madelyn's side, clutching her arm so tight Madelyn had to remind her to loosen her

grip every few minutes. But now that they'd entered the kitchen, for some reason Andrea felt a gust of courage and let go of Madelyn to search for the cellar door on her own.

She'd only been separated from Madelyn for a few moments, but that was all their attackers needed...

"Hey, Mads...you having any luck over thmmmmph!"

Andrea was grabbed from behind and yanked back. Madelyn was far enough away from her that she hadn't heard what was going on yet. Andrea's attackers quickly wrestled her to the ground, placing her on her stomach and tying her arms behind her back. The meaty hand slapped across her mouth silenced her screams to Madelyn for help as the three kidnappers bore down on her.

Coarse rope was wrapped around her wrists, her upper arms, and even her legs. By the second she could feel more and more of it circling her body...these goddamn thugs were efficient!

"Hlllmmph!"

The hand pressed over her mouth wasn't going to be a permanent solution to silencing Andrea, but the goons were well aware of this. Grabbing her booted feet they ripped both of her boots off before peeling the grey socks from her feet leaving her barefoot. Lifting the hand from her mouth for but a moment, the thugs jammed both of the socks into Andrea's mouth and pushed them all the way in. She coughed and sputtered as the large mass of socks clogged her mouth, but they did their job in keeping her quiet and Madelyn still hadn't noticed that Andrea was gone.

"HHHHHHMPH MMMMMMMMPH!"

Andrea squealed behind her sock packed mouth at Madelyn, even as her attackers would a bunch of tape around her head. Sadly, she was far too muffled and Madelyn was too far away to hear her. Andrea's kidnappers opened a closet door and quickly stuffed Andrea inside, shutting the door on her. This got Madelyn's attention, the sound of the old wooden door closing that was.

"Andrea?" Madelyn called out as she turned around and looked to see where her friend was.

Strangely enough, Andrea had wandered out of eyesight. Then again, it was pretty dark in the old house and visibility was pretty limited. Still, Andrea shouldn't have gone far, and Madelyn was concerned that she could no longer see her friend.

"Andrea, you there?" Madelyn said, a little louder this time.

Again, there was no response.

"Oh, shit," Madelyn said as her heart began to pound.

Had they gotten her too? That was the only explanation at this point. Andrea was way too scared to just wander off on her own, especially without telling Madelyn first. No, he had for sure been snatched, and if that was the case Madelyn had a feeling she'd be next! Shaking her head she took a deep breath in and out. She wasn't about to let some no good thugs ruin her night! She'd push on, find Kayla and Andrea, and show these goons she was not to be trifled with!

Or, at least that was her plan up until a pair of hands grabbed her from behind.

"Son of a bmmmmmmph!"

A hand was slapped across her mouth as another arm wrapped around her chest. A third attacker came in front of her, scooping her legs up as she was carried away.

"LMMMPH MMMPH GGMMMPH!"

Madelyn thrashed and screamed, but it was no use. Just like Kayla and Andrea, she too had been compromised. So much for being the hero and saving the day! Dragging her through the old dusty manor, she was taken to one of the upstairs bedrooms and tossed onto the bed. She was free for but a second before the hands of the goons were all over her again. Forcing her onto her stomach they pulled out a bunch of tape and started wrapping it around Madelyn's wrists and legs.

At the same time that Madelyn was being "hog-taped" one of the other thugs was busy scrunching up a handful of nylons. Giving Madelyn's blonde hair a sharp tug, he took the wad of pantyhose and shoved it right into her open mouth pushing as much in as would fit.

"Fmmmmmmmmph!"

If her mouth wasn't so crammed full of hosiery she would have asked how many goddamn pairs of tights he managed to stuff in there! Even if he didn't follow it up with a bunch of tape wrapped around her head, there probably wouldn't have been any way she would have been able to push them out of her mouth!

"mmmmmmmmgph..." Madelyn moaned softly behind her massive gag as the men continued taping her up.

They'd pinned her arms firmly against her back thanks to the tape wrapped around her stomach, below her chest,

and around her body. Grabbing her boots, her attackers wrenched them off and tossed them to the floor before adding tape to her thighs and ankles. The final touch was to wrap tape around her ankle sock clad feet and then without ripping it bring the length of tape all the way up to her chest before wrapping it around there a few times. Madelyn had been hogtied plenty of times, but being hogtied like this in tape was...well it was pretty neat actually! Where there was a will there was a way...

She forgot there for a moment that she was supposed to be irritated that she was being all taped up and chewing on a mouthful of nylons.

"MMMPPH!" She grunted at the thugs as they finished up their work.

Of course she had ended up all taped and gagged like this on Halloween. Being best friends with Kayla Grace meant trouble around every corner, and holidays were no exception! She just hoped her friends were at least somewhat okay given the circumstances...

Speaking of which, Andrea was still downstairs locked in that closet. She hadn't made any work on the rope around her wrists and ankles. Her first priority was to just get herself upright! The closet was so small and cramped she was having a hard time sitting up. Then again, being all tied up didn't help much either. By the time she had even gotten herself into a position where she could reach the doorknob with her bare feet, her attackers had come back and opened the door on their own.

"MMMPPH!" Andrea yelped as they reached in and pulled her out.

She was slung over one of their shoulders as they carted her down the hall and up the stairs, bringing her to the same bedroom Madelyn was tied up in.

"Gggnnnnmph!" Madelyn greeted her through a mouthful of tights.

"Mmmmph!" Andrea managed through her own mouth packing sock gag.

She was plopped down into a chair as the kidnappers used a bunch of rope to secure her firmly to it. They wrapped rope around her lap and underneath the chair, and even connected more to her ankles pulling the ends of the rope under the chair and back up to her wrists so that her legs were folded underneath her. After they'd finished up with her, they packed up their things and swiftly exited leaving Madelyn and Andrea to quietly squirm in their binds as they mewed through their gags.

What a disaster this night had turned into! Kayla was still hogtied and suspended down in the cellar, while her two best friends were bound and gagged in their own rights a few floors above her. As Kayla sighed into her gag, she remembered telling Madelyn that this wasn't going to take all night and they'd have plenty of time to make it to that party afterword. Sadly those were always her famous last words...

"Oh, this should only take a moment!"

"I'll be done soon, don't wait up!"

"Don't worry, I've got this!"

Kayla rolled her eyes, recalling all the times she'd ended up just like this after promising her friends she had everything under control. She knew that she'd be hearing

about tonight long after the fact, and yet...knowing Kayla Grace, it wouldn't be long at all until she found herself in this position again!