You Belong To Me, Now
by Caffiend

Summary

But they were the Elite of London! What happens in the terrifying concrete hell of the High-Rise when civilization ends, and Dr Robert Laing seizes the chance to have his haughty and elusive neighbor, Angelica Fraser. In every possible way.

Notes

Like my other story about the High-Rise, "Dr. Laing's Loose End," I've upgraded the good doctor to a neurosurgeon and set this story in present-day. I've read the history of the 1970's. Nothing interesting happened then. Nothing.
This is dedicated to The Hummingbird Writes, who shares my love of- as she puts it- "filthy, dirty, bearded Laing."
"Call Me Robert. Call Me Sir."

Chapter Summary

In which we begin with Angelica, one of those pretty, red-suited British Airways flight attendants. Not fond of the High-Rise, and despising a certain handsome neighbor across the hall.

Thank you so very much to the very lovely and wonderful rayofdawnworld for creating this beautiful art!

To call Angelica unobservant would be completely inaccurate. Her career was based on being sharp-witted, catching mistakes before they could be made, calming passengers before they could become loud, and obstreperous. Being the head crew member on numerous international flights every week kept the woman in a hyper-alert state. Being the highest-ranking American employee of British Airways- and at 34, one of the youngest- made her conscious of never allowing a mistake to be made. Not on her watch.

So, no. The lovely silver-blonde was quite observant, quite attuned to nuance and small signs. But after a month of the London to Tokyo to Sydney 24 hour run, she made it home to her flat at the High-Rise for a brief 36 hour rotation that was just long enough to pass out and sleep for 12 hours, do laundry, try to fit in a run, then pack and do it all over again. To be honest, she hated the “stew-zoo” flat she’d bought into with 5 other flight attendants in the towering concrete monstrosity. But it was safe, affordable, and the view on the 25th floor really was quite beautiful. Tipping her Uber
driver and trudging into the building that early summer evening, Angelica was vaguely aware that everything looked nasty like the cleaners hadn’t been there for weeks. There were broken furniture, food tins and something that looked suspiciously like a pee stain on the wall on the lower floor as she entered the lift. Angelica had noticed the steady downhill slide of the supposed state of the art tower. Every trip home showed some troubling new sign of decay- garbage stacked by the incinerator door, lights flickering- once the power going out long enough that her phone went dead and she nearly missed her flight. Watching her mirrored reflection assault her from four different directions, the woman tiredly rubbed the last of the mascara off her lids. She looked like death warmed over. Shower, first thing. God, she hoped Melanie wasn’t there- the selfish monkey always ran all the hot water- and there’d been less of that recently, too. “Plumbing problems in a brand new building,” Angelica grumbled as the door opened, pulling her suitcase after her and running into a tall, solid body.

“Oof!”

To her embarrassment, it was that arrogant Dr. Laing. Of all people to run into- literally! “I beg your pardon,” she said stiffly, not able to look him in the eye. The doctor had those eyes... those pale crystal blue eyes that looked like a pond, where you could see clear to the bottom. All her roommates giggled over the obscenely attractive neurosurgeon, inventing excuses to ask him over to help with a stuck faucet or a stubborn air conditioner. ‘For Christ’s sake!’ Angelica would think irritably, ‘He’s a surgeon, not a handyman, and they haven’t bothered to call the one we pay for in our monthly tenant’s fee!’

“My apologies, darling,” Dr. Laing answered. His voice was usually dripping of sex- low, cultured, almost purring. He was strange today, not letting go of her arm where he’d caught her from falling, staring down at her blankly. And that voice that could make anything with ovaries weak in the knees sounded robotic. “The fault is mine, I should have been paying attention.” Angelica could feel his big hand still on her, long fingers almost burning into her skin.

Noticing he was wearing white shorts and carrying a racquet, she flashed a professional “let’s move this along” smile. “I see you’re off to a racquetball match, so I’ll just step aside. Good afternoon, Dr. Laing.”

He answered- as he always did- as the lift’s door closed. “Call me Sir.”

Angelica halted mid-step. He’d said "Call me Robert" as he always did, right? Then why did it sound like he'd said, "Call me Sir?" Shaking her head, she gratefully shoved her key in the lock of her door. It took a couple of tries to jiggle the key enough to make the tumblers release. Bending down, Angelica's dark brows drew together. The brass lock looked scratched, almost dented. Rolling her eyes, she snarled, "Tansy. Had to be. She's always forgetting her key. Did she, what? Try to pick the lock?" Making a mental note to call a locksmith tomorrow, Angelica dropped her keys in a dish by the door and stumbled to her bedroom, staying upright for a blissful shower, she gloated that the hot water didn't run out. "Makes sense," she mumbled, "no one's home." But... that couldn't be correct. Angelica kept a large whiteboard in the kitchen, dutifully updating everyone's schedules every week to keep track of them all. The girls could be silly, careless, even. But they called her "Mama Hen" for a reason. They were all nearly ten years or so younger than her, and she did worry. It was in her nature.

Finally pulling on some sleep shorts and a tank top, the woman crawled into her bed, a grateful little moan escaping her as she felt the wonderfully soft cotton sheets. Looking out her window as the afternoon sun slanted across the bed, Angelica lifted her arm, looking at the faint marks where Laing grabbed her arm to steady her. She didn't like him. Angelica intimidated men, not the other way around. She had huge blue eyes and blonde hair that inexplicably lightened to a lovely silver shade
when she turned thirty. She never changed it. The American was too practical for much vanity and the shade somehow gave her more authority. But Laing towered over her, he seemed to like leaning in to reinforce that fact. He looked at her like she was one of his patients, laid out unconscious with their skull open. As if he could look inside and find all her secrets.

She could still remember the first "Welcome to the High-Rise" party she attended on the penthouse floor that housed the Royals with a minor sense of revulsion.

Angelica met the "elite" of High Rise society shortly after moving in and spent the entire evening trying not to laugh. It seemed that there wasn't a single decent man in the towering pile of concrete. At least not among the exalted invited to the oh, so special party of Anthony Royal and his drunken wife. While her fellow flight attendants giggled and flirted, Angelica wandered quietly around the massive penthouse that married the different works of art from old masters, like Goya, crowded together with violent new paintings from modern darlings like Alfred Kubin. In fact, Dr. Laing first saw her standing in front of Kubin's painting "The Water Ghost." Laing was captivated immediately. She was exquisite- even the ruthlessly picky doctor had to admit that her tall, slender form and that strange glorious silver hair tumbling over her shoulders made Angelica suit her name beautifully.

"You're staring at that painting as if it's about to devour you." His low, smooth rumble sounded just about her left ear, Laing's big body standing so close that she could feel the heat from him against her bare back. Suddenly wishing she'd worn something other than the backless white dress, she stepped to her right, pivoting on one high heel to face him without touching.

"It's...disturbing, don't you think? This entire gallery seems to be devoted to death and degradation." Angelica gestured at the next painting, the huge portrait of two women, savagely cutting the throat of a screaming man. His pale, disturbing eyes slowly moved from his leisurely examination of her to the painting.

"Artemisia Gentileschi's 'Judith Slaying Holofemes'," Laing said, perfectly coiffed head tilted to catch the detail of the blood spill from the victim's throat. "I would think you would appreciate it, as a woman. Two females conspiring to overthrow the domination of the male?"

Angelica's brow wrinkled at the odd statement. "I've never needed violence to make my own way," she said. "Hard work is necessary, not murder." Looking up, she could see the man was closer, looking directly down at her now. Even at 5"10 and high heels, he still loomed over her. But he was beautiful, this ridiculously tall man. Lean, but powerfully built. Enormous, capable-looking hands and a well-fitted suited that her practiced eye knew cost well over £3,000.

"If you were mine," he said suddenly, "I would wind this long, glorious length of hair around my fist to hold you steady as I fucked you from behind."
Angelica's mouth dropped open in shock. "You ass!" she hissed, "How dare you-" Slapping his hand from her hair, she stepped away.

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Relations were understandably chilly between them after that, thought Laing, standing at the foot of her bed. She was an angel, his sweet, silver-haired American. And when she woke up, Angelica would be taught her place. Pulling open a small silver case, the doctor pulled out a syringe, tapping it carefully. Gently holding one smooth calf, he quickly injected the fluid into her, enjoying her brief startle, those ocean-colored eyes wide open for a moment before becoming unfocused and glassy. "Shhh, love..." he soothed, "Daddy will take care of you. Sleep now. I have so much to show you."
Descent Into Hell

Chapter Summary

In which our normally authoritative Angelica is confused. Our Dr Laing is running the long game. And madness is soaking into the walls of the High-Rise.

She was so tired... Angelica was used to the low-grade fatigue of long flight rotations. But she'd build up enough seniority soon to pick and choose, cut back on hours. Maybe she could go home to Minnesota, see her Aunt June, her friends from college. But this... God, she could hardly move. Her legs felt like jelly like they wouldn't support her if she tried to move from her warm bed. "I just need more sleep," the woman thought vaguely, "just another couple of hours and I'll get up and check on everyone..." Her eyes were already shut before the thought could be finished, and Angelica never felt the big, sure hands of the doctor tenderly put another needle into the thin skin of the inside of her elbow.

This time, the exhausted woman woke at the sounds of shouting in the hall. Angelica could hear the shrill, anxious voice of Tiffen and a couple of men. Off her bed like a shot, she raced to the front door, not bothering with a robe in her hurry. "-I told you! I belong here on the 25th floor! You can't make me-"

"Shut your hole, you sow!" One of the bullies - a man Angelica vaguely remembered seeing at the Market on 32nd, had her roommate by the hair. "You'll do what-"

The voice that interrupted him was ice, with a strong undertone of I'm in charge and I will make you
regret this.' "You will take your hand off Tiffen now, or I will make sure the next time you'll use it like that will be to fight off your over-muscled cellmate. You do look like 'bitch' potential."

The man's sneering face went ruddy as the other man—clearly drunk—laughed uproariously, still managing not to spill his drink. "Bitch potential, I like it!"

"Shut the fuck up, Pangbourne! As for you—" he swung threateningly to Angelica again, who had a protective arm around her shaking roommate. "Arrogant Yank, thinking you've got any power here?"

Leaning forward threateningly and taking a page from Laing's book to loom over him, Angelica purred in a voice so sharp it could chip ice, "Oh, please make a move. Really. Please do."

"What the bloody hell is going on here?"

Speak of the devil, she thought.

The two other men dropped their aggressive stance and seemed to back away from the furious Dr. Laing, magnificent in his cashmere topcoat and holding a briefcase that cost more than Angelica's rent. "Answer me!" He snarled, then turning to the women with a look of concern. "Are you hurt? Did they threaten you?" Laing was looking at Angelica, even though it was clear the other girl was most distressed.

"This one—" she nodded to the man, already beginning to back away, "—had my Tiffen by the hair, he was threatening her. And Pangbourne here—" she mockingly drew out his name in the British fashion, "just stood by and laughed." Looking up at Laing, Angelica almost took a step back. His eyes had turned a polar blue, his mouth set tight in a thin line.

"You stupid bastards." His voice was low and calm, which somehow made it more terrifying. "Get the hell out of here. I'll deal with you later. Or, Royal will." The two men turned drunkenly and made for the lift, looking over their shoulders with some alarm. Turning back to his neighbors across the hall, Laing went into doctor mode. "Did they hurt you, dear? Are you injured?"

Tiffen sniffled prettily. "No, Dr. Laing, they just pulled my hair."

He nodded, that perfect face still set in lines of concern. "Why don’t you go take a shower and just make certain there’s nothing else, all right?" Sniffing, the girl turned to follow his directions, leaving him and Angelica in the hallway.

Suddenly, horribly aware that she was standing in full view wearing nothing but silky sleep shorts and a (likely) see-through tank top, she abruptly crossed her arms over her chest. "Thank you, Dr. Laing, your timing is excellent. But I’m still going to file a police report on that idiot. If you’ll excuse me, I have to change- I, um, I heard Tiffen shouting and jumped out of bed." She was expecting one of his slow, visual circuits of her body, but Laing did not. His eyes stayed focused on hers.

"Are you all right, Angelica? I heard you standing your ground with Cosgrove. Did he... touch you? It will be the last time he has a hand to use." She shivered again, hearing Laing’s voice drop to a resonant growl.

"No, I'm fine, thank you. I'm just- I need to get dressed. I have a flight out this morning." Angelica was just edging back into the flat and safety when the doctor frowned and looked at his Christian Koban.

"At what time?"
"What?" She was startled. Then dread crept in. What day was it? Did she sleep too long? "This is Tuesday, right?" She asked anxiously.

Nodding with a frown, Laing looked up from his watch. "It's 9 am, I was just about to leave for the office. When are you due at Heathrow?"

Angelica gasped. "Nine? AM? Omigod, my flight leaves at 11!"

Without pausing, the doctor took her arm and steered her back into the flat. "Go get dressed, quickly. I'm assuming you're the sort to always have your flight bag packed?"

Nodding, the woman swirled her waist-length hair up into a topknot and nearly ran for her bedroom, but his hand on her shoulder stopped her. 'Why is he always so hot?' Angelica thought vaguely, 'Like he's setting my skin on fire?' Forcing herself to pay attention, she nodded. "Yes, I'm packed."

"Good girl." The words were spoken almost lovingly, in a way that made her irrationally proud. "Get dressed and I'll get you to the airport on time," Laing chuckled briefly, "just like Cinderella."

"Just as long as your Jaguar doesn't turn into a pumpkin," Angelica shot back jokingly, freezing for a moment as she realized she'd just admitted she knew what kind of car the arrogant git drove. As if she cared. But she heard his knowing chuckle all the same as she ran for her bedroom.

After checking on Tiffen and extracting a promise that she'd file a police report, Angelica dressed in her sleek red and blue uniform, throwing her hair up in a french twist and making for the door. To her surprise, the tall doctor was leaning against it, waiting for her with her suitcase in hand. "You-you really don’t have to do this, Dr. Laing," she said uncomfortably.

He shook his dark head. "Call me Robert." Opening the front door, he nodded to her to go first, making her feel strange as he followed her, wondering where his eyes were. Her skirt was quite tight- and shorter than she liked.

Watching the rest of the cars on M4 disappear as the charcoal colored Jaguar sped past them, Angelica had to admit the car was beautiful, much like it’s blasted owner- at least physically. But she had to admit, the cold Dr. Robert Laing was suddenly being very kind; taking her to the airport, breaking up that strange and disturbing altercation at the High-Rise. She shuddered at the thought. She hated that place- it was time to look for something else. In her heart of hearts, she knew she’d just stayed to look after the other girls.

"Are you cold?" Laing’s cultured tone brought Angelica out of her thoughts.

“Oh, no, I’m fine, thank you, Dr. Laing. I was just thinking about this morning. I’m a little worried about Tiffen alone there. Maybe, um, maybe you could look in on her?" She felt strangely uncomfortable about asking for the favor- not liking somehow that he would be there, maybe alone with the girl. Who would no doubt attempt to hit on him again. All the girls had, but from what their complaints had shown, the grand Dr. Laing was not biting on their lures. Why did she feel oddly jealous?

He smiled over at her briefly, and Angelica’s heart nearly melted. The expression lit up those amazing eyes, making Laing look so kind, so protective and caring. “Of course, darling. I’ll check in on her before I head to the surgical center.”

“Really?” Angelica was startled. That was more than she’d expected.
Pulling into a spot in front of her terminal, Laing looked at her intently. Putting his gloved hand on hers, he squeezed it gently. “You’ll find that I keep my promises, little girl.”

Angelica frowned. “What- what did you call me?”

The good doctor’s face showed nothing but polite confusion. “I said, Angelica?”

Absently rubbing her forehead, the woman nodded. “Oh, sorry. It’s noisy here.” smiling, she added, “Thank you again for bringing me, you just saved my whole day.”

He insisted on swinging out of the low-slung car to collect her luggage and hand it to her. “Safe flight,” Laing smiled, leaning in to kiss her cheek. Angelica was shocked to feel herself waver a bit. It was such a nice touch... but then, her forehead wrinkled. Under the doctor’s expensive cologne and the smell of fine wool, lay a strange, chemical smell. Something familiar, but...

Touching her cheek with his gloved hand, Laing smiled down at her fondly. “Dream of me. I’ll be here to pick you up on Sunday.”

“All right,” she agreed without thinking. It wasn’t until settled in her hotel room in Sydney a day later that Angelica thought to wonder how he knew when she was coming home.

The moonlight was reflecting lovingly off Robert’s well-defined back. Angelica could see his muscles slip smoothly under his skin as he took off his white dress shirt, hands moving to his belt as he turned around. The look he gave her- she shivered delightedly. Oh, he was going to eat her alive, he looked so hungry. “I’ve waited a long time for you, little girl,” he growled, the sound vibrating up her spine to her skull. “You’ve been so very difficult to catch. But now you’ll be my good girl, won’t you? You’ll let your Daddy take care of you?” Her eyes were completely focused on those long, nimble fingers unzipping his pants, waiting with a rather unladylike interest to see what they’d reveal. Immediately, his gloved hand was holding her chin firmly. “I asked you a question, baby.”

Angelica licked her full lips and tried to concentrate, round eyes still staring up at his. “Yes Sir,” she whispered, “sorry, I was... um... I was looking...” To her relief, Laing started laughing and removed his pants. Apparently, Daddy didn’t bother with underwear that day, because his cock was already aggressively erect. And big. Erect and huge, in fact. His gloved hand took her by the wrist, pressing her hand against his shaft. Eyes closed and head thrown back appreciatively, Robert hummed low in his throat.

"Such a good girl..." he groaned, "so sweet." His other hand slipped inside her panties, and Angelica realized she was already stripped down to her underwear. She gasped and jolted when one, then two of his leather-clad fingers slipped inside her. "I can hardly wait to be inside you, you taste like nectar. Don't you remember this, little one? Fucking you with my hand? God, my gloves smelled like your pussy for days. I could hardly bear to take them off." Robert was chuckling fondly, watching her reactions to him with an almost clinical intensity. "Does that feel good, pet? My fingers inside you? I must put my cock there."

Still lightly running her thumb over the swollen, wet tip of his cock, Angelica paused for a moment. "But... Daddy. You've never tasted me." Had he? Wasn't this their first time? They'd never- Gasping as his gloved fingers pushed up into harder into her, feeling obscenely thick and strange, she gripped at his shoulders.

"Then why don't you?" Angelica moaned, back arching as he hit an especially sensitive spot. She was momentarily shocked at her response. What did she just say to the haughty Dr. Laing? She
whimpered gratefully as the fingers from his other hand held her breast still so he could nip and suck on her pink nipples, yanking the cups of her bra down.

Putting her hands in his dark curls, Angelica was pleased to feel how soft his hair was, a sensitive scalp that made him alternately purr and growl when she lightly scratched it as he tried to put most of her breast in his mouth. "Because I have to stretch you, darling. I don't want to hurt you. Such a good girl. It's been years, hasn't it?"

Angelica stiffened. It hadn't been \textit{that} long! Really- thinking back, she realized she'd broken up with Jay- her last boyfriend two years ago. "Damnit!" She whispered to herself, but of course, Robert heard her.

"That's all right, little girl, that's why Daddy is here. And I'm going to split you wide." Hearing her gulp at his promise, Laing gritted his teeth and held back a bit. "Now, Daddy's going to put his cock in your tender little pussy. Are you ready? Will you let Daddy break you wide open?" He wasn't waiting for her permission, Angelica could feel the wide head of his shaft pressing at her opening, idly circling to gather a little slick on the tip.

When he finally breached her passage, pushing his way slowly to the top, he gave a guttural moan in her ear. "Tight. Soft...wet. God- the pressure of you on my cock! I could live inside this perfect pussy..."

Angelica was not by nature a scratcher or a biter during sex. But she felt like her head was flying off her body from the insanely good feeling of Daddy's cock pushing through her. Bigger than she was accustomed to, but ignoring her body's resistance as he pushed to the top of her. He was all heat and pressure and stretch and god - it felt so good! Digging her sensibly short nails into his broad shoulders, the woman tried to ground herself. But feeling her shaking legs finally loosen a bit around his waist, Laing gave an appreciative groan, rotating his hips a bit before pulling out and plunging in again with more force. "Oh! Daddy!" Angelica gasped, still surprised at the words flying from her lips. Sliding her hands down to his ass, she gave a little whimper to feel it tense and loosen, the perfect structure of those taut buttocks driving his cock up into a little harder.

"Put your ankles on my hips, little girl," he purred, and she did as she was told, moaning as it changed the angle of his heated shaft, rubbing all her nerve ends delightfully.

"Ohhh..." Angelica moaned, "I'm sorry, Daddy, but I need... um, I really need..."

Impossibly, Robert's hips hammered faster against her yielding pussy. "What, baby? What do you need from Daddy?"

"Please," she was back to digging her nails in his skin to find something to hold on to, "please can I come?"

As if a dam broke, his dark head went back, even teeth gritting as the big body above her exploded inside and around her. "Fuck! Yes, my delicious little pet. You may come."

Just as Angelica could feel that flame tearing through her, back arched in anticipation of an alarmingly intense orgasm, she woke up, alone and sweating all over the sheets of her Sydney hotel bed. Running a shaky hand through her hair, she shook her head. "I've never..." she mumbled, confused, "I've never had a sex dream before. And about \textit{Robert}?" Too tired to wonder why she was wet, her clit swollen hopefully under the sheets, Angelica fell into a restless sleep.
Chapter Summary

In which Angelica is completely in charge, and then completely helpless. Laing is as always, beautiful.

Chapter Notes

Because I'm dealing with dystopian fiction here, there's a lot of AU elements that I'm going to leave up to you: how far has the madness spread? You decide. I know, I hate it when authors do that to me, too.

The next day was the closest thing to hell that Angelica had experienced in a long time.

Her roommates always teased her about being such a "control freak," but she never took offense. Angelica was a control freak. She liked rules, she liked making sure everyone followed them, too.

Then, the plane was happy. The trip was safe. Everyone disembarked with a smile. Too many things could go wrong during a flight, and it was her job to watch for the signs of potential disruption and head them off. But just pulling herself out of her bed the next day was an ultimate exercise in self-
control, and she'd taken so long to get ready that Angelica couldn't go for a run- the one thing guaranteed to put her straight.

"What's wrong with you?" Marlene leaned in close as Angelica ploddingly tried to organize the drink cart.

"Huh?"

Shaking her gently, her second lead looked into Angelica's cloudy blue eyes. "Bitch, are you in there? I've never seen you like this. Did you get drunk last night?"

"What? No-" Passing a hand over her throbbing forehead, she tried to glare at Marlene. "You know I don't drink when I'm on rotation!"

Frowning, Marlene's hand came up to Angelica's cheek. "Honey, you're making me nervous. You're pale and all clammy and shit. Do you think it's the flu?"

“No, I just- I didn’t sleep well last night, and the Sydney-Tokyo leg was a cluster of epic proportions. Two guys got in a shoving match on-boarding, and one had a girlfriend who tried to join in with a nail file, for God’s sake. We just put that mess to bed when there was a scuffle by the bathroom. It’s like everything with a pulse is aggressive and nasty today.”

Marlene shrugged, “Maybe it’s a full moon?”

"Well, FUCK YOU, TOO, ASSHOLE! Who do you think you-" The sickening sound of a punch sounded in first class, and the women were on the altercation in seconds. Two well-dressed businessmen were throwing punches, their soft hands flailing and striking at the other. There was already blood splattering and an older woman across the aisle made an odd chirruping sound in fear.

"Mr. Mackleson, STOP. IT." Angelica's voice was like ice, cold enough to sear. She briskly immobilized one of the men with his arm behind his back in the seat, tucked against the bulkhead so he couldn't pull it loose while her forearm went across the throat of the other screeching passenger. His howling cut off instantly and he stared at her in shock. Trying to smile as she switched into a calm, lower tone, Angelica nodded at him, "Thank you, Mr. Farouk. I do appreciate your ability to calm down. The other passengers are frightened, gentlemen. I know you wouldn't want to see your child crying like that little boy." She nodded to a wide-eyed mother two seats back holding her sobbing 5-year-old. Both men looked shocked, staring down at their torn shirts and raw fists.

"WHAT'S GOING ON HERE!" The shouting made the 5-year-old start crying again, and the two men jumped, suddenly anxious and turning aggressive.

The sky marshal for this plane was Trevor Wiles. Trevor was an idiot, she thought furiously. "Everything is fine now, Trevor," she gritted out, glaring at the six footer whose hand was hovering uncomfortably near his concealed weapon. "Perhaps you'd like to help me separate these gentlemen into different seats?"

"Fine," He shrugged, "YOU!" Pointing at Mr. Farouk, who puffed up like a stuck turkey, ready to defend his honor. "You started this mess?"

'Oh, for fuck's sake!' Angelica snarled internally. "No, Mr. Farouk did not. Why don't you remove Mr. Mackleson to the jump-seat. Marlene, please help Mr. Farouk get comfortable. I'm going to pass around another round of drinks."

"Can't hurt," muttered Marlene. "Can I have one?"
Pinching her friend as she passed her, Angelica pasted on her brightest smile as she walked through the cabin, handing out snacks and drinks. When the overhead came on and the pilot announced "Heathrow Airport, 10 minutes away..." She nearly wept in gratitude. Until Heathrow police and the British Airways security division came aboard and the questioning about the fight began.

“This isn't like you, Angelica.” The pilot on the Japan-London leg of the run was looking at her, frowning. “You're so good about seeing these things brewing. How did it get so out of hand without you stopping it?”

Rubbing her forehead again- ‘why would this headache not go away?’ she thought, her blue eyes looked up levelly at the three men taking her report. “It seemed to come out of nowhere, the crew was all surprised. Even the two involved couldn’t fully explain it."

An hour and a half later, Angelica was swaying slightly with exhaustion as she finished the last of the paperwork. The captain leaned his shoulder on the bulkhead and stared at her with concern.

"You look like shite, Fraser."

"Thanks, Tony. Your concern is comforting," she stood and stretched, putting her suit jacket back on and trying to smooth her hair.

He picked up her flight bag and led the way off the jet. "Really, you look like you haven't slept in a week. Are you all right?"

Angelica liked Tony. After she'd turned him down three or four times, the handsome pilot graciously settled into friendship, they often ate dinner together during a flight rotation and shared horror stories about unruly passengers. "I don't know?" She finally admitted. "I feel...slow, a little stupid. It's taken me longer to react on this flight, and that worries me."

Affectionately squeezing her arm, he reassured, "It was just a coincidence we had all the arseholes this time."

She paused for a moment. "But, that's just it," Angelica said slowly, "have you noticed? It's getting worse, the anger, the short tempers, the racism? There was a passenger who actually snarled at me that I quote- 'know my place' on my last flight."

Pulling her back into motion, Tony shrugged. "What writer was it who said the airport is the microcosm of society? We just see all the worse parts of mankind in a much smaller space."

Angelica sighed, "Then mankind is becoming a monster."

It was just as they'd left the restricted area when she remember Dr. Laing's promise to pick her up. This memory came flooding back as she spotted his tall form leaning against the wall, his gaze trained on the exit.

Tony had just jokingly put his arm around her shoulders as he'd teased her about another pilot who wanted to ask her out. "-so the man fancies the hell out of you, asked me questions about you for the entire damned New York to Hamburg flight!"

"Angelica."

His voice stopped her dead, her wide blue eyes turning instantly to the stern expression on Laing's handsome face.
"Oh! Robert- hello- I’m so sorry, we had an altercation on the flight so the crew had to file an incident report. Did you wait this whole time?" She did feel terrible, Angelica was always on time. She did not keep people waiting.

Laing held up his iPhone. "Not to worry, darling. I know these things happen. But I was worried that I couldn't reach you."

It never even occurred to Angelica to wonder how the good doctor even had her number, but when she pulled her phone out of her bag, she saw 3 missed messages from him. "I'm sorry, Robert! I-"

Tony was looking back and forth between them with great interest, as if he was watching a match at Wimbledon. Robert's cold blue gaze met his for a moment before stepping in and taking Angelica's arm in one big hand and her flight bag in the other. "Stop apologizing, darling. These things happen. Next time, just check your phone when you land, would you?"

The odd triangle of bristling male interest and her utterly uncharacteristic confusion made Angelica nod rapidly, just to get this uncomfortable encounter over with. "Of course- Tony? This is Dr. Robert Laing, he lives across the hall from me at the High-Rise. Robert, this is Captain Tony Parks." She could see the tendons pop out in Robert's wrist as he took the other man’s hand.

“A pleasure,” he intoned.

“Likewise,” Tony said, barely stifling a yelp at the man’s grip and pulling his hand away. Aside from actually peeing on his colleague, Laing could not have marked his territory with Angelica more clearly. "Well, I'm off," he finally said, breaking the uncomfortable silence. "See you Saturday, Angie." She managed a nod and a smile as Laing smoothly steered her away.

"I hate that nickname," she muttered, not aware she'd spoken out loud.

"I would say so," agreed Robert, "your name is too beautiful to shorten it." He was still guiding her through the crowds with his hand on the small of her back, and Angelica marveled at how he kept her from any contact but his. He had her in his Jaguar in minutes, even leaning over her to clip her seat belt shut.

Struck by the heat and spicy scent of his close proximity, she tried to lean away. "I can fasten my own seat belt, Dr. Laing."

He paused, still over her. "I like keeping you safe, Angelica. And what did you just call me?"

'He's so close,' she thought, 'his eyes...I don't like it when he stares at me like this.' Narrowing her own, Angelica set her jaw and replied in her best no-nonsense tone. "Dr. Laing," she repeated defiantly, "I appreciate the ride, though it was certainly not necessary. But this doesn't change anyth-"

Robert's mouth was on hers in a second, those firm lips over her startled ones cutting off speech, sliding over them to take her bottom lip between his and sucking on it. He grinned internally to hear the hitch in her breath when he bit down gently. Several soft, sucking kisses later, he pulled back. Angelica was tilted back against the leather head-rest, dark lashes fanning over her cheekbones and her mouth slightly open. 'So beautiful,' he growled internally, 'and mine.' "Let's get you home," he said, as if she'd never spoken, "you'll feel better after a shower and some food." To his great pleasure, the exhausted woman fell asleep on the way back to the High-Rise, which made it the easiest thing in the world to lightly inject her again just inside her hairline, where a mark wouldn't be spotted. It was very really fortunate she was asleep, he mused to himself as he carried her into the lift, because the first five floors of the concrete monolith were battle zones. The only thing keeping the
upper strata away from the conflict was their private entrance on to a lift security-locked for use for floors 25 and above. Even so, Robert thought, kicking away a pile of trash in front of the doors as they opened, things were a little...unsettled, even here. Walking past a couple fucking against the wall, Laing pulled out a ring of keys and opened the 4 new locks on his door. The one to Angelica's flat was smashed open, and it was clear anything of value had already been looted. He smiled to himself as he bolted the door behind them, it's not as if she'd be going back there, anyway. His exquisite Angelica wouldn't be going anywhere at all.

"...up, angel. Come now, it's time to wake up..."

Angelica moaned a little, trying to swim up to the surface of the dark waters. She could hear Laing's beautiful voice calling her, low, and knowing. He wanted her to do something- what was... As her eyes finally opened, she found him smiling down at her. "There's my angel," Robert praised, "I was beginning to think you'd never wake up!"

Ignoring the vaguely ominous tone of his greeting, Angelica attempted to sit up, just to fall back on the pillow with a groan. "What's- what's wrong with me? I feel all..." Even her fingers felt loose and helpless as she tried to rub her eyes, "And why are you here in my bedroom, Dr. Laing?"

His thin lips spread in a malevolent grin, he was sitting on the side of his bed, leaning an arm near her hip to get closer. "We're not in your bedroom, darling. We're in mine. Don't you remember last night?"

Angelica looked down. To her horror, she was naked and there was a stickiness between her legs that could only mean- "Did we have sex?" She blurted.

Robert threw back his head and laughed, "Angel, when we have sex believe me, you will remember it." He sobered a bit as he looked at her horrified face. "You really don’t recall anything from last night?"

“I- I don’t- I don’t do one night stands, I don’t wake up in strange men’s beds and I shouldn’t be here!” Angelica was getting louder with each word, but she couldn’t stop herself. Why was she here?

“Relax, darling, really- relax now,” Robert said soothingly. “You were exhausted and fell asleep in the car. You were telling me about some fistfight on your flight?” She cautiously nodded. “I made you dinner so you wouldn’t have to cook, and you had a couple of glasses of wine. We started kissing, and then…”

Angelica was inching away from him, still clutching the crisp white sheet to her breasts. “And then what?” She managed hoarsely.

Laing’s head raised, and the morning sun slanting across his bedroom lit his face with an unholy beauty, like a fallen angel who promised so very many sins. "And then, I ate you out."

“I really need to go home and check on the girls,” Angelica said, sitting uncomfortably at the kitchen counter, watching Robert make her breakfast. She was wearing some leggings and a loose sweater she’d packed in her flight bag, and even clean underwear. After he’d held her hands and talked in low, soothing tones until she calmed down, she felt at least that having breakfast with the man who’d apparently given her amazing oral sex the night before would make her less… slutty?
He was dressed casually— the first time she’d ever seen him in jeans. “I believe two of them left last night for a flight? And I’ve checked on Tiffen, of course. And Keely’s up at the Royal’s penthouse, some kind of all-day, all-night party.”

Her brow wrinkled. “How do you know that?”

Robert looked up from the food he was plating and smiled knowingly, “Because they stopped by and invited us last night, but we wanted to be alone.”

A loud thump— as if someone had fallen against Laing's door made Angelica jump and broke the staring contest. He just went over to check through the spy hole and shook his head. "It seems everyone's having a party today."

As they ate his excellent omelette she asked, "Does life here at the High-Rise seem...I don't know...disintegrating?"

"How so?" Laing pushed his plate away to give her his full attention.

Angelica shook her head, "There's trash piling up, tenants fighting all the time, sometimes I think I hear screams. The door to my flat looks like the lock was picked. At first, I thought it was Tansy, the girl is always forgetting her key, but now, I... It just feels wrong here. Unstable.”

Robert was leaning back in his chair, his forefinger idly tracing his lower lip as he listened."There’s been several power outages,” he said finally, “problems with the plumbing. People get upset and anxious when things are off in their home. I suspect you’re just more attuned to mood and those little behaviors when things go wrong.” Picturing the the two men fighting over a canned ham just outside his door and causing the thump they’d heard earlier, Robert stifled a grin.

Pushing her hair back, Angelica shook her head. “You’re probably right, Robert.”

“Ah…” the satisfaction in his cultured tone was obvious, “progress.”

“Hmmm?” She looked up distractedly.

Leaning closer, Laing smiled devilishly. “You called me daddy.”

“What?” Angelica was halfway out of her chair as he looked at her, puzzled. “What- what did you say?”

His face wore nothing but genuine confusion. “I said, you called me Robert, darling. We’re at least past the Dr. Laing challenge.”

It was happening again, Angelica thought, fuzzy and feeling like her brain was wrapped in cotton candy. The tall form of her lover stood over her, running one finger from the hollow in her neck down between her breasts, passing over her belly button and idly stroking at the top of her cleft. She was naked again, and so was Robert, he was purring compliments as he kissed along the path his finger left. “So exquisite, sweetest girl...these lovely breasts, tickling your nipples as they harden so nicely.” He proved his point by gently suckling one, then the other into his mouth. Grinning at her moan, he gave one more hard suck, enjoying her yelp before continuing his kisses down her smooth stomach. “But this…” Angelica could feel him gently spread her thighs, and her legs tightened for a moment, blocked from closing as he wedged his broad shoulders between them. “Shh, angel. I won’t do anything you don’t want, all right?”
“Oh! That’s…” Angelica’s soft voice died off as his mouth was suddenly over her pussy, nipping, licking, tickling her clitoris with the tip of his tongue. Two of his fingers went down to pull her open to his regard.

“You’re pink, angel, pink and so sweet and your lips are swelling so hopefully.” His gently bit down on one, pulling at it, and then the other. “Ah...there’s that clit, come out to play…” and his malicious tongue began swiping against it, back and forth until Angelica’s thigh muscles tensed, trying desperately to close her legs again. Slamming one arm over her stomach, Laing looked up. “Now, my angel, don’t be a bad girl. It’s time for you to come. Won’t you feel so much better?” He was slipping one, then two of his fingers inside her, groaning as the part of her not connected to Angelica’s brain joyfully responded, her pussy tightening against his stroking fingers. “Come now, darling. Don’t be shy,” Robert purred, then took her clitoris carefully between his lips and pulled. It was all she needed to come, and she did. Angelica heard utter wanton moans of desperate satisfaction coming from her lips as her back arched, still feeling Laing’s fingers delve deeper inside her, his tongue lashing back and forth against her painfully tender clitoris.

“Seh- seh- sensitive!” Angelica finally managed to say, panting desperately in her release, trying to come down and express that it was beginning to-

“Not just yet,” he purred, iridescent blue eyes fixed on her anguished expression. “One more time, little one. Come for me.” One of his fingers pushed up right next to her cervix, making her stiffen, not sure if she was going to come again or needed to make a beeline for the nearest bathroom. Robert and her treacherous pussy made an executive decision, and Angelica came again, this time her thighs tightened against Robert’s head, feeling him chuckle and the vibrations ripple through her wildly responsive center.

Absently stroking though his hair, she marveled at how soft it was, so different than the hardness of the rest of him. "You're...this is..." Angelica couldn't seem to finish a coherent, sentence, so she gave up trying, lying under Robert and running her fingers through his hair.

"I believe I can finish that thought," Laing murmured, "you're so very beautiful when you come, and this is the moment where I'm going to slide inside you, angel. I'm going to part these sweet lips- yes, just like that..." He groaned, Angelica felt just as he'd hoped inside, snug and silky, wrapping perfectly around him. He could feel her stomach muscles tighten as he pushed further inside, shuddering with pleasure as his channel was forced wide by his cock. "The feel of you..." he growled, gritting his teeth to stay in control, "I want to stay inside you forever, my angel, nothing has ever felt-" he growled again, pulling out slowly, his sinuous hips moving back as her pussy involuntarily tightened, wanting to keep him inside her. "-felt so exquisite as your velvety cunt..." His forehead dropped between her breasts, shoulders heaving with the effort of not coming instantly. Laing felt disgusted with himself. ‘Like a 14 year old virgin, you fool!’ But it was so infinitely satisfying to be inside this delicious pussy, to own this woman that he’d wanted for so long. Pushing forcefully back in, he enjoyed Angelica’s yelp as he slid out again. Running his arms under each knee, Robert looked down at the swirl of his hips, moving his glistening shaft in and out of his angel, loving the feeling of her nails digging into his biceps. “I've got you spread wide open, sweetest girl, this tender kitty is clinging to my cock. I think you like having me fuck you, don’t you, my angel? I think you like that I made the decision for us, so you didn’t have to struggle. And I promise to keep you safe here on the 25th floor. No man will ever touch you.”

Angelica heard the words, delivered in Laing’s silky drawl, with an undercurrent of a growl beginning to seep through, as if the time for the civilized exterior to be shed was upon them. But it was his voice, it made her nipples harden, made her arch her back more to brush them against the hard muscle of his chest. One hand captured hers and held them over her head. Any other time, she would have angrily yanked them down, but this…
“Does this feel good, little one? Do you like this cock driving into you? Pulling you apart?” Robert’s face was covered in sweat, his hips speeding up harder and faster, pushing them towards their finish.

She did, Angelica did, but she never said things like that. Even with boyfriends, she wasn’t a dirty talker. “Mmmmmmm…” she offered, hoping he wouldn’t ask anything else, hoping he’d just let her come and then he’d come and she’d feel his heat inside her. His cock was hot, fiery hot and it blazed along her wet passage.

Slowing his hips again, Laing grinned at the moan of disappointment she didn’t even notice she gave. “Angel. Look at me.” The hand not holding her wrists went to her chin. “Are you ready? Do you want to come with me? You have to say it.”

Angelica wanted to kill him! She was so close- if he’d just stay, just like that she could- finally snarling with frustration, she gasped out, “Please, please Robert! I want to come, and- and- and I want you to come inside me, I want to feel-”

It was more than enough. With a growl, Robert slammed back into her, pumping his hips harshly and forcing them both into the finish they were craving. Angelica moaned, feeling the heat of him spurt inside her.

Laing carefully wiped her still shaking body with a soft cloth, cleaning her and smoothing her hair, making Angelica drink some water. Then pulling the covers to her chin, he whispered, “Sleep again, my angel. You’re waking to an entirely different world.”
Angelica woke with an utter sense of disorientation. The thick grey curtains in the bedroom were closed- she couldn't tell if it was day or night. She pulled herself up to lean in a shaky fashion against the multitude of pillows, carefully examining her surroundings. Why was her head so fuzzy? It felt like every hangover she'd ever had- times six. But fourteen years of waking up in random hotel rooms every other night helped her now. "I'm... this is Robert's bed." She managed to whisper, looking around her and trying to gather her memory. "We had... sex... last night. I think he made me dinner? Was it breakfast?" To her horror, tears were gathering in her eyelashes and Angelica tried to force herself to breathe slowly. She was a careful person. A professional. She didn't 

Midway through her attempts to calm down, the door opened and he walked in. Dr. Laing, that hateful man who said that dirty thing to her when they first met at Royal's party. The man who'd slept with. Who gave her the strongest orgasm of her life- that, she remembered. And the man who was looking at her with a concerned, caring smile that still carried the dark undertone of ownership that terrified her. "Darling, how do you feel? You've slept for an age,"

Pushing her hair off her face, Angelica cleared her throat and tried to sound authoritative. "What time is it? How long did I sleep? Sorry, I'll just get up and head over to my flat and-"
Laing was ignoring her, cupping her face in one big hand to look at her eyes, checking her pupil size. "I asked you how you feel, little one."

Angelica stiffened her spine. "I'm fine, Robert. I just need to get up and-"

"You're very pale, darling," he continued, ignoring her, "let's get some food into you and a shower and see how you feel."

"I'm not sick!" She tried to sound forceful, but her voice was shaking. "I just... what time is it?"

Again, the beautiful doctor ignored her plaintive questions, picking her up with alarming ease and carrying her into his huge bathroom. Watching Laing turn on the shower, Angelica was struck with how heavily he was muscled for such a lean frame. She'd seen him on the rowing machine in the High Rise gym, obsessively rearing back and forth on the equipment, blue eyes set and focused. And once, she'd allowed herself to stop jogging on the indoor track to watch a racquetball game between him and that vile architect, Anthony Royal. Finally setting the shower temperature to his liking, he looked over to her and smiled, dropping his loose sweats and walking over to pick her up.

Angelica tried one more time. "Robert... I should... I really need to go home."

Kissing her cheek as they entered his huge, white-tiled shower, Laing tenderly answered, "No, sweetest girl. You don't. Daddy will take care of you."

"I want to go home." This time, her voice was small, her huge eyes lifted to him in mute appeal. "I want to go home, Robert."

Leaning in to wet her hair under the warm spray, his beautiful face held nothing but care and concern. "Baby girl. You are home."

Angelica was finally truly frightened when they emerged from the shower and Laing dried her, putting her in a thin, silk robe that she recognized as her own. "This... how did you get my robe?" She asked as he brushed out her long tail of hair.

"Everything you need is here, now." He answered, meeting her eyes in the big mirror in his dressing area.

She’d always felt courage in her strength, but when Angelica tried to stretch her arms and legs, trying to feel her muscles move in that secure, strong way she’d built so carefully, all she felt was a slack sort of exhaustion. "Why am I so tired, Robert?" she finally asked.

"Call me Daddy," he whispered, kissing her sweetly.

Licking her suddenly dry lips, Angelica tried again. "Daddy, why am I so weak?"

Robert kissed her again, lovingly sucking her full lower lip between his. "Because you’re finally getting better, baby. You’ve been only half-awake for a long time."

She had her first moment of clarity when he took her into the huge living area to eat- he'd laid place settings on the table on his balcony, with flowers and shining crystal glasses. The sun was just setting over London, and Angelica stared at the last rays shimmering over the River Thames. 'So, I've slept all day?' She thought hazily, 'This is... this is still Friday? Right?'

"Wine?" He was hovering over her with a beautiful bottle of Cheval Blanc 1947. Carefully reading
the label, Angelica tried to smile.

"A 1947? What's the special occasion?"

Pouring her a glass and toasting it with his own, Robert smiled. "You, darling. Everything I've wanted. Here, under one roof."

The tenderness of his answer was drowned out by a sudden round of screaming from the floor above. The woman sounded drunk, terrified, but still wildly enthused. "Robert- there's- what's happening? There's someone screaming, we need to call the police!" Angelica's natural protectiveness almost ruled out the drug-addled receptors in her brain. "We need to help her!"

"Shhh... hush, love, hush..." Laing held her hands firmly, keeping her from rising from the table, his intent azure gaze on hers. "Look at me, sweetest girl. Everything is all right. She's just playing. Now, hear that?"

To her horror and confusion, Angelica could hear the woman from above, suddenly giggling now, responding to the greedy, low tones of at least two or three men. Shaking her head stubbornly, the woman refused to accept it. "I don't care! I heard her- she was frightened! This isn't-"

Sighing, Laing tilted his head and called up. "Pangbourne! Is everything all right? Who do you have up there?"

There was a volley of giggling, and the ugly, knowing sound of men's laughter. A woman's voice answered him. "Oh, Robert..." she simpered, "we never did finish that lovely shag we had here on my deck. Why don't you come up? There's plenty of room..." The laughter of several men denied her claim, and Angelica shrunk back in her chair. Charlotte. The most unpleasant woman in the entire building. That's right... she was in 26-D, right above Robert's flat. She'd never spoken to Angelica, even when she'd nodded politely or introduced herself- three times. So she'd written the spiteful brunette off as one of those women who just hated other women... because they were threats, simply by virtue of also being female.

"Oh, darling..." Laing's voice was as delicious and promising as it could be. "Thank you, but my beautiful Angelica is here, for good. There's no need of your tired cunt. But I do appreciate the offer."

The chorus of men's voices roaring for him to bring, "That sexy fucking stewardess!"

"That high-toned silver-haired bitch!"

"That perfect-titted angel!" came from above, but his tall body seemed to shield her from the noise as Robert carried his shaking angel inside again.
The Devil's Breath

Chapter Summary

In which Angelica realizes just how deep she's in Laing's grasp.

"Robert..."

Clearing her throat, Angelica tried again. "Robert, please talk to me."

He was carrying her from the terrace, pushing the glass slider shut, cutting off the hoots and laughter from the flat above them. Laing looked down at her with a smile, his eyes still a warm cobalt. "Let's get you settled in bed first, shall we? Once you're comfortable, we can-"

"No!" Angelica could feel his grip tighten, then relax again. Forcing a smile, she asked prettily, "Could I please sit on the couch? It's such a nice evening, and I'm sore from being in bed all day. Maybe I- I mean, we could take a walk, stretch our legs?"

"No!" Angelica could feel his grip tighten, then relax again. Forcing a smile, she asked prettily, "Could I please sit on the couch? It's such a nice evening, and I'm sore from being in bed all day. Maybe I- I mean, we could take a walk, stretch our legs?"

"Not on a wilding night," he answered matter-of-factly, but he did turn and head for the living room again.

Sliding her arm off his wide shoulders as Laing carefully set her down, she tried again. "What does that mean, wilding?"

His gaze this time was a chilly polar blue, blank again like the other day. "It means it's not safe."
Forcing herself to nod obediently, Angelica smiled as warmly as she could. "Would you sit with me?" Holding out her shaky hand, she was relieved when he dropped a kiss on it and sat next to her, putting her cold feet in his lap, rubbing them gently.

Robert frowned briefly. "I don't like that your circulation isn't picking up the way it should. I think we'll take a turn around the room and get your blood moving."

"This feels good," she ventured, "your hands are warm." Surgeon's hands, she thought, large, with long, dexterous fingers. Strong. "Did you have any surgeries this week?"

He looked up from his task, brow raised. "No."

Angelica gritted her teeth. The food and his foot massage were helping to clear her head, it felt like some of the cotton candy wrapped around her brain was peeling off. Which made her realization obvious. "What did you give me, Robert?"

His brow creased handsomely. "I beg your pardon?"

"I don't have a lot of experience with pharmaceuticals-" 'If you knew my mother, you'd know why,' she silently added- "but I know I've been drugged." Licking her lips, Angelica tried to keep an even tone. "What did you give me?"

When Laing lifted his hand towards her face, she forced herself not to flinch. "Something to help you relax, little one. You've been so stressed recently. I could see it building in you over the last few months. As your daddy, it's my responsibility to take care of you. Protect you, even from yourself at times."

"I'm 34 years old, Robert-" Angelica took a breath, trying to slow her speeding pulse and keep her tone mild. "-I've been taking care of myself for a long time. But- but thank you for being concerned, for looking after me. I'm sure this rest has really helped me."

His hands were still rubbing her feet, carefully moving from the heel to the soft insole. She jumped when his thumb pressed firmly there. His eyes were still cold. "Taking care of yourself?" His low, eloquent voice was hard. "Breaking up fights on a jet while you pass out drinks and snacks? A woman of your intelligence and beauty? You're worthy of so much more than serving the common-"

Breaking off, Laing forced himself to smile. "And that's why I'm your daddy. I'll give you everything."

'Not the time to argue,' she forced her expression to stay sweet, admiring even. "You're so nice, daddy. But I'm feeling much better now. I don't-" she swallowed down the scream that wanted to fight up and out of her throat. "I don't need any more medicine now. It gives me bad dreams."

Laing ran a clinical hand over her forehead. "I'm not certain, darling. You still look so agitated."

Angelica knew if he drugged her again, she would lose precious time. Time she needed to find her girls and get the hell out of here. This man was insane. Everyone in this concrete pile of shit was nuts and she was not getting buried here under all these pompous British assholes. Taking another breath, she opened her eyes as wide, as big and blue as possible. "I want to...I want to be awake, all the way when you're in me. I want to be able to feel you." Leaning forward, she put a hand against his chest for balance. Robert’s face looked carved in stone, his sharp cheekbones of Carrara marble. "Will you kiss me, daddy?"

It was as if a dam broke inside him, and his hands went to her upper arms, jerking her forward and onto his mouth. Despite her fear and fury, Angelica was shocked to find how fast she responded,
opening her mouth obediently for his tongue, arching her shoulders to press against him.

Despite enjoying her attempt at seduction greatly, Laing knew his angel was trying to play him. She was too hard-headed, too sensible to give in this quickly. 'But,' he thought, groaning into her mouth as her tongue joined his, 'let’s see how far she’s ready to take this game of hers.’

Trying to stay focused, Angelica relaxed into the kiss, feeling Robert's hand slide behind her head and into her hair, cupping it as he leaned her backward on to the couch.

"This beautiful mouth," he murmured, "I'd wondered how you'd taste. Sweet. No cigarette smoke or stinking of alcohol. Your full-" Laing nipped at her lightly, enjoying her startled gurgle, "-juicy lips. You make this little moan, did you know that?"

She found her hands were gripped tight to his shirt, trying to hold herself together, trying to keep focus. But his tongue was sliding down her neck now, that sensuous purr vibrating through the thin skin there.

"Oh..."

It was an exhalation of breath, but he heard it, her dark daddy. Chuckling, "Yes, love. Just like that." He ran his hand up her thigh, pushing the silk robe ahead of him, squeezing her soft skin, enjoying how the muscles there tensed as he touched her. Yes, it was infinitely more erotic having his angel fully awake and active as he played with her. Angelica's slack muscles and slower response when drugged wasn't as arousing, but it was better than having to work against her instincts to fuck her. But this! She was perfect, making those little sounds again, feeling the push and pull within her of trying to pretend this was a game, but responding to him with an organic desperation that already told him he'd won. Abruptly lifting her, Laing carried her to his lengthy dining table, seating her on the edge with his hips firmly wedged between her spread thighs. Running his thumbs up the inside of her thighs, he enjoyed his angel's helpless little responses again. "How beautiful," Robert praised, "how lovely are these long legs? I used to watch you run every morning, stretching your pace as far as you could- all that energy and fierceness in this sleek body."

His thumbs were tracing lightly along her lips, infuriatingly already moist and swelling for him. Angelica dropped her head onto his shoulder, trying to concentrate. "We could go running together. Tomorrow. I've watched you, too," she admitted. 'Run the fucking hell away from you!' She hissed internally, trying to calculate if she could lure him out of his concrete fortress- that would make this so much easier. Distracted as one sharp thumb forced its way inside her, Angelica's spine stiffened.

"Lay back, little one."

Damn his voice! She moaned internally. Angelica briefly thought of a flight where she'd had an actor- Sean Bean- where was that? Heathrow to LaGuardia? They had a long chat, and she'd been mesmerized by his voice, the Shakespearean level oration, deep and sonorous. Marlene had laughed at her all the way to the hotel, teasing her for having a... a what? She jerked against another lazy thrust of his thumb as she tried to focus. Oh! Oh, a "voice kink," Marlene had said. The actor's tone was nothing against the weaponry of Robert's voice- it seemed to sink into her skin, through nerve endings and straight to her pussy. His hands were opening her robe now, Laing's hot mouth sucking greedily on one nipple, and then the other. She'd somehow managed to pull off his shirt, running her hands down the flexing muscles of his back. Briefly, she hated herself. She was enjoying this way too much. This asshole kidnapped her- drugged her and-

"Ah, so tight against me."

Laing was working two fingers inside her now, using that wet thumb to tap against her clitoris. He
put his other hand over her pelvis, pressing down gently. Pushing his fingers against her wet walls at
the same time, he made her shoot upright and gasp, grabbing his biceps. They were eye to eye now,
her wide blue ones staring into his, a grainy azure intensity that made Angelica embarrassed, made
her want to cover her breasts and-

"Don't look away."

His fingers were moving faster now, sweeping up and down inside her. His hand pressing against
her hurt—making the movements inside feel sharper, more intense. Angelica tried wrapping her legs
around his hips to stabilize herself and the movement pushed his fingers higher, and the shock of it
made her yelp.

"Such a good girl, helping daddy make you come. You want to come, don’t you baby?" Her gaze
tore from his, trying to close her eyes against how painfully good this felt. She’d had boyfriends
suggest tying her up before, making a tentative attempt at spanking while inside her. Angelica never
liked it, never liked the idea of a man’s attempt to physically overcome her, even in play. So why was
she making these little moans? Why were her hips moving like she wanted to-

"Oh, GOD! Oh, that's so..." Her shriek broke off into a groan as she felt her channel suddenly spasm
violently against his fingers, his thumb pressing down hard—too hard! on her clit and that warm hand
still pushing on her abdomen. Angelica wiggled, trying to dislodge something, but all those fingers
kept pressing down on nerves and tender places, making her come again. She was shivering now,
not cold but her body couldn’t seem to orient and she slumped backward onto the table, boneless.
"Not- not again please Robert, I can’t-"

"What do you call me, angel?" His fingers cruelly pressed harder, wringing another orgasm from her
spasming pussy.

Angelica was crying now, desperate tears streaming down her cheeks as her body shook and
shuddered as if she’d grabbed a live wire. “I can’t-”

“Yes, you can.” Laing answered gently, “what do you call me?”

Grabbing at his wrist, she tried to stop his fingers inside her. “Um, Daddy? Daddy! Please stop now,
it hurts…”

Sobbing in relief, Angelica could feel him pull his sharp fingers out, sliding his cock inside instead.
But it was blunt, smooth, so hot inside her and the sparks to her nerves weren’t as vicious. He began
thrusting immediately, pushing harder into her than he’d done the day before, roughly handling her
legs and looping them over his elbows.

“Beautiful,” Laing groaned, his voice lower, guttural now. “So smooth inside this kitty. I could fuck
it all day.” He chuckled at her pained moan, still sliding in and out, feeling her tighten helplessly
against him from the aftershocks of coming so much. Looking down at his shiny cock parting her, he
let out a growl. “You try to tighten against me, angel, but I can always find a way back in, can’t I? I
can feel you shaking inside when I shove against your cervix, and if I angle just so-” He grinned
unsympathetically at her shriek, “-I can push my cock straight. Into. It.” With a final three violent
thrusts to punctuate his claim, Robert flooded inside her, tendons in his neck and back standing out,
teeth grinding together as he pushed and circled his lean hips, feeling his come and her slick sliding
out in small, obscene squelches.

Angelica was beyond thought or argument now, head tilted slightly off the other side of the table and
seeing the city lights from upside down. She watched as a huge flare of flame shot up from
somewhere by the Houses of Parliament. “Fireworks…” she thought faintly, “there’s fireworks
Finally, Laing pulled from her, Angelica flushing red in embarrassment hearing the rush of moisture from her opening, puddling on the table. He smiled lewdly, running two fingers through the mix of them both, running the soaked digits across her stomach, tickling her nipples.

“No need to be shy, angel.” He soothed, “We’ve shared so much already.” To her horror, his wet fingers moved to her anus, idly circling it while she cringed and tried to pull away. “Not yet, I know. We’ll work up to it.” Laing paused, looking at the woman spread out so beautifully on his table. Angelica’s silver hair flew in a corona around her head against the dark wood, her pale skin and wide eyes seemed to glow. “Exquisite…” he breathed greedily, “…and all mine. My sweet girl.”

Swallowing against her dry mouth, she managed, “I need to go the bathroom, um, daddy.”

Laing was immediately concerned, solicitous. "I'm sorry, darling. Of course, you do." He picked her up, Angelica awkwardly wrapping an arm around his shoulders to get her balance back.

Setting her gently on her feet against the black and white hexagonal tile, he bent to give her a lingering kiss. Shifting from one foot to another, arms trying to cover her most obvious nudity, she gave him a pleading smile. "Could I have a moment of privacy, please?"

"Of course," Robert reached in to turn on the shower before moving to the door. "I'll be in right after I scrub the table and we'll clean up." Giving her another fond smile, he turned and left the room.

Groaning with relief- she really did have to pee desperately- Angelica hastily finished and wiped, not flushing the toilet yet. Scampering over to his black granite counter, she tried to quietly scrabble through the items there. Nothing. Darting a look over her shoulder at the open door, her shaking hands went next to the drawers. "Bingo," she whispered, seeing a collection of pill bottles and a case of syringes and liquid. Rapidly picking up one container and then the next, she tried to remember her drug training at the airline. They'd all taken a three-day safety training, and one day focused exclusively on drugs.

"Diisopropyltryptamine?" She mumbled softly, "A barbiturate, I think?"


It was the glass container of a powder that made her hand start to shake again. "Scopolamine." This one, she remembered. The Interpol officer teaching the class was grave when talking about the new scourge.

"We're all raised with some sort of sense of right, or wrong," he'd said, pacing the front of the room, "but under the effects of The Devil’s Breath, however, these logical thoughts do not exist. The drug leaves the affected person with absolutely no sense of right or wrong – and very little ability to go against the suggestions of another person – even a complete stranger. This is why it has been given the name The Devil’s Breath – as it is akin to selling one’s soul to the devil."

"Oh, fuck." Angelica whispered.

Suddenly, footsteps sounded on the hardwood in Laing's bedroom and she heard his smooth, beautiful voice. "Did you say something, angel?"
A Conversation And A Corset

Chapter Summary

In which Robert teaches Angelica that drugs are not the only means to compliance.

Chapter Notes

Trigger warnings for non consent and forced orgasm. Also, squirm-inducing descriptions of a certain surgical procedure. I'm from a medical family so we talked about this weird shit all the time at the dinner table. You might be a little more refined. Just warning you...

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Artwork courtesy of the lovely RayofDawnWorld

"Just- just a minute, please!" Her anxious squeal was only half manufactured, the concept of being caught with her pants down- even though she was nude- terrified Angelica enough to seize the pill bottles and crab-walk back to the toilet, seating herself and rapidly shaking pills into the water. "I'm just finishing up... would you give me a moment?" Pitching her voice louder to drown out the sound of the meds sinking into the porcelain bowl, the woman shook, hearing the sound of Robert's steps drawing closer.
"Darling," his voice was so calming, she thought despairingly, so beautiful- "are you all right?"

“Yes!” She groaned internally, where was all her smooth confidence? She sounded as guilty as she did at the age of 10 when her aunt used to catch her sneaking cookies.

“Hmmmm…” Robert’s voice had dropped, he didn’t sound pleased. “You seem to be taking quite a while, my angel. You’re not attempting to delay our evening, are you?”

“No?” He grinned a little at her small voice. He so enjoyed dismantling that haughty assuredness Angelica wore like a power suit. “Hurry, then. You have exactly two minutes.”

“All right, daddy!” She shrieked, shaking the pills faster into the water, praying that the flush would remove the evidence. Jumping as he finally knocked sharply on the door, Angelica emptied out the last of the Devil’s Breath, peeking between her thighs to see the powder swirl, turning the water milky. Flushing just as Robert opened the door, she jumped and layered her arms over her breasts.

“Don’t look!” She yelped, blushing painfully as her tall, demented captor smiled, crossing his arms over his bare chest as he looked her up and down.

“Baby girl,” Robert drawled in that delicious upper-crust accent, “I have seen those lovely tits before. Put down your hands.”

Gritting her teeth, Angelica rose to her full height, dropping her arms to distract his gaze with her pale breasts, nipples peaking quickly as she hastily flushed the toilet. It was successful. Robert’s polar gaze was focused only on her chest, enjoying her skin flushing pink with embarrassment.

"Good girl," he soothed, lips twisting with pleasure as he looked Angelica over thoroughly, slowing for a closer look at her bare pussy. His angel trembled, he noticed, as one rough fingertip traced along her smooth slit. "Are you tired, baby?"

Angelica’s head nodded stiffly, like a marionette. "Yes... um... daddy. You were very... demanding?"

Her head dropped as Laing began laughing, his hard chest brushing against the skin of her back in a damnedly noticeable way. "All right. Let me tidy you and we'll go to sleep." Another violent "thump!" slammed against the wall leading to the outside hallway. "Ssshhh," he soothed, watching her alarmed stare, "I'll take care of you, little one. Nothing will harm you tonight."

Robert tenderly bathed his angel, spending an inordinate amount of time between her legs, stroking one swollen lip and then the other, enjoying the slick that seemed to thicken the texture of the water. Humming into her ear, the surgeon attempted to distract his lovely prize from the shrieking and sounds of anarchy on the other side of the plasterboard and expensive paint.

Angelica did everything she could to stay awake, planning to attempt leaving Robert's flat as he slept. But with the combination of the overwhelming physical excesses of the day and the drugs still in her system, she finally succumbed as he watched her closely. Laing returned to the pristine white bathroom, opening the drawer to find the right dosage to help his darling rest comfortably. Brow creasing his smooth forehead, he found the syringes and medicated wipes, but not the little brown bottles that contained the arsenal meant to calm his stubborn angel. Looking up into the harsh lights of the huge mirror over his vanity, Robert watched his eyes narrow, mouth turning tight.

Little bitch-

Hands rapidly searching the beautiful wood cabinet, Laing found no trace of his medications. A growl building in his throat, he strode to the toilet, angrily flipping the white bath mat over to show
the little collection of bottles— all empty. "You cunt—" he hissed, "such a bad, bad girl! Disobeying daddy!" Growling as he clenched those big fists, Robert drew air in through his nose, then out his mouth in an attempt to calm himself. "Two steps forward, one back," he counseled himself, "I knew my angel was attempting to con me. Now she learns the consequences."

"Wake up!"

Laing’s clear, sharp voice nearly sent Angelica up off the bed, until something jerked her backward painfully, her arms held behind her.

“Ow!” She gasped, “Robert, why is—”

“Shut. UP.” He hissed, leaning into her field of vision threateningly. Laing was standing over her, wearing only a pair of black jeans that cling to his long legs, zipper up but unbuttoned. His expression was perfectly calm, only the frost blue of his eyes blazing at her exposed his fury. “You’ve been a very, very bad girl, sweetheart.” Angelica looked down to see the complicated corset he’d created from smooth nylon rope, binding her breasts tightly, compressing her ribs. The loops near her hips clasped her wrists there, securing them firmly within the design.

He smiled coldly as her alarmed gaze rose to his. “D-Daddy, why am I tied up? I can’t breathe very well—”

“-you’ll breathe well enough,” Robert interrupted, having a hard time paying attention to her protests when his angel’s pretty, pale breasts were swollen after being bound so tightly with the soft rope. "How disappointing to find that you aren't bright enough to understand a warning when you hear it."

Angelica gritted her teeth as she attempted to struggle to a sitting position without the use of her hands. 'All bets are off, asshole,' she thought, actually relieved to not have to play his game any longer. "Untie me." Her voice was clipped, cold. The tone she used for unruly passengers. "Now, Robert! No more games! You were drugging me with the Devil's Breath? You bastard—" She was cut off by a gasp as two long fingers slid into her.

"Do you know," Robert interrupted, his tone casual, but professional as his digits began invading her, "I was asked to consult on a case just yesterday, here in the High-Rise."

"Is that so?" Angelica managed through gritted teeth, trying desperately to not cry. She hadn't thought her captor would notice the dumped drug stash so quickly. Did the man never sleep?

"Hmmm..." he agreed, slipping one wet finger into her ass, "while you were resting. I had a free moment- you were exhausted, darling." Laing chuckled unkindly at her humiliated flush. "So, the subject," he continued clinically, "was accused of raping a tenant-"

"Which one?" She gasped, thinking frantically of her roommates.

Robert heard her stifle a moan as he pushed another finger inside her tightened pucker, "Wilder, of course. Always one to agitate, to stir up a fuss-"

"No!" Angelica interrupted, "what woman? Who did he...?"

His beautiful face was thoughtful as he added lube to the two fingers inside her ass, ignoring the clicking sound in his angel's throat as she forced herself to not cry. "Charlotte," he finally offered, "just above us."
She was ashamed of her instant relief, the immediate flush of gratitude that it wasn't one of HER girls- "T-take your fingers out of me!" Angelica hissed between her clenched jaw, "I won't play your flesh doll anymore, you sick son of a bitch- AAH!" She was cut off by a scream as Robert viciously slapped her ass, leaving a bright red print on one pale cheek. She groaned as those treacherous fingers slid back inside.

"So Royal's little entourage came to me, requesting an evaluation," he continued as if she'd not said a word. "Pangbourne had treated Charlotte by then- she's staying in the penthouse now, safe from the rest."

'The rest of what?' Angelica thought. She angrily tried to move away from his sharp, probing fingers, but Laing's other hand suddenly moved to the harness, grabbing a loose end on her spine and yanking the woman sharply upwards, back arched and off balance.

After a pause, Robert's hand began moving again, scissoring those two fingers inside her clenched ass. "They wanted to know if Wilder was a good candidate for a lobotomy," his voice was cold, precise. It was clearly a tone he used to lecture unruly first-year med students. "Could I sever the lobe responsible for violence and leave him as a useful pack animal." He listened as Angelica's breath caught, feeling her shudder. "He's a large, burly fellow," Laing allowed dispassionately, "and properly controlled, he could be useful. Why kill what is useful?"

Angelica was panting lightly, her strong thighs trying to get her knees under her weight properly, trying to balance and fight against his intrusion inside her. She'd never tried anal sex, adamantly refused even the possibility. And here her tight muscles were being forced to relax against his moving fingers. "I don't care!" She hissed, "Let me go! I'm not your slave, I'm not your angel and I'm getting the fuck out of here-"

To her rage, Angelica could hear the cap open on the bottle of lube, more spread around her anus and onto his fingers as Robert slowly pushed a third finger inside her as she thrashed furiously against him. “After a careful analysis,” he continued dispassionately as if his elegant hand wasn’t busy invading her, “I agreed that the best course of action would be a prefrontal lobotomy to control him.” Smiling as he heard his angel’s gasp of horror, Laing continued. “It’s quite simple, you know. Without my full surgical array. I had to be... creative.” He chuckled, still gripping the back of Angelica’s corset and moving her off balance again. "An icepick, for instance, is quite similar to the device Dr. António Egas Moniz first used when he developed the procedure."

Fists clenched, Angelica was still trying to regain her balance, attempting to ignore the slick, slow slide of his long digits inside her. He was pressing- unfairly, she thought bitterly- on the backside of her G spot, stroking over it carefully. The frustration of trying to control her traitorous body while the chilling story unfolded was making her dizzy. “Rapists are monsters,” she managed, “Wilder should be held and given to the police. He should be charged-"

“Fortunately,” Laing’s sure hand continued his movement inside her as his tone remained in lecture mode. “Fortunately Royal has a sterling silver icepick- quite sharp- and after a careful sterilizing, it made an admirable surgical tool.”

“Oh, God,” she moaned, beginning to shudder with disgust at his story and herself, teetering on the brink of a much unwelcome orgasm. How could she? Her thoughts were swirling, not letting Angelica’s sharp mind pick out one or another to really examine properly. How could she be on the brink of coming from the hand of a man she hated- the monster telling her this horrible story? "You didn't- you didn't give Wilder a- a- the-"

"It's been called surgically induced childhood,” Robert mused, his muscled forearm- so strong from so many rowing sessions and games of squash- kept pushing his fingers inside her. "Surgeons used it
constantly to refer to the results of lobotomy. The operation left people with an 'infantile personality,' a period of maturation that would then lead to recovery."

One knee slipping on the silky sheets, Angelica shook her head violently. "Robert..." she groaned, "you didn't..."

"I've never performed one, of course." Robert's exquisite voice remained calm, smooth. "But the theory is simple. The transorbital lobotomy involves lifting the upper eyelid and placing the point of a thin surgical instrument under the eyelid and against the top of the eye socket..."

"Please, don't tell me-" she gasped, still trying to fight against the swelling of her wet lips, currently being nudged against the rough denim on Robert's thigh.

"A mallet was used to drive the orbitoclast through the thin layer of bone and into the brain along the plane of the bridge of the nose, around fifteen degrees toward the interhemispherical fissure..." Laing was remorseless, refusing to stop either his hand or the terrifying narrative. "The orbitoclast is malleted five centimeters into the frontal lobe, and then pivoted forty degrees at the orbit perforation so the tip cut toward the opposite side of the head toward the nose. The instrument is returned to-

"Stop!" Angelica was shaking, terrified and ashamed to be at her limit. "Why are you telling me these horrible things? Why won't you let me go? Please, Robert-"

There was a pause then, his fingers sliding carefully from her bottom. "What do you call me?"

She pressed her lips together. She wouldn't give this sick fucker the satisfaction. Suddenly, the blunt, cool nose of something metallic was pressed against her rear, coated with more lube and beginning to make it's way past her tight ring of muscle. "R-robert, what are you...?" Angelica couldn't finish the sentence, gasping as the thickest part of what was obviously an anal plug slid past her barrier and seated itself securely inside her back passage. It didn't hurt, really. More stretching, but her captor's talented fingers had apparently widened her enough to blunt any real discomfort.

His broad hand smoothed over her ass, and Angelica could hear Laing's growl of satisfaction. "Beautiful," he praised. Still trying to balance against his hold on the shibari harness, she could hear the faint 'click!' of a cell camera. "Would you like to see?" He offered, leaning so close to her ear that his lips brushed against the thin skin below it. Before she could refuse, his hand put his phone in front of her. Between the smooth globes of her ass winked an emerald gemstone. "Gorgeous," Laing praised, his tone darker, more greedy now. "The sight of you wearing this for me..."

Feeling his knees slide between hers and spread them farther, Angelica tried moving her shoulders instead. "Don't. Robert- don't! I don't want-"

“Shhhh…” he soothed, the sound of his whisper sending chills up and down her spine, making her shudder. "You do. You do, little one, and I will not stop. Not until I can show you how I can make you feel."

Angelica caught a sob trying to escape as she felt the blunt head of Laing’s cock slide to the entrance of her pussy, idly moving back and forth for a moment, brushing her opening, then up to her swollen clitoris and back. He was murmuring praise in his silky, filthy tone, sending goosebumps in a spray over her sensitive neck.

Robert kissed her back, smoothing her hair until he felt her relax slightly, and then began working his cock inside his angel, watching her hands clench against their shibari bonds until her knuckles went white. But she said nothing, and after a long pause, Robert moved again, closing his eyes and dropping his head, trying to maintain control against the insane heat and tightness of his precious girl.
He could feel the plug inside her other passage slip and slide against his cock in the most distracting way, and as his rough fingertips found her clit, the man smiled to hear her moan despairingly, the tone of a stubborn creature finally giving in to the wildly erotic sensation of being filled in both channels.

“God, Robert,” Angelica gasped, “I can’t—”

“Call me daddy,” his voice above her was remorseless, tugging and pulling on the shibari ropes to move her against his hips. “And you can, baby. You certainly can.”

“No,” the denial came in a sob, Angelica trying to fight against the rising orgasm that she knew would swamp her, something she couldn’t avoid or fight back.

Robert’s hand moved faster against her hard bundle of nerves, his index and middle fingers finally bracketing the pink flesh and pulling gently. “It’s time now, angel. Time to come for daddy.”

“I- I won’t!” Angelica gasped, trying to pretend that her body was still her own, that this monster didn’t own her. But as his cock arched up just so to press against the thin skin between him and the plug, Robert yanked on her clitoris and she screamed, overwhelmed by it all and no longer able to resist. It seemed to go on forever, the shuddering tightness of her clenching channels against the solid objects blocking them, holding them open for his use. And when Robert stiffened, growling at his finish, Angelica wailed in desperation as his heated come flooding her sore body forced her into another powerful release as well.

Angelica lay still as Laing cut her free from her rope corset with bandage scissors, tenderly wiping her sweaty body with a warm cloth, chuckling as she weakly tried to close her thighs against the cloth’s progress with her pussy and then her anus. She felt his hand slide under her head, tangling with her hair as he brought a glass of water to her lips, purring approval as his angel gulped it down gratefully. The sun was rising, she thought, barely conscious as she watched the golden light creep across the bedroom floor.

"Robert?"

"What do you call me, angel?"

She sighed quietly. "Daddy?"

Leaning his dark head on a propped hand, Laing smoothed the other hand over her cheek. "Yes, baby?"

"Did you..." Angelica clumsily cleared her throat and started over. "Did you give Wilder the lobotomy?" She could feel his broad chest move against her back as Robert shrugged.

"No." He ignored her sigh of relief. "I gave him a chemical lobotomy. A combination of Thorazine and Seroquel. Much less invasive, but he's still quite malleable." Laing ignored the rigid stillness of his little girl as he stroked her breasts, tenderly massaging them after being bound so long.

Finally, she spoke again. "Why did you tell me that story?"

Chills erupted again as Angelica heard his indulgent chuckle. "Oh, darling. Do you think you disposed of all the drugs in the High Rise? You will be my good girl. One way, or another."
Still trying to plug (snigger, she said plug!) away on this story and "My Lovely Doll." I also had another Loki story in mind, but my stupid vision isn't helping much. The ophthalmologist ended up cheerfully lasering my other eye to prevent the same rips and weak spots. I can't tell you how many doorways I've walked into in the last two weeks...
There's My Good Girl...

Chapter Summary

In which Angelica is obstreperous. And Laing counters with charm, orgasms and pharmaceuticals.

Chapter Notes

Trigger warnings for dub-con, drugging and bondage. But since it's at the hand of Laing I doubt most of us will be displeased.

It was a shatter of breaking glass that jerked Angelica from her sleep the next day. She could hear raucous laughter from the balcony of the apartment next to Laing's, and by the sound of it, they were using the cars parked below as target practice with their wine bottles. Shaking her head and trying to think again, her hazy eyes looked out the window. 'Still daylight,' she thought, squinting, 'maybe... noon?'

"Ah, you're awake." Robert walked over to the side of the big bed, into Angelica's range of vision. It took her another moment to realize her movement was limited to the minimal amount allowed by the ropes binding her wrists and ankles, shackled to thick leather cuffs.

'This can't be real,' Angelica thought despairingly, 'not again.' The Doctor Laing was immaculately
outfitted in a perfectly fitted grey suit, starched white shirt, and subtly patterned blue tie. 'Sapphire,' she thought dazedly, 'like his eyes...'

The bed jostled as he sat next to her, running one possessive hand up her hip. "Darling girl," Robert's smile would have seemed sweet, until the polar shade of his eyes gave him away, "you've slept an age. You need to eat."

Other, more urgent needs were making themselves known, and Angelica shifted anxiously. "Actually, could you please help me up? I really need to go to the bath-"

"No need," interrupted Laing, waving one big hand, "I've inserted a catheter line in your urethra. Go ahead."

It felt like the lower half of her body was suddenly encased in ice. "You... you WHAT?"

The sunlight slanted against the pristine white sheets and his beautiful suit, putting his face into shadow. All she could see were those cold eyes and a small, ironic smile. "You heard me. You won't be leaving this bed until you've earned the privilege of being allowed up. And at this point my angel, you are not even in the vicinity of earning such a thing."

His tone was infuriatingly reasonable, Angelica thought angrily as if she'd a been a spoilt child caught sneaking out after curfew again. "You must be mad," she used her coldest tone. "It's been at least three days since you've kidnapped me, Robert- kidnapped! Do you know the procedure when a member of a flight crew goes missing from duty? The airline sends someone out on a welfare call. If the investigator does not speak directly with the missing employee, they immediately notify the police." She leaned against her bonds, hearing the stiff leather shackles creak. "You'll be arrested..." Angelica's voice dropped now, poignantly sweet, compelling. "You'll be tried in court, humiliated in front of your peers, your family-" She didn't miss the way he stiffened at the last sentence. "Imagine the humiliation for your family! Just... let me go. I don't have to report you."

She'd gone too far, Angelica realized when Robert leaned back in, sending her onto the unreasonably fluffy pillow. "You're... adorable, darling." He was smiling, but his tone was terrifyingly cold. "Who do you think called in the medication for your nervous collapse, notifying your work supervisor that you would be taking an extended leave for mental treatment? And-sweetheart. It hasn't been three days."

His indulgent chuckle made her blood turn to fire, her fists clenching helplessly. "You've been here over a week, sweetheart- nine days, to be exact." Her jaw dropped, the woman could feel it- but she couldn't hide her horror. "You- you bastard!" She said hoarsely, "You didn't dare-"

The Doctor Laing's smile was utterly feral now. "Oh, darling. But I would. I would dare to take care of you. To help you get better." He watched the lovely Angelica strain against her bonds again, teeth gritted furiously. "Your supervisor was clear, however," he added, adjusting the cuff of his shirt, "that due to airline regulations you would require a six-month waiting period and a clean bill of health from your treatment team before returning to work."

A shudder went through her. The monster was right. Any hint of mental illness required a very thorough process before returning to work. Even a mild anti-depressant was enough to get an employee grounded for good. Her career- everything she'd worked for- it could all be gone because of this evil, horrible- "You son of a bitch!" Angelica screamed, "You lunatic bastard! Let me up! Let
me up right now! I swear to god I will kill you if you don't-

"Oh, darling." Robert looked genuinely troubled now, "I was quite right. An extended period of rest and medication is needed, just as I prescribed." She shrank away as he pulled out a small amber bottle, deftly inserting a needle and pulling the plunger back, holding it up to check for bubbles. As he brought the syringe to her arm, Angelica started thrashing frantically, as much as her bound wrists and ankles would allow.

Shaking her head furiously, silver-blonde hair flying, she gasped "Don't you touch me! Don't you put that thing-" With a quick grasp from one hand to her straining arm and a plunge of the needle from the other, Robert injected her, watching the horror fill those lovely, pale eyes. Smoothing her hair as Angelica sagged back onto the pillows, he smiled tenderly.

"There's my good girl. Just rest now. We'll start again when you wake. You'll be my sweet, good girl then, won't you?"

"Fuuuu... youuuuu..." slurred the woman as her lids dropped shut.

When Angelica woke again, it was dark outside. Tears spurted from her eyes as she remembered the afternoon and the horrible predicament she was in. No help coming from work. Not many close friends to even miss her for some time. And this lunatic bastard with a seemingly unstoppable supply of medication and bondage gear. Remembering his calm threat of Wilder’s medical “lobotomy” from the day before, she cried harder. ‘Oh, my god,’ she thought despairingly, ‘some sort of slack flesh doll?’ It triggered every one of her worst fears: being weak, helpless, unable to protect herself. She’d worked for so long to become strong and independent. How could this have happened? How could this man take over her entire existence so quickly?

She tried to muffle her sobs, but they must have been audible, because the bedroom door opened, and the tall form of her captor blotted the light from the great room. “Oh, baby girl,” Robert soothed, walking in and turning on the lamp next to the bed. “No crying, sweetness. Daddy’s here.” His words made Angelica cry harder, and she turned her face away from him, the only defiance her bound body allowed her now. One warm hand easily pulled her eyes back to his. They were tender, even sympathetic as he viewed her tear-stained face. "I know you're afraid, little one," he soothed, "it's very frightening to lose control. But I'm going to help you get it back. You just need to think clearly, remember how important I am to you- how important we are together."

Angelica tried shaking her head. They weren't... he wasn't... god, she was so tired...

"Here, let me help you up a little." That beautiful, deep voice was suddenly right next to her ear when she turned her face, his mouth brushed against hers. With a pleased growl, Robert pressed his mouth against hers harder, his tongue slipping through hers in a slick, pleasurable way. She was sniffling, embarrassed that her nose was running and her arms bound, too weak to fight against him. But then his big, warm hand pressed gently against her cheek, long fingers stroking her skin. "There's my sweet girl," he whispered, a breath away from her, "Daddy has you, I'll keep you safe." Her eyes were drooping, Angelica fighting to keep them open as Laing pressed his perfect mouth against hers again. The feel of his tongue rolling against hers made the woman whimper, cutting off the sound as she realized what she was doing. But Robert was smiling by then, the feel of his even teeth pressing against her full lips as he continued exploring her mouth.

Somehow, it was even worse to Angelica that it felt so good, his tongue and lips, his big hand sliding slowly down her neck, stroking along her exposed collarbone. This gorgeous monster knew how to kiss- her rapidly hardening nipples proving the point. One rough thumb went to them, stroking back
and forth against one, then the other, making her realize for the first time that she was naked under those 1,500 thread count sheets. One of his hands was sliding up her strained arm, pulling mindlessly against her leather shackle and releasing it. But she was too occupied with his talented mouth to realize he’d simply locked her wrists together, still bound to the bed. Bending lower, he released her right leg, curling it around his hip.

“Wait- Robert?” Her whisper in the dim lighting of the bedroom made the man pause for a moment, looking down at her. “Will you…?” Angelica pulled at her cuffed wrists, not sure how to ask him to release her. His hair was so smooth- she wanted to run her nails through it, feel those wonderfully silky curls come loose from his strict style.

Her only answer was Laing’s hands on her hips, flipping her over before she could react, tightening on her skin as Angelica gasped. “Shhh...sweet girl.” He murmured, “Daddy will take care of you. Just relax, I’ll do all the work.” Some part of the woman expected his generous cock to press against her, but instead there was an odd tugging sensation, not painful exactly, but definitely not pleasant. To her horror, Angelica realized he was pulling the catheter from her body.

“Oh- god! Don’t…” She couldn’t think of anything to say, exactly. Robert’s hands were back on her hips, stroking her soothingly and forcing her knees under her more, making Angelica’s back arch. She stifled a sob as she now heard the tell-tale rasp of his zipper coming undone. She couldn’t decide what was worse, that his cock was pushing inside her, or that she was wet enough to welcome him.

A long groan from above Angelica told her that Laing had discovered just how slick her channel was. “There you are, taking Daddy’s cock so nicely.” He paused at the top of her, stroking soothingly along her back, his rough fingers rubbing against her ass, circling the strained space where his shaft was buried inside her.

“Breathe deep, baby girl,” his voice was dripping with pleasure, licking along her inflamed nerve endings and making the woman shudder, “I’m going to fuck into you now, harder than I’ve done before. I’ve been too soft with you, haven’t I? Perhaps a good, deep fuck from Daddy is what you’ve needed. Shall we find out?”

The smooth wool of his trousers pressed against her bare thighs, his open zipper scraping her wet center as he began to thrust. “Wait,” Angelica tried to remember what she needed to tell him. “Don’t you… aren’t you going to take off your clothes?” The silky movement of Robert’s hips slowed for a moment.

“No.”

And he began again, shoving that thick cock of his back and forth inside her, smooth, and even. One elbow planted down by her bent ones, her bound hands gripping each other. Angelica could feel his breath in her ear, a low hum as he met the top of her each time. It was so strange, she thought, pinned between the silky cotton of the Doctor Laing’s sheets and the abrupt slap of his belt, hitting her hip each time he pushed back inside her. She tried to bite back a moan as his other hand began playing with her breasts, stroking and pinching, pulling on her nipples until they were hard and aching. “Robert, I….” Furrowing her brow, Angelica tried to remember what was so important to share. “Could... would…” Her voice faded off as he began pushing harder, angling his hips to rub enticingly against the front of her channel.

“Could I fuck you harder?” Laing whispered teasingly into her ear, mocking her attempt to reason with him. “Yes, baby, of course.” And Angelica shrieked despite herself as his hips moved harder against hers. The thick veins on the surface of his cock began pressing against the clenching walls of her cunt, the soft, spongy tip hitting harder against the top of her.
“Oh... god... Robert...” Angelica moaned, resting her forehead against her bound hands.

“You call me Daddy,” he corrected, pinching one nipple sharply enough to make her jump, unintentionally pushing harder against his pelvis. “Now, do you want to come with Daddy? Would you like that, my Angel?”

Angelica bit down hard on her lip, vaguely tasting the bitter, coppery flavor of her own blood. Another moan escaped her as he laid his warm back against her sweaty one, caging her smaller body neatly under his. Robert’s stubbled cheek rested against hers as he bit her earlobe in rebuttal.

“I asked you a question. Do. You. Want. To. Come. With. Daddy?” A hard thrust punctuated each word, the woman arching her back to try to take away some of the intensity of his cock shoving inside her.

"You're- this hurts, Daddy, please- ow!" Angelica's head dropped to the pillow, only to be yanked up by her hair, wrapped in Robert's fist.

"Answer me, my Angel." His voice was cold, remorseless as his hips began slapping harder against her soft bottom. The sterling silver buckle of his belt was slapping harshly against her thigh, but the sting felt good, she was shocked to realize, blending in with the pleasurable ache he was causing in her pelvis. An especially hard thrust made her wail. "Are you ready to come with me?"

Angelica squeezed her eyes shut, trying to push away the feel of him enclosing her-surrounding her so completely. His hard body caged her in, supporting her shaking legs as his forearm went across her abdomen, harshly pulling her up against his thrusts. Her world had narrowed into to a few, intense sensations- the heat and width of him, the sting as Robert's cock passed through her strained entrance, the impatient slap of his body against hers. And as the sensation built and she felt his teeth press against her shoulder, it was the easiest thing in the world to moan, "Oh, god! Yes, please, Daddy, please come in me? I need- please-" Her begging ended in a grateful shriek as she felt him bite into her skin- hard- breaking the surface and drawing blood as his shaft flooded her just as her walls squeezed tightly against him, her body trying to suck his cock inside her, hold it like some delicious secret. Angelica felt Robert's hips shove unsteadily against her a few more times, pumping his cock dry as she moaned and clenched against him.

His voice was darker now, harsher. "You're mine, Angel. You belong to me, now."

Lying pinned underneath all his hard angles, all Angelica could do was moan.
Angelica was dreaming. She knew she was, and braced herself to endure the same loops of the nightmare that she'd fought against over and over again. But it always felt so horribly wrong—like it was the first time she countered these ugly images again as an adult.

"Look, Angel darling. This is your new father!"

"Such a pretty girl... We're going to be good friends."

Frank was a good friend, at least a for a while until her mother lost that suburban sheen as she drifted deeper into her prescription drug cocktail.

"Happy Birthday! My baby girl is 16!"

"I'm 17, Mom..."

"Oh, for god's sake, Carmen! Go take a nap before you fall over!"

Robert woke midway through the dream, leaning up on one elbow to watch his Angel's sweating, miserable face. She was muttering in a low, anxious way.
"Don't get mad Frank... her... mom's anxiety meds... she... they make her forget things..." Laing's big hand hovered over her deeply creased brow, wanting to stroke it smooth again.

Angelica moaned and braced for the next round of the endlessly repeating cycle of the nightmare.

"That's bullshit, Angelica and you know it! How many...what the hell, Carmen! Where did all these pill bottles come from!"

The lovely 1,500 thread count sheets were nearly ripping in his girl's hands, Robert knew, trying to gently pull one hand away to hold it. She was still moaning.

"...you're the only one I can talk to honey, your mother- God, the woman's a mess! I don't know what I would do without you..."

This time Angelica's voice was louder as her arms came up, batting away an invisible grasp. "Fr- wait, Frank stop it! I'll tell mom!" Robert's heart turned to ice. He'll find this Frank and beat him to death.

"Angel your father says you've been rude and disrespectful to him! Do you want to make him mad? Make him leave like you did your real father?"

Tears were sliding down the woman's face now, her full mouth drawn into the expression of someone trying not to cry.

"Mom- how can you not see it? He tried to-"

And then the hellish nightmare ran it's course, that last night when the 17-year-old hit her NOT father in the head with a bottle, leaving the house with a backpack and never coming home again. "You don't touch me! Not ever! You don't..."

And then a cool hand came down on her sweating forehead, a deep, soothing voice broke her from the endless revisit with her past. "Shhh... baby girl. No one will ever hurt you again. I promise to keep you safe, sweetheart. You're safe now. I've got you."

Robert's heart took a sudden leap when Angelica's eyes opened, looking into his with a lucidity not possible after what he'd given her to "rest."

"I am?"

Somehow understanding he was now swimming in the river of her memories, The Doctor Laing gave her a smile of such kindness that he was almost unrecognizable. "Yes, love. You're safe. I've got you..."

"Really?" Her voice was so small, like a child's.

Sighing as he rolled her whole body into the embrace of his long arms, Robert kissed the top of her silver-blonde head. "Yes baby, I'll never let anyone hurt you again." For a brief, uncomfortable moment, Laing realized that the list of those who could hurt her included himself. He shuddered, tightening his arms around her and feeling Angelica tuck her head under his chin, falling asleep with a sigh of relief.

Afternoon... again? Placing a shaking hand to her forehead, Angelica looked out the floor to ceiling windows in Robert's bedroom. The same slanting light- cloudy today but still there- placed her in
some kind of time zone. After over a decade of flying, her body clock had learned to align itself—recognize the time of day wherever she was in the world. "Afternoon..." she whispered, trying to sit up.

"Here, darling. Let me help you." Laing’s beautiful voice was its usual sonorous, soothing tone as his hands went around her back, helping her sit up, placing the pillows behind her. Angelica looked down to see the thick leather shackles were gone from her wrists. And after a cautious examination with her toes, the shackles gone from her ankles as well. Her eyes went up to his knowing gaze. "You were such a good girl for Daddy last night:" he grinned at the flush over Angelica's pale cheeks, "you've earned some freedom. I'm sure you won't disappoint me, will you, little one?"

She was shocked to feel her head nod immediately without even thinking about it. Clearing her throat awkwardly, Angelica answered, "No... um... daddy. I won't disappoint you."

"Good girl..." the back of his hand ran tenderly down her cheek as Laing smiled fondly. "Let's have some lunch."

As it turned out, "lunch" involved Angelica sitting passively as Robert hand-fed her, as she clenched her fists under the sheets. It was clear the bastard was enjoying it, she thought resentfully, watching him smile at her fondly as he wiped her mouth. The woman endured it as long as she could before pulling away with a tight smile. "Thank you!" She gritted out, "I'm full."

Next was the bathtub ordeal, where Laing's lean body slipped in behind hers, carefully stroking a fragrant soap over every inch of her before groaning and lifting her on to his lap and then on to his cock, enjoying her surprised gasp, then the reluctant moan of having him stretch her so obscenely. She could feel his warm lips sliding over her back and neck, pausing at the bite mark he'd left last night, then kissing it gently. Angelica's head was lolling backward against Robert's chest as his hands on her hips moved her up and down on his cock. "Beautiful..." he groaned, "your soft ass slamming down on me, the way..." Laing's dark narrative drifted off as his thumbs slid down, holding her open as he watched his glistening shaft spear in and out of her. Rising Angelica out of the water by lifting his hips, he put her elbows on the bath’s edge, helping her balance as he brought her to her knees, thumbs still spreading her lips wide as he enjoyed the sight of himself inside her. She gasped andocluted at the porcelain edge as his thrusts became stronger, pressing her breasts against the chilly edge. “I’ve never seen anything more erotic than this,” Robert eventually panted, slamming in and out of her, “that sweet, strained pussy of yours holding on to me-” Groaning, he arched his back and shoved his cock higher than Angelica knew a man could go inside her, fingers sliding over her clit to bracket it and tug. Listening to her little moan as he yanked her into another orgasm, Laing chuckled breathlessly. He always seemed to take great satisfaction in filling her, playing with the lips of her pussy and watching their fluids slip from her channel, Pulling out, he finished on the small of her back, which was confusing. Feeling him rub the head of his cock- still hard- on his spendings, Angelica could feel him coat himself, then pushing back inside her.

“Oh, god-” she moaned, “please, Daddy, I can’t come again, it’s too-”

“Yes you can,” he murmured persuasively, licking a stripe up the tight line of the tendon in her neck. He’d linked one arm across her hips to keep her from knocking painfully into the side of the tub, but even post-orgasm, Angelica was so sore that the thought of coming again sounded more like a threat. “I’m tender,” she attempted, “really- OH!”

A particularly deep thrust was accompanied by a somewhat unsympathetic chuckle from the man inside her. “I’ve fucked you raw, sweetheart?” Laing enjoyed her furious growl, smoothing his strokes to be less aggressive. “I can make you feel better,” he soothed her, “come with me one more time...”
Angelica groaned, shaking her head but he pulled her hips higher, arching her back and angling his shaft against the front of her channel, pressing harder. One hand toyed with her nipples while the thumb of the other pressed down at the top of the cleft of her buttocks. As the sharp digit stroked along her tender spot, the woman was shocked to feel the heat returning inside her, numbing the soreness as her nerves started striking like match-tips against wood. “What are you doing to me?” She gasped, “I don’t understand how…” Simply giving up because there was nothing to say, really, Angelica braced herself as another orgasm roaring through her channel, circling and sparking through her clit and cycling back to the drive and weight of his cock, finally swelling to finish again inside her. She was rigid, but she couldn’t seem to unlock any of her muscles, all spasmed tight as the last thrust of his sharp hipbones against her ass pushed his orgasm through her.

After tenderly drying her and soothing her inflamed skin with lotion, Robert patted Angelica’s bottom and put her back in bed. “Why don’t you rest for a moment, darling? I have some work to finish before we head to Royal’s party.” Green eyes wide in alarm, she clutched the sheet to her breasts, watching him put on a fresh suit.

“We’re... going out?” She finally managed, not sure whether to be thrilled at the potential for freedom or horrified that it would be spent in the company of those she despised the most.

Robert smiled at her, but it wasn't pleasant. "Oh, yes, babygirl. Everyone's so excited to see you again. You never did attend any more gatherings here at the High Rise after I offended you at that first party, did you?" He chuckled humorlessly, "I was gauche," he admitted, "you were simply so beautiful that I wasn't thinking properly. You do seem to have that effect on many men- even some women here, I'd imagine." From the white-knuckled grip she had on his sheet and her wide eyes, the doctor could tell she didn't find his confession comforting. Not in the least.

He seemed to lose interest then, and Angelica watched as he distractedly left the room. Pushing the flow of silver hair away from her face, she stood- a little unsteadily- and tried to follow. Her sudden lethargy made the woman furiously realize he’d likely drugged her again with lunch. "Robert?" she called, wrapping the sheet around her, "I can't open the closet door, I need to get dressed..."

Wandering out into the main room, she found him leaning against the massive dining table, examining four neat squares of blue painted on the wall opposite the kitchen.

"What one do you prefer?" Laing asked, ignoring her query.

"Which? Oh..." the surreal nature of such a domestic question from her beautiful captor sent Angelica off guard a little. "They... well, they all seem a little too bright for your style."

His cobalt eyes darted from the paint squares to her face, then he nodded. "You're right, of course." Giving her a kiss, he moved to pass her when Angelica grasped his suit jacket. "Rob- Daddy, the closet? Can I get some clothes?"

Kissing one cheekbone, he smiled down at her. "You haven't earned them, sweetheart." Enjoying the look of fury spreading across her face, Laing walked over to his laptop, clicking the keyboard and ignoring her again. Angelica stood for a moment, shifting from one foot to another. Her clouded brain couldn't offer up the correct sharp retort that would convince this horrible man to give her access to her own clothing. Clutching the edge of the sheet and wrapping it over one shoulder like a makeshift toga, she began wandering the room, aimlessly exploring as the silence of the flat was broken by his fingers tapping on the keys of his computer.

Spotting a door she'd not seen before, the woman irritably rubbed her stinging eyes and tried the handle. To her surprise, it opened and she slipped through. Unlike the rest of Robert's rigidly ordered
domain, the room was stacked ceiling high in some places with moving boxes, a few open and items drifting out. A couple of books stacked on one. "Edgar Allen Poe," Angelica mused, putting them down again. A bright red sweater peeked from another box- a woman's sweater- she noted. And pinned against the far wall was a little photograph. Leaning so close that her nose nearly touched the tattered image, she found it was a grainy image of a woman- smiling with an expression very much like Laing's- had he'd been the sort to ever really smile in a genuine way.

"What are you doing in here."

Angelica shrieked a little as she whirled. "I'm sorry- it- the door was open-" she tried to explain as the tall body of the man who'd just ravished her raw drew closer. He was looking over her shoulder at the photo tacked to the expensive paint finish. "Who is she?" Angelica finally asked, "A relative?"

Laing was expressionless as he looked down at her. "My sister. These are her things."

"Oh." Angelica hitched up the edge of the sheet again. "So... she stays with you sometimes?"

He put one hand on the box next to him. "No. She’s... dead. She was diagnosed with breast cancer at 32. It was a very virulent strain. By the time they’d found it, she had only a few weeks to live."

“I’m so sorry,” Angelica said sincerely. “That must have been so hard for you as her brother and a healer- a physician. Are your parents nearby?”

His eyes were that sudden, frigid shade of blue when they dropped to hers again. Roughly grasping her upper arm, Laing escorted her from the room, shutting and locking the door. “They’re both dead,” he said finally. “Go into the bedroom and lie down. You’re going to need your rest.”

Whatever hellish concoction The Doctor Laing had drugged her with continued to make Angelica's sharp mind slow, her limbs clumsy as the afternoon darkened into night. The noise from the hallway grew exponentially as if the High Rise residents had all turned nocturnal, coming out to play. Or to hunt. He seemed to ignore the violent thuds and crashes from outside his door, the occasional laughs, or screaming as he applied some makeup skillfully to her still face, smiling at the red marks his heavily stubbled cheeks had made on the pale skin of her breasts, even brushing her hair and pinning some up in pretty curls. "I used to... I would help my sister do her hair towards the end," he volunteered suddenly. "She never lost her beautiful curls, even with all the radiation." Watching him, Angelica gave him a small smile.

"She was lucky to have you," she said. "I always wished I'd had a brother."

Zipping up her black dress, Robert leaned in to kiss the sore spot on Angelica's shoulder as her head darted to the door at the sound of hammering and calls to "Come out and play, you fucker! Come play, and-" There was another thud, and she looked at his image behind her in the mirror.

"It's nothing, darling." He soothed. "Just some... kids having fun."

Even in her drugged state, the woman's jaw dropped at the sheer ridiculousness of his statement. "Kids?"

Watching her flinch at another scream, Laing leaned in to kiss her forehead. "I'll keep you safe. Just as I promised." Angelica's dream rushed back into her memory in all it's horrid, technicolor glory and she flushed. Didn't she hear him say those things to her before? Was that part of the dream, or was this? She sighed and swayed a little, tired of being tired.
Despite the desperation of the last week (or had it been two?) to get out of her elegant prison, Angelica shrank back slightly as Robert undid all the many locks and bolts on his sturdy front door. (He'd obviously sprung for the steel-lined model, she thought hazily, the flight attendants thought the extra expense was silly.) Breath coming a little faster, she felt his hand on her chin, lifting it to make her look at him. "No matter what you see," he warned coldly, "just keep hold of my hand and keep moving. Don't worry, I'll kill the first man who tries to touch you." With that deeply unhelpful instruction, Laing opened the door and Angelica saw for the first time the utter destruction of the 25th Floor.
Chapter Summary

In which Robert and Angelica attend a party in Royal's penthouse. Which turns out just as well as you probably expect. Also, bra decor, babies and the new, horrifying "laws" of the High Rise.

Chapter Notes

Trigger warning for drug use, orgies-not the attractive kind- (if such an orgy exists) oh, and pregnancy kink.

Nothing Robert could have told her, nothing Angelica's fertile imagination could have conjured would have prepared the woman for what she saw when Laing's steel-lined door opened.

The first thing she focused on was the sagging, splintered door and open entryway to her flat. It was clear instantly that anything of value or meaning was ripped from the home she'd tried to create with her five roommates. She could see dishes and food smashed across the floor, and someone's collection of bras was decorating their living room. Angelica's balance on her high heels faltered, and Robert's arm quickly slipped behind her back, supporting her.

"Where are my... where are the other girls?"

"All safe," Laing promised her, leading Angelica away from her violated home after locking all the
bolts and chains on his door. "Three are up in Royal's penthouse, two out on flights and I'm assuming cared for by the airline."

She was trying to pay attention, but her wide eyes swiveled between the torn-out wiring in the ceiling and the graffiti, gouges and excrement defacing the formerly pristine hallway. There were stinking piles of garbage stacked against the walls, bags open and spraying their contents across the floor. She could see near the end of the hallway where two teens in only their underwear were gleefully smashing holes in the walls with golf clubs. "Who... did this?" Angelica asked in a whisper.

Laing, busy with fitting a key in the security lock on the dented lift panel, shrugged his elegant shoulders. "Malcontents. Anarchists. Children. Who knows? We are safe within our homes, let them burn off their destructive energies with spray paint if they must." His sure hand escorted Angelica into the chrome interior of the box the moment the doors opened, settling her against a mirrored wall. She jumped as a wild-eyed man slammed himself against the closing doors. "Not going to share her, you selfish bastard?" Robert growled and hit the man in the face, loosening his grip on the door. "She's the property of 25, DOCTOR, you MUST SHARE!"

'I... I take care of myself..." Angelica chanted internally, 'I belong to no one but me.' She was shaking uncontrollably, disgusted by what the lunatic was screaming and horrified that all she could think to do was to cling to Robert.

Dr. Laing.

The man who'd drugged and imprisoned her. But when the tall figure next to her bent his beautiful face down to look into hers with concern, all she could think to do was to slide her arms around his waist and cling to him. "Rob-" She stopped, forcing herself to think carefully against the cotton candy layers blocking her ability to function. "Daddy. What did he mean? About sharing?"

The harsh lights of the chromed lift reflected against Laing's brilliant azure gaze and expensive suit. For the first time, Angelica realized he hadn't shaved and his shirt was no longer a pristine white. "The tenants here in the High Rise have created... zones, darling. Usually by floor. What is shared is what has been stolen or captured. And you are neither." The lift slowed to a stop, and even through the thick metal door, they could hear the drunken shouts and laughter. Turning to her, Robert lifted Angelica's chin so he could stare into her hazy eyes. "You will stay by my side at all times. You will not drink or eat anything that is not given to you by my hand. I will not allow anyone to touch you. Do you understand?"

Her head tilted back to return the stare. Inside, the woman was screaming in frustration and fury. If this gorgeous madman hadn't incapacitated her with drugs, she would have employed all her self-defense skills to beat this man to a pulp and run. Just run and take her chances with the rest of this concrete hell hole to escape. But Angelica knew that her shaky legs and slow movement would allow no such thing. And looking into those clear, mesmerizing eyes, she knew that Robert knew it, too.

Licking her dry lips, Angelica whispered, "Yes, Daddy."

The doors opened and she blinked against the sudden haze of smoke. There was an overwhelming smell of weed, too much perfume and- nose wrinkling- body fluids of all kinds, a nauseating miasma that made Angelica cough as Robert drew her into the massive room. She looked around her, peering through the smoke and trying to spot any of her girls. There was one, her back to them as she bounced vigorously on the cock of a man Angelica didn’t recognize, but the girl- her red bob looked like Tiffen’s. She started towards the couple, only to be pulled back to Robert, hard enough to make her back bounce off his chest.
“What was the first rule I gave you, baby girl?” Laing’s voice was low, spoken into her ear and blocking out the party’s noise.

“To… “ Angelica tried to think. “To… um, I’m sorry, Daddy. I thought I saw Tiffen, I wanted to make sure she was all right.”

His big hands slid up and down her arms, making her shiver before they closed on her shoulders like cuffs. “The girls from your flat are no longer your concern, darling. I know you were a mother hen to them and cared for them beautifully. But now others will watch over them. And I will watch over you.” His mouth moved from her ear to her temple, his breath stirring the little curls there. “Now be a good girl and stay by my side. I will not hesitate to pull you over my lap, yank your panties down and blister your bottom in front of all these people if you do not obey me. Do you understand?”

Robert noticed with some amusement that his angel’s hands were clenched into fists, the furious set to her mouth no doubt meaning she was visualizing driving one of those little fists into his face. But, she forced herself to smile- her professional one, Robert noticed, the one given to an annoying passenger- and looked up at him.

“Yes, Daddy.”

The two words made Laing’s cock stiffen, spoken from those juicy lips of the woman he craved.

Watching her seat herself on the stained couch and pull her skirt over her knees, Robert smiled. His lovely Angelica had no idea how long he’d been observing her. He knew her expressions better than he knew his own- the smile that she gave to children and the elderly couple down the hall. The tight-lipped smile she’d given to men like him and Royal. The professional, ”let’s move this along” smile when people tried lingering to gossip. And the huge, open-mouthed smile that stretched into a grin, laughing in her delight. He’d witnessed it a few times when she was chatting with her flatmates, teasing each other or recalling something amusing. She smiled that way when she was racing through the last of her run, pushing herself fiercely and lengthening the stride of her long legs to finish. And, most deliciously, was the gasping little smile she had when he made her come. Blissful, at peace for a moment and utterly enchanting. The smile that was for him alone.

The one she wore now was the tight-lipped one, lips pursed to avoid giving anything away by her expression. Angelica was rigid, but as he sat beside her and put his arm around her, Robert was shocked to feel her relax slightly into his side. She looked doubtfully at the drink her handed her, and he chuckled. "Only wine, darling."

Angelica nearly choked on her first sip as the drawl of their malevolent host suddenly addressed them. “Laing, my boy. At last, you’ve come out of hiding! Of course, looking at this lovely little thing, who could blame you for keeping her tucked away?”

She stiffened as his black gaze turned to her. She’d disliked the man from the first time they’d met, his eyes so dark brown as to be black- “like a shark’s” she’d thought at the time. She tried to pull her hand back when he bent to kiss it, but the architect’s grip tightened until her knuckles were white, lingering as he placed his greasy mouth on her skin. Looking sideways at Robert, the woman was surprised he’d allowed it, given how adamant he was about not letting anyone touch her.

Royal was still leaning over her, staring into her pale face greedily. "So delightful to have you back with us at last, darling. Though I imagine Laing here has been keeping you... busy." Angelica gazed back at him levelly as the architect laughed mockingly, several other around them joining in.

"Now Royal, you mustn't embarrass my Angelica." Robert was idly swirling the contents of his glass
as he looked around, the surrounding giggles cutting off immediately. "Surely not the mark of a good host."

"Heavens, no," crooned Royal, those shark-like eyes glistening. "We want your Angelica to stay with us forever and ever, don't we?" He enjoyed watching the blood drain from her lovely face, leaving her lips white and tightly compressed. A loud shriek of a female reaching orgasm as she was pounded in both mouth and vagina diverted his attention, and he wandered off, letting Angelica slump a bit in relief.

The couch jostled as someone sat down heavily. "Don't let him bother you," said a matter of fact... Helen? Angelica remembered the woman's name as Helen's sweet face turned to smile at her. in one hand, the woman had a smoldering cigarette and in the other, a rather precarious hold on a newborn.

"That's right," Angelica remembered, "you were pregnant. How old is the baby?"

Waving the cigarette holding hand and spraying ash, Helen giggled. "Oh, just a couple of days. I gave birth right in Royal's bed in there-" she nodded in the direction of a filthy room where several couples appeared to be fucking furiously. "-it was lovely, all the girls helped."

Angelica's eyes widened. "You... had a home birth? Was there a doctor?"

"Mmmm hmmm," Helen nodded while taking a gulp of a drink colored a violent pink. "Dr. Pangbourne was there. Very helpful." The woman winked at Angelica. "Your Dr. Laing being busy at the time!" She burst into a fit of drunken giggles that jostled the infant, who woke up and began to wail. "Bother!" Helen said crossly, "She'll want a change, then. Hold her, would you?" Without waiting for an answer, she plopped the little girl into Angelica's lap and heaved herself off the couch.

Angelica sat frozen, terrified to move and jostle the infant again. She knew next to nothing about babies, she was an only child and never babysat. Robert watched her look of alarm and felt an enormous surge of affection. "Here, darling. It will be easier if you cradle her head in the crook of your elbow- like so- and then you can balance her on your arm. Mind that soft, floppy little head."

"M- Maybe you should hold her," Angelica said hastily, turning to Robert to offer him the child. "I don't have much experience with babies- I- I never hold them."

"You're doing fine," Laing's cold eyes lit with amusement, making them warmer to her, and she stared up in appeal.

"They do start that way, darling." Robert was teasing her a little, she knew, but Angelica still looked up with a distracted smile. "You never wanted one of your own?" He watched as the smile dropped from her face, the carefully expressionless mask sliding back into place.

"There was no time for- family. Babies." Her dark lashes made a fan over her cheekbones, looking down at the baby and refusing to meet his gaze.

Running a hand along her cheek, he soothed, "You would be a wonderful mother." He smiled as she
shook her head. "No, darling. Look at how sweet and maternal you are with the other girls. Your very nature is to take care of others."

The words popped out before Angelica could think. "Was that why you became a surgeon? To take care of others?" Laing’s warm expression cooled, his beautiful eyes turning blank again.

"It was expected of me."

Before she could press for an explanation, the doors to the terrace slammed open, so hard that a few of the panes of glass shattered as the doors hit the wall.

"Your virgin sacrifice!" A voice boomed, and a naked redhead came prancing in, most incongruously, on a white horse. Angelica had heard rumors that Royal's young, spoiled wife insisted on keeping her mount on the roof of the concrete monstrosity, but she’d dismissed it as silly. But there it was, festooned with flowers and carrying a simpering woman that Angelica vaguely recognized as a daytime soap opera actress who lived on the 30th floor. Her eyes went to the big man holding the horse's reins and leading it around the room and Angelica's stomach clenched in horror.

"Is that man..."

Robert leaned in, "Wilder? Yes. Very tame now, as you see."

The man in question was lurching a little, clearly not well-balanced and shuffling his feet. His dull gaze stared straight ahead, even when partygoers began jeering and throwing food and ice cubes at him. His mouth was slack, and it was difficult to tell if he understood what was happening. His bruised and bloodied face showed he had not been retained easily. Despite her cellular-level disgust for men who attempted to force what they wanted from women, Angelica found herself remembering a time Wilder cornered her in the market, exuberantly describing his newest documentary about the class system in England. She wondered what had happened to him, to turn him into a monster and then a dullard. Feeling a little sick, she realized suddenly that the infant she was holding was in fact, his.

The redhead meanwhile, had climbed off the pretty white horse and assumed a similar position on her hands and knees. “So!” She shouted, “Who’s going to come over here and fuck me up the ass!” A cheer went up as men- and a few women- headed over to where the actress held court on all fours, and Angelica shuddered.

“This place…” she moaned, trying not to vomit, still carefully holding the baby sleeping in her arms.

“Don’t look at them, darling.” Robert’s exquisite voice was back, whispering in her ear to cut through the din of screeching laughter, howls and the overly dramatic yelping of the actress currently getting her wish. “None of them are of any consequence.”

“Then why are we here, Robert?” Angelica looked up at him desperately.

He frowned, a little puzzled. “These… are our people, darling. The Upper Strata.”

"But-" her brows furrowed, trying to make her point, "you said they are of no consequence to us."

For the first time, Laing did not look at her with complete confidence in what he was saying. "They..." he paused, still frowning, "they are both."

As if the grunting, sweating mess surrounding the actress was a starter pistol, people around the room began climbing on top of each other, tongues, fingers and cocks thrust into various orifices as
Angelica groaned and turned her head away. She could not even beg Robert to leave- she had no idea where Helen had gone to and she would not leave this tiny creature alone.

Laing’s eyes were lazily canvassing the room, watching groups of two, three or half a dozen all attempt to connect body parts in their drunken frenzy. Glancing down at his angel, he saw her carefully holding the baby, looking down into that little face and refusing to acknowledge what was happening around her. She jumped a little as his warm hand slid into the neckline of her dress, cupping her breast. "I can picture these beautiful globes, filled with milk..." the voice was back again, his sinister, deep, sensuous tone that made her legs shake, the one that promised all kinds of dirty delights. "Full and swollen..." With a groan, she could feel his thumb idly sweeping over the other stiff nipple as he squeezed the breast he was cupping. "You'd put our child to your breast and feed her... I would brush your other nipple and sweep the sweet drops of milk to my mouth."

Angelica was furious to realize her breath was coming faster as his hand smoothed the skin of one tight nipple, and then the other, closing her eyes to block out the depravity around them.

"When you were quite heavy with our son or daughter, I would put you on your knees and enter you from behind, stroking the taut skin of your stomach, fucking into you gently. Not harshly, as we do now. But we would still come together, come hard. With your passionate nature darling-" Laing paused and gave her a kiss, "-you would be quite insatiable with pregnancy hormones, I am certain of it. And it would be my very great pleasure to attend to you." His beautiful, sonorous voice had the intended effect, making all the nauseating moans and slurps, growls and grunts around them disappear, leaving only his hypnotic story whispered in her ear and the sweet weight of the baby in Angelica's arms.
We Should Try That One Again

Chapter Summary

In which Angelica survives the most Unpleasant Party. Ever. Only to discover that her dark and terrifying lover is about to throw a little private fete for the two of them.

Chapter Notes

Trigger warnings for... uh... I'm not sure but some readers think this chapter is quite debauched. Um... triggers for unusual uses for home improvement items?

Oh, and for horrid snobbery.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

It felt like hours as Angelica waited for the nauseating mess in front of her to finish, but finally, the party goers seemed to settle down, too drunk, stoned or exhausted to do anything other than nuzzle each other or pass out.

Robert suddenly stood, straightened his cuffs and smiled blandly at a sweating Royal, lounging on a soiled couch near them. “Thank you, Anthony, the party was... sybarian as always.”

Waving one regal hand, their host murmured, “Of course, dear boy. Though I am disappointed by your lack of participation.” Royal chuckled, eyes still closed as he attempted to sip his drink. “I’d
had hoped to sample your little silver-haired pet, there.”

Had he been even slightly more alert, he would have seen the polar chill sweep over Robert’s expression, jaw tightened in fury. “My Angelica will never be available for ‘sampling.’ By anyone but me.”

The words were snarled, and even the subject of the discussion shivered as she tried to hold the sleeping infant steady.

Royal was just sober enough to realize Laing’s loyalty extended only so far, and that he’d just stepped over it. "Of course, dear boy," he said soothingly, "she's still so new and fresh." He watched gleefully as an expression of disgust rippled across Angelica's features.

"Ah," said Robert abruptly, "there is Helen. Let's return the infant and we're on our way." Angelica gratefully nodded and rose from her uncomfortable perch.

"Before you go, Laing," Royal drawled, "I'll need you to touch up the Beast's meds, he's getting a bit snarly." Shrugging as he stood, the Doctor Laing pulled a slim black case out of his rumpled suit jacket. Putting one arm around Angelica's waist, he steered her around the sweaty, napping party-goers and to Helen, almost dozing on top of a chubby resident from the 29th floor.

Stretching and blinking to focus her bleary eyes, Helen finally smiled, holding out her arms for the baby. "Oh, thanks love. Hope she wasn't too much trouble." Carefully handing the infant back to her mother, Angelica bit back her shock that Helen could be so casual about simply handing off her baby to a relative stranger to participate in the grimy orgy.

"No problem Helen, she's so beautiful," pausing for a moment, Angelica asked, "what's her name?"

A blank expression spread over the other woman's face, turning to mild surprise. "Oh," Helen said, "I hadn't thought." Silver head bent over the baby, Angelica stroked her soft cheek with one finger before turning away. Robert was there to take her arm, walking her through the minefield of naked bodies, drugs, and debris.

Safely back in his flat, Angelica watched as Laing carefully re-locked all the steel bolts on his door. When he turned back to her, there was a strange sheen in his eyes. "Did you enjoy the party, Pet?"

"No!" She blurted without thinking. Seeing his expression turn cold, the woman tried to think of something to soften her disgust, but her usually nimble mind was not up to the task. "I just... Daddy..." Angelica backed up as he strolled over to her, taking off his stained suit jacket and rolling up the sleeves of his shirt.

Even though his prowl towards her was definitely predatory, Robert's voice was calm as he spoke. "Why, darling?"

Looking away from those intent eyes, Angelica mumbled, "It's different than... us." She surprised herself with the answer. 'Where's the disgust?' She iritably questioned herself, 'the fury for dragging me into that cesspit?'

For Laing, however, it was definitely the correct answer, as an approving smile curved his thin lips. "That's true. I would not expose your lovely body for anyone else." One big hand began sliding down the silk covering her breasts. "You're too beautiful, too... clean for them."

Swaying just slightly under his caressing fingers, Angelica managed to gather her thoughts. "Then
why did we have to go to that horrible-" she shuddered, remembering the noise and smell of several
dozen unwashed bodies, "-that party? That orgy?" She shook her head sadly, remembering the tiny
baby without a name. "That poor baby..." Now, her captor was frowning, the chill turning his eyes
polar blue, a color Angelica knew would not bode well for her.

"We are the upper strata!" Laing suddenly thundered, making her jump, her back pressed against the
wall. "These are our people- the right people! We do not associate with trash!"

Angelica's jaw dropped. "Those are the right people? Robert- Daddy- they're insane! Everyone in
this building is insane! Why can't you see it?" He was advancing on her, face pale with fury. "Do
normal, upper-class people wallow in their own filth? Let three or four men have them at a time? Do
well-educated men fall into their own vomit as they pass out?" She was moving now, trying to angle
away from her tall captor, who leaning over her and blocking out the light. She had to make him see
what was happening before they all died here in this concrete hell. "The- the other surgeons in your
practice- would they do these things? They're part of your superior class, surely?"

One broad hand slammed on one side of Angelica's head, then the other landed opposite, caging her
in as Laing glared down at her. "How can you be so STUPID!" He was shouting into her face, and
she was shaking, but locked her knees and stared back. "You would rather associate with scum? The
unwashed, uneducated dullards who drink cheap beer and live at the corner pub? The scum of
society who live in government subsidized housing who never aspire to anything more than a weekly
wage and a government to blame for their failure? Cheating, lying bitches who betray everything
you-" The man suddenly leaned back, hands sliding down the wall slowly to rest on her shoulders.

"Ah, darling." A beautiful smile spread over his mobile lips, Robert's gaze turning tender as he
smoothed a loose strand of hair back into the arrangement he'd created from her long hair earlier.
Patting the lock of hair to make it perfect, he gave a deep, indulgent chuckle. "Of course. You're an
American."

Angelica blinked. "Yes?"

He kissed one cheek and then the other, leaning in closer, the heat rising off him to soothe over her
chilled and clammy skin. "You were raised with these absurd notions of a classless society- of
equality..." Robert drew the word out as if it was the most ridiculous thing he'd ever heard. He began
stroking her cheek, smiling down in his most condescending The Doctor Laing way. "You're so
very young and idealistic, you Americans. Thinking there is no difference between the classes, but
you will learn. And Daddy is here to help you, darling."

It had been hours since her terrifying Daddy had drugged her, so Angelica's mind was working more
coherently. Staring up at the beautiful, blank expression on her unwilling lover's face, all she could
think was, 'What the fuck has been done to you?'

Their staring match was interrupted by another vicious hammering on the front door, and Robert's
arms went around her protectively as a pair of male voices began howling like dogs. "She belongs to
the 25th, Laing! You must share!" Briskly, the tall doctor released her and strode to the door,
sweeping up a golf club on the way as he undid his locks. With swing from one muscled arm, the
ugly thud! of metal hitting body reverberated through the flat and Angelica could hear the one-two
thud of bodies hitting the floor like sacks of wet cement. He looked back to see his sweet pet
standing exactly where he'd left her, arms wrapped protectively around her middle and staring at him
with those lovely, wide crystal blue eyes- sometimes a silvery sheen, like her hair, sometimes a blue
like the clearest, cleanest water from some untapped source. He doubted she knew how much those
eyes gave away to him, even after years of learning how to control herself. It was the thing that first
drew him from interest into obsession, the thought of that crystalline gaze staring up at him as he
fucked into her. Forcing a smile, Robert lifted one limp hand and kissed it. "Come, love. Let's give you a bath and wash away the smell of Royal's party. And then..." here, he leaned forward to whisper in her ear, "I'll rub myself all over you and get you dirty again." His sweet angel could deny it all she liked, at those words from him she shuddered in pleasure, giving a little moan he wasn't certain she knew she'd uttered.

Surprisingly, he did not join her in the tub, only drawing her bath and filling it with bubbles that smelled like jasmine. Robert tenderly undressed Angelica from her smelly silk dress and piled her silver hair on top of her head, assisting her still shaky limbs into the big marble tub.

"Here, love. Take this bottle of water," Robert put it down on the side of the tub, "you're dehydrated and I want to see this all finished when I come back to dry you off."

Nodding obediently, relieved that his rage seemed to be gone, Angelica promised, "Yes, Daddy." The answering curve on those beautiful lips made her heave a sigh of relief. Slowly soaping herself, thoroughly washing her hair to get the smell of sex and debauchery out, the woman tried to go through the curious exchange with her beautiful Daddy/captor/protector. This obsession with the "upper class," she pondered, something he clung to as if it would save him, keep him somehow protected from the real world. Shuddering, Angelica thought that she’d prefer the mindless destruction of the lower levels to the filth and hedonism of the floors above. Though, the main question still lingered: knowing what she knew now, could she get out of this monstrous edifice of death without Robert’s help?

Her troubled thoughts were disturbed as the man himself returned. “Darling,” he soothed, “you’ve been an age. I should have fetched you sooner, but I think I’ve hit on the perfect shade, you must come to see!”

Angelica gazed up at the rapturous Laing, eyeing the splashes of blue paint in different hues drying on his shirt, his skin, even in his usually perfectly coiffed hair. “Oh?” She forced her lips in the shape of a smile, even as her arms circled her knees protectively. Heart sinking, she watched her terrifying lover’s gaze drop lower to her pale breasts, along the long line of her torso and the shadowed area of her pelvis.

“Hmmmm… yes, darling,” Robert sighed happily, “I have such plans for you.” Taking her hand in his, he led her into the vast living area, the kitchen divided by a gleaming expanse of the granite countertop. Suddenly, she felt his hands slide around her waist and lift her easily on to the chilly surface. “Look to your right, little girl,” he urged, kissing her mouth and then guiding her chin to look at the sloppily painted cooking area, drenched in a vacuous pale blue, dripping over the expensive Viking stainless steel appliances and the beautifully carved oak flooring.

This was the moment that sent an icy shard of horror through Angelica’s heart. Robert was rigidly orderly, demandingly spotless and possessed with exquisite good taste. The utter breakdown of three key elements of his essential core told her he was breaking loose of the moorings that held him to sanity. "I... it's... do you love it, Daddy?" She desperately attempted to sound calm, not wanting to stir him up when the manic gleam in those cerulean eyes told her it was not a line to be crossed.

"I do," the cold Doctor Laing smiled kindly, leaning down to give her a luxurious kiss, teasing the tip of his tongue delicately along her plump lips. "I've been looking for just the right shade... yes, this is the one. It speaks to me." His hand went between her breasts, pushing Angelica back until she was resting on the stone surface of the countertop. "It's a color," he said conversationally, "that really looks exquisite on any surface- allow me to show you." To start, only one of his long, elegant fingers dipped into a dripping, open can of paint, lifting out to slide a straight line of blue across her belly.

He smiled to watch her strong stomach muscles contract as if trying to recede from the latex color
making its way through the lines of her skin and ribs. He loved his sweet pet's body- not a cadaverous thinness, but toned muscle- his surgeon's eye rejoicing in the clean, beautiful lines of her musculature and knowing her effort to stay strong- to protect herself. Humming idly, Laing chuckled. Not that she'd need to do that now. He was here to care for her, to keep his angel from harm, from greedy hands trying to touch her and soil her clean, sweet skin.

"Ah, my Angel," Robert purred with pleasure, "look how beautiful you are. This must be what you look like from inside."

Angelica could just make out the slightly blurry reflection of herself in the huge steel range hood in front of her. Like a bizarre tribal design, Robert had outlined the lines of the body she'd worked so hard for. Lean biceps, a strong back, a toned belly from a thousand sit-ups. Her brow furrowed in confusion. She was shocked to feel comfort from what this body painting did for her- helping Angelica to re-arm her in her strength. But what did her demented Doctor Laing see?

"Such power in this body," Robert complimented, his snowy white shirt now defaced with a hundred splashes. "My brave girl. It will all make sense to you soon, Angel. I promise you." His entire left hand slipped into the paint bucket and came out dripping, sending convulsions into her southern region- which was apparently connected to the cold Doctor Laing, because he gave an arousing moan as well. Painting delicately along her swelling nether lips, along her thighs, idly circling her smooth mound, the man leaned close to Angelica’s ear, whispering words of pleasure, filth, and promises so profane that she only understood enough of them to be wildly aroused and equally terrified. It was when he put her hand into the bucket of paint that the woman began to feel the same, strange arousal from running her hands over Robert's body.

"Beautiful..." Angelica sighed, running her right hand up the planes of his abdomen as her left dipped back into the bucket, eager to paint along the definition of his sculpted arms. The doctor was by nature lean, so these thick bands of muscle were created and maintained by hard work.

"Drink this." A blue-tinged hand holding a glass of wine lifted it to her lips, and Angelica drank without a thought, still engrossed with painting along the hollow on the side of his buttock, then both hands smoothing over the taut globes of his ass. "Another sip, darling." Obediently opening her mouth, Angelica finally looked up into his blazing eyes. She shuddered a little, knowing what that look meant for her. But Angelica's hands kept moving as her gaze stayed on his, smoothing over his long thighs, dipping back into the can for the paint to cup his ass again. While Robert unbuttoned and unzipped for her, he never took his shirt, tie and dress pants off. At the moment, she couldn't be bothered to care as long as her fingers could continue to stroke along his skin.

"One more sip."

As Angelica was swallowing the demanded gulp of wine, it occurred to her that the palms of her hands were almost unbearably sensitive- that every bump of Robert's ribs. the ripple of muscle as he moved for her- resonated through her entire nervous system. Without thinking, her long legs went around his hips and she almost shuddered with the pleasure of it. Her heels brushed against his taut ass feeling it flex as he shifted position. Running the tips of her fingers along his broad shoulders and over the swell of his deltoids, Angelica moaned a little, realizing he'd managed to dose her with something. Again. The bastard. She knew she would be furious with herself in the morning, but right at that moment, her left hand went to the bucket of paint to scoop a puddle that she slid along the broad length of his cock, enjoying the surprised hiss of Robert's breath.

"My sweet Angel," he purred, approval radiating from every word, "how very naughty of you, wasting paint like this." She smiled a little and hummed, eyes closed as the second dollop of paint in her other hand began cupping and stroking his scrotum.
"These are so heavy." Angelica suddenly volunteered, shocked to find her mouth open and her thoughts tumbling out. "I can feel them against me when you press inside me as tight as you can when you're coming." The items of discussion drew up slightly against his pelvis as Robert groaned. "You push like..." she sighed, eyes still closed and feeling like she could "see" everything with the travel of her palm over his painfully stiffened cock. "...like... you want to shove all of you inside me. Your balls slip and slide across my bottom." 'What are you doing?' Angelica screamed internally, but her treacherous mouth continued. "it scared me at first, you know... I feel you. All the way to my belly button and..." She yawned, luxuriously stretching her legs, then her arms and enjoying the pull of the muscle there. An impatient thrust of Laing's hips brought her back into the moment, and Angelica hummed as she enjoyed the slick slide of the paint against the heat and weight of his shaft. Opening her eyes, she gasped. "Beautiful..." Really, she had to admit, even with the somewhat still sane portion of her brain, that everything about this man was beautiful. She'd never rhapsodized about a lover's equipment before, but the doctor's was something to praise. Idly stroking the silky tip of his cock over the painfully sensitive center of her palm, Angelica sighed blissfully. "How can something so hard feel so silky?" She arched up to put her mouth against his, and Laing helped her by cradling the back of her head. Running her tongue along his thin lips, she hummed her approval, the vibration transfer from her to him, sparking nerve endings like electricity. Pushing his lips open, she inquisitively stroked along Robert's even teeth, along his mouth and out again, giggling when his tongue tried to chase hers.

"My darling," he managed to groan, "I am moments away from embarrassing myself. The feel of you and those words from your sweet, ladylike lips- Jesus! This is unspeakably good."

Angelica was lost a bit, hearing his beautiful, sonorous tone, the deep notes of his growl when his arousal was too much without really knowing what her dark lover said. Her skin was on fire- the tips of her breasts brushing against the light dusting of hair on his chest. Her pussy was helplessly producing more slick, trying to be available for what should have been an invasion by his cock right now. The cold of the stone under her- the almost feverish heat of the man above her- she was nearly ready to come from nothing more.

"You should, um… you should put yourself inside me, Daddy," Angelica finally managed, astonished at the words coming out of her mouth. "I want you to fill me. Fill me full so I never think about the 32nd floor again. Don’t leave any room for anything but you."

It was a miracle, the doctor thought, breathing like he’d run a 5K, that he didn’t spurt before pushing the thick, spongy tip of his cock into his lovely girl’s channel. Enjoying the slight ‘pop!’ as he passed through, Robert held her cerulean-splashed face in his viridian-stained hands. “Come now, my beautiful Angelica. Come and give the smile meant only for me.”

With the last grip of coherence, Angelica thought, ‘God, I hope this paint is water-based and not oil…’

As it turned out, she was correct. The periwinkle stain covering them both was an innocuous water-based acrylic, but Robert spent a very long, pleasurable time in the shower making sure it was all rinsed from inside her. Still so shaky from the luxurious four orgasms he’d demanded before leaving her alone, Angelica barely noticed that Laing stayed in his suit, simply scrubbing the paint off himself. When his clothes dried enough to join her in bed, he smiled as she curled into him.

“Daddy?”
“Hmmm?”

“What did you give me?” Angelica yawned hugely, trying to get the question out as Laing chuckled.

“Ecstasy, little one.”

“Oh…” tucking her head under his chin, she was nearly asleep when she whispered, “we should try that one again.”

Chapter End Notes

Sooooo... Is our girl falling into the drug-laced weirdness of the High-Rise? Did the E just help her loosen the hell up? We can all admit Angelica is wound tighter than a Hong Kong wristwatch, even before the fall of the High-Rise. You may notice I haven't actually tried E myself if there are flaws here, but I spoke with a couple of more adventurous friends who swear by it. Hopefully I"m not too far off base.
Angelica woke that afternoon with the sounds of cheering and glass shattering from above them. She could tell that Robert came awake at the same moment as his body stiffened, arms tightening protectively around her. A sudden swell of despair flooded her, and the woman blinked back tears, still lying against the beautifully defined chest of her demented daddy. 'Another day in paradise,' she thought bleakly.

"Idiots," growled Laing as he pulled himself from her and stood. Angelica- now clear from the Ecstasy- was startled to see he was still wearing the tattered dress shirt, trousers and tie from the day before. When he looked back down at her, still cuddled in the sheets, his polar eyes warmed and Robert smiled. "Good morning... or whatever time it is. How do you feel, darling?"
Shrugging shyly, she sat up, running a hand through her wildly disordered hair. "Good morning, uh, Daddy. I'm all right. What's going on, do you think?"

The composed Dr. Laing actually rolled his eyes. "Some idiot's idea of a party, of course. Destroying yet another apartment and leaving the High Rise with one less habitable space. I'm surprised Royal allows it."

Watching him absently straighten his tie in the mirror, Angelica bit back her next round of questions. How did Royal play such a powerful role in her captor's life? Robert was not the sort of man to defer to anyone. Why did he not notice that he'd worn this suit through three rounds of sex, a frenzied paint job and nearly 36 hours? That he hadn't shaved for some time and his elegant stubble was turning into a ragged beard? Finally, she settled for, "How do you feel today, Daddy?"

His cerulean eyes glanced back at her from the mirror. "I'm well, darling." As he turned, she cringed a little to see that intent expression again. While she'd never seen past Laing's beautiful, inscrutable shell while she'd lived across the hall, the short and extremely intense period of her captivity gave Angelica many opportunities to learn how to gauge his mood. It was a skill honed from childhood, after all- reading his expression and body language, monitoring his tone of voice- keeping Robert from exploding into another rage was crucial. Not just because she feared his temper and what he might do- but that like being a child again, he was all she had. The realization shook the woman to the core, and Angelica sank to the bed again.

His warm hand was under her chin, and Robert raised it to look at her. "What just happened?" He knew she would lie to him, pretend nothing was wrong. But Laing could see the tears glittering in those pale eyes. While he'd never seen her cry before taking her, her tears fascinated him. His angel would never weep unless she felt completely helpless. Or hopeless.

"I'm okay..." her gaze turned from him, as Robert expected. "Maybe I'm... I think I'm hungry. That's all."

_Liar._ Laing wanted to spank her- just throw his bad little girl over his lap and slap her bare ass until she screamed and cried and gave in, letting him into all of her secrets. Carefully trailing the calloused tip of one finger over her wet eyelashes, he chose to simply nod. "Come then, my angel. Let me feed you."

Bringing her out on the deck again, Robert set the table, settling her comfortably in a padded deck chair and putting her in the weak sunshine. "You're pale," he observed, enjoying how she squirmed under his scrutiny. "Perhaps some fresh air will help you."

Remembering how their last attempt at eating on this balcony had ended, Angelica doubted it, but she forced a smile as Laing dropped a kiss on her forehead and went back inside to fetch the food. Looking apprehensively at the empty terraces on either side of his flat, she tried to guess how many dwellings were still occupied on this floor. Remembering how quickly her home had been overrun, she doubted many were still intact. As a sudden explosion from within the city made her gasp, Angelica stood, leaning over the balcony’s edge to try to get a better look at the plume of smoke rising by the Thames. She could see signs of a fire- or some damage to the bigger buildings by the Houses of Parliament. But after the initial blast, downtown London was still again. Rubbing her forehead, Angelica tried to think. It was... Thursday, correct? London should be bustling with taxis and people and horns honking... Why was it so quiet?

"Aaaah!!"
The sudden grip of hands around her waist nearly made the woman topple over the edge of the deck. Staring directly down 25 stories to the crushed rubble and broken glass spraying across the concrete, Angelica frantically tried to pull free.

"What are you *doing*?" Thundered Robert, furious beyond all reason with his precious girl. Had he made a mistake, trusting her alone out here? Was Angelica more desperate than he knew? Her wide, terrified eyes told him differently.

"I'm- I'm really sorry, Daddy!" Angelica managed to gasp. "I just heard an explosion from the city-downtown? I was just looking," she finished lamely, still unnerved by his fury. Suddenly his long arms went around her, holding her tightly against his chest. She could feel Robert's chest heave, feel his head dip down into her neck.

"The way you were leaning over the rail- you must never endanger yourself so, do you hear me?"

Robert leaned back, grabbing her upper arms tightly. "You could have fallen, Angelica!"

Staring up into his furious face, she realized there was an edge of fear there, too. Her terrifying daddy was afraid she would hurt herself? Maybe... try to end it all? Angelica's rapid breathing slowed as she realized she would never find her way over the edge of the High Rise. Not unless there was no other option left to her. "I didn't mean to scare you, I'm truly sorry." Slowly, Angelica wound her arms around his neck, waiting to see if the stiff and furious man before her would pull away. "The explosion made me... I just wanted to see what was happening, Daddy. I didn't mean to upset you."

Putting her chin between his fingers, Laing jerked her face up to look at his. "I thought- You mustn't be careless, darling. If you should get injured- even as a surgeon- here at the High Rise, I have so little..." Sighing, he kissed her mouth. "It would be difficult to save you." His tongue angrily pushed through her lips, trying to own her kiss. "I can't- I must keep you safe, little one. Do you understand?"

Letting him pull her abruptly into a tighter embrace, Angelica merely laid her silver head on his shoulder, waiting for his grasp on her to loosen. She suddenly thought of the picture of Robert and his sister, both so happy. Was he trying to save her because he couldn't save the person dearest to him? "I didn't mean to scare you, Daddy," Angelica was gentle as she pulled back. "Let's have breakfast, all right?"

Her moment at the railing was enough to make Laing even more protective, and Angelica learned this as she was forced to sit on his lap, being hand-fed her breakfast before he would let her up again. Gaze intent, Robert placed small bites of crisp, buttered toast between her lips, wiping them with a linen napkin, then reaching for a forkful of eggs. Despite the ominous surges in power and the occasional blackouts, the fridge, stove, and lights in 2505 stayed steadily on, leading Angelica to suspect there was a "special" power grid for the "right people." That, and Robert still seeming to have access to fresh food and the variety of drugs he'd subjected her to made her wonder how her beautiful captor was receiving all his supplies. Despite her discomfort of being fed and mouth wiped like a child, the woman allowed it, sitting passively and smiling tentatively as he solicitously attended to her meal.

"Daddy has some work," he finally said, picking up the remains of their afternoon breakfast. "Can you entertain yourself like a good girl for an hour or two?"

Watching him carefully, Angelica thought he might be slightly more "himself," even if he was still wearing his filthy clothes. "Of course, Daddy. Do you..." she took a deep breath, hoping not to set him off. "Do you have some surgeries scheduled this week? You haven't been to the medical center for..." Angelica rubbed her forehead, how long had she been here, locked in with Robert? "...for at
least two weeks?"

Laing’s head turned from where he was pulling out his laptop. He stared, bemused at his darling. "Why would we ever leave the High Rise?"

Angelica's breath left her in a rush as if he'd just punched her in the stomach. "Don't you ever want to go anywhere else, Daddy? Don't you worry about your patients? Don't you miss running or driving your Jaguar or..."

He just stood there, laptop forgotten in his big hand as he stared at her. Angelica stood frozen, not daring to move. Laing's usually bland expression was gone, his beautiful face mobile and working through a gamut of emotion- confusion, uncertainty, then irritation and finally that expression of authoritative fondness that scared her most of all. The one that told her Laing was about to impose his will on her again. He chuckled, walking over to look down at her apprehensive face as he traced her cheek with his fingers. "Everything we need is here, my precious girl. We're home."

"Before here, before the High Rise, where was home?" Angelica was on thin ice here, she could feel it in the sudden chill radiating off his tall body, looming over her. But she had to see if she could break through his mania, see if there was any of the man, the healer still inside there.

His index finger continued to trace her cheek as Robert frowned at her. "Home? There's a cottage... It belonged to my parents but I kept it after they died."

Angelica smiled hopefully. "A vacation cottage? Where is it?"

"Devon," he answered absently, azure gaze focused on the smooth skin of her throat as his fingers wandered there. "Sandbridge, to be precise. We used to summer there, my sister and I."

"It sounds beautiful," Angelica was hopeful, recklessly hopeful. He was talking about something other than the High Rise, other than life here! If she could just make him remember the real world. "How long has it been since you've vacationed there?"

"Oh, I haven't been there since-" Laing's hand suddenly tightened on her throat. When his eyes raised to hers, they were polar blue again. "You're wasting my time, little girl." His long fingers loosened, then tightened again against her fluttering pulse. "Go play and keep out of Daddy's way. I have work to do."

Breathing in deeply as his hand slid from her neck, Angelica nodded, pasting a smile on her reddened face. "Of course, Daddy. Sorry."

Blinking back frustrated tears, the woman marched back into the master bedroom, fighting with herself to not scream or throw anything. Even disheveled Dr. Laing would be outraged by such behavior. She was still in the thin silk robe he'd placed on shoulders before breakfast, so Angelica tried the closet door again. Still locked. Tapping her fingers angrily on the wood, she looked around the room. She hated going without underwear! Finally, she marched over to his bureau and pulled out a t-shirt, soft from too many washings and a pair of boxer briefs, which turned out to fit her as comfortably as her running shorts. Brushing her hair and piling it up in a sloppy knot on the top of her head, Angelica pondered what to do. There was a low-grade fuzziness simmering in her thought process, telling her Laing had managed to dose her with something- likely as he hand-fed her the meal. Still, she wasn't completely incapacitated, and she could force herself to concentrate. Walking to the guest bedroom door, she looked over to see Robert's dark head bent over his monitor, Angelica slipped inside silently. Walking through the piles of boxes again, she felt a curious sadness.
The only person her captor seemed to love was his sister, the last of her held in these containers. Looking at the picture of the two siblings, Angelica sighed. Robert was wearing the only true, genuine smile she’d ever seen on his face, body relaxed and angled towards his shorter sister. Same eyes and the way the girl had an arm around her brother’s waist showed her love for him. Pulling open the lid on the box containing her books, Angelica lifted a few out, looking at the titles. His mysterious sister had similar taste in reading material as she did—lots of classics, some excellent mysteries, and even a few horror novels. Angelica shuddered and put those back in the box. She was already living in a horror story of her own. Straightening the books, she pushed a couple of others aside to make room for the stack and found a box taped shut. Putting it on her lap, Angelica pondered it for a moment. Sure, it was taped. But that didn’t mean it was locked. There was nothing that said, “Do not open!”

So, she did.

“Oh, thank you, Lucy!” She whispered. The box was filled with letters and cards to a Lucy Laing from various friends, and a thick stack of correspondence between her and Robert. Shuffling through them, Angelica realized that at some point, he must have gathered all the letters and cards from his sister and put their correspondence all together in this stack.

A postcard. “Hey, Robert—Belize is amazing! You need to come here sometime…”

A Christmas card. “Happy Christmas, brother dear. I wish I was home to celebrate with you. Don’t work the entire time.”

And letters. So many of them, dating back several years to just before her death. Looking nervously at the door, Angelica chewed her lower lip before taking one of the more recent ones.

“Dear Lucy,

Your concern is touching but unnecessary. We both knew Mother and Father would be horrified by Megan. And they were. It doesn’t matter, to me or to Megan. I stopped needing their approval years ago. And yes, there was much consternation and hand-wringing about my ‘picking someone out of the gutter to marry.’

Charming.

And then, the embarrassment of a pregnant bride! I left them to their hysterics. We shall have the big wedding my girl wants, with her lovely, huge belly…”

Angelica folded up that letter and reached for the next one in the pile. So, Robert was married? He had a child? She didn’t like the twinge of discomfort she felt, thinking about him as someone else’s husband and father. Checking the date, she saw the letter was from about a year and a half ago. Where was this Megan? Their child? The next letter was from Lucy.

“Dear Brother,

I am so very sorry. I can’t imagine what you’re feeling right now. I hate that woman for what she’s done to you—making you believe you were the father of that child. Protest all you want, but I know you’ve always wanted children. I used to tease you about insisting on letters instead of email. More
to keep, you said. But especially now, because I’m not sure I could sit in front of you and say these
things without crying, and I know you would hate it. It wasn’t because she’s from a poor family or-
what do Mum and Dad call it? The Underclass? It’s because she’s a lying, cheating gold-digging
chav. Forget about the big settlement. You have plenty of money and what is money good for, if not
to remove problems- or wretched people- from your life? It doesn’t matter what the gossips are
saying- it doesn’t matter what that stupid cow is bragging about! It will die away quickly, you’ll see.
You’re such a private person, brother dear. I know being so exposed is excruciating for you. But
YOU have nothing to be embarrassed about!

Please don’t go back into that little circle of wealthy snobs you’ve hung around with since
Cambridge. There are so many wonderful, deserving people in this world. And you love so
passionately, there’s no shame in that! You keep insisting that she “made a fool of you.” Brother
dear, love makes fools of us all.

Anyway, I’ll be home in two weeks. Plan on me making use of your guest room and annoying you
incessantly.

Love, Lucy.”

Angelica carefully smoothed the paper and put it back in the envelope. Of course. It made sense. She
vaguely recalled someone pointing Robert out to her at the store on the 27th floor once- something
about him being somewhat newish to the High Rise too, fresh out of a divorce. She remembered the
fond look in his eyes as he helped her to hold Helen's newborn properly at Royal's horrible party,
talking about how he would enjoy seeing her pregnant with his child. But, Robert being duped into
marriage? It was impossible to picture the man she knew being manipulated by anyone.

“Where are you, darling?” Robert's voice sounded dangerously close, passing into the master
bedroom in search of her. He'd come back out in a moment and see the open guest bedroom door.

Heart in her throat, Angelica gasped and hastily replaced the letters in the box, hands shaking as she
pressed the tape back down and put the little box back, hastily piling books on top.

“What are you doing in here!”

This time, Angelica actually jumped and shrieked, Laing’s angry voice right behind her. Putting a
hand to her chest, she turned around. “I- I was just… there were some interesting books in this box
and I just-”

“You have disobeyed me. Again!” Laing thundered, making her jump once more. He watched as
tears filled those pretty, pale eyes, turning them silver like her hair. Angrily pulling away the books
she was clutching, he slammed them down back in the box. Shaking, Angelica noticed he checked to
make sure the taped box of letters was still buried under the other novels.

He folded the box flaps shut and turned back to her. "How did I disobey you, Daddy? I haven't-"

Laing took her chin in his hand, giving it a brisk shake. "I told you that you were forbidden to come
in here! And...” he looked her up and down distastefully, "you're wearing clothing. Mine, in fact! I
am very disappointed in you, little girl."

Angelica gritted her teeth and said nothing as he angrily pulled her from the room and into their
bedroom, making her have to scamper a bit to keep up with his long legs. "Daddy, I was just looking
for something to read! I'm very sorry! I didn't know I wasn't allowed in there?" His back was to her
as she sat on the bed where he'd not quite thrown her. When Laing turned around and glared at her with his polar stare, she saw the syringe he was holding. All Angelica could think of was the mindless face of Wilder, plodding obediently around the party last night. Pushing backward with her feet, she rapidly shook her head. "No, daddy I'm very sorry- don't put that in me! Don't! Don't you-"

She was always surprised by the man's speed, how Laing would use those long legs and arms to his advantage. Angelica was over his knees with one of his legs pinning hers and her hands trapped behind her back in seconds. "We will address your disobedience tomorrow, I am too angry to trust myself. So you will sleep like the very. Bad. Little. Girl. YOU ARE!" He furiously punctuated the words with harsh slaps against her ass, the thin material of his borrowed underwear not protecting her from the pain. At all. The slight sting of the needle sliding under her skin was barely noticed, until Angelica moaned in horror, feeling her arms and legs grow leaden again. Robert's hand went to her hair, stroking it as he finally gritted out, "And tomorrow we shall start from the beginning. Again."
A Tantric Afternoon

Chapter Summary

In which Angelica learns just how long Robert can stay hard inside her. Which is to say, a ridiculously, impossibly, "I have way too much self-control" amount of time.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

“No… I don’t– please don’t do that… I…”

Robert looked up from his laptop, eyes darting to the darkened master bedroom. Her voice was small, but he was so attuned to his angel now that he heard her instantly, even over the shouts and occasional screams in the hallway outside his quadruple-locked, steel-lined door. Checking his watch, he was surprised to see it was 2 am. Where had the night gone? Rising swiftly, he headed for the bedroom, hearing Angelica's voice raise.

"Please don't make me! I hate it- him- he's..." In a moment, Laing was by the bed. Angelica's arms were raised over her head as if protecting herself. "You don't! You don't do- Robert! Robert I need- please- don't let him!"

Laing's breath caught in his throat. She was asking for him? She trusted him- somewhere in the middle of her dream world- enough to believe he would help her? Swooping down, he pulled her on to his lap. "Shhh... little one, sweetness... hush. It's only a dream, love. Nothing will hurt you, I promise..." Angelica was still shaking, lovely face contorted in terror. "Baby, I've got you. I'll keep you safe..." Her shuddering slowed and one hand reached up blindly and he took it in his warmer
Angelica's breathing evened out, her chilled fingers grasping his. "Oh? That's..." Watching her sleep, face finally serene, Robert stroked her hair, laying it across the pillow like a silver river.

"Always so stubborn about doing it yourself, love, aren't you?" He murmured, "But you're starting to see that your Daddy can take care of you, yes? Such a good girl." He sat there, his eyes a warmer azure as he watched his angel sleep, ignoring the sounds of glass breaking, heavy things slamming down the stairs between the floors and something that sounded suspiciously like a human being shoved into the garbage chute, screaming as the poor soul rode the steel walls 25 floors down to the bottom.

"Wake up, sweetness... come now. It's time to wake up."

Angelica reluctantly cracked one eye open to see her beautiful, terrifying captor hovering over her. To her dismay, Laing was still wearing the same grubby clothing, though they were wet, as well as his hair. Meaning... 'Did he shower in his clothes again?' She moved uneasily, watching him idly scratch the growing beard on his jaw. Angelica nearly started crying as she felt the stiff leather cuffs on her wrists and ankles, and to her horror- something around her neck. Lifting one arm, she dolefully realized she wasn't bound to the bed, though the cuffs looked unyielding.

Laing smiled tenderly, watching her lips press together in a firm white line, her signal that she was so furious and so frightened that his Angel didn't know which emotion was foremost. "I know you're upset, love. But you did bring this on yourself. You will have to earn my trust again." Based on the seething eyes raised to his, fury was winning out.

Angelica knew she should be soothing Robert with words of penitence, but she was just too angry to fake it. "I just... I was looking for something to read while you were working. I didn't know I wasn't allowed to wear your clothes. You never said..."

"Did you think I was keeping your closet doors locked as a lark?" Laing impatiently interrupted her, waving one big hand angrily. "You knew you were to wear only what I gave you! As for going into Lucy's room..." His irritated rant died off as his angel's eyes turned silver again.

"I would never disrespect anything of your sister's," Angelica said stiffly. "I know how important she is to you. I just wanted something to read."

Watching her slim hands tighten into fists, bracketed by the heavy leather cuffs, Robert shifted from one foot to another. Unlike before, the woman didn't try to threaten him or lose control, start screaming like a banshee. Angelica was simply trying to make her case. "Did it ever occur to you, little girl, to simply ask my permission?"

Her jaw tightened. There was never a way to win this bastard's games! But she couldn't lose her temper again. She couldn't risk another injection, maybe this time turning her into a Wilder. The thought made her shudder, and Robert shook his head. "It's a bit chilly in here. And since you will be spending the day nude, I'll turn up the heat, perhaps build a fire. I don't think I've ever actually used the fireplace here."

"I- I'm what?" It burst out before Angelica could stop it, but she was horrified. She didn't like being nude. It made her uncomfortable. And being naked all day in front of her darkly beautiful daddy was horrifying.
Oh, she hated him—hated that knowing smile that spread across Laing’s face as he stroked her cheek. “I warned you last night, darling. We start at the beginning. And you will have to earn your privileges back.” He pulled Angelica briskly out of bed, hard enough that she fell against his chest. Taking the moment to run his hands over her hair and the soft curves of her ass, Laing enjoyed her corresponding shiver. “Come now, let’s have breakfast. It’s even the correct time of day for it.”

While Angelica doubted that there was a correct time for anything in the anarchist hell of the High Rise, she obediently followed him to the deck, seeing that Robert had already laid the table. It had been a long time since her last, uncomfortable meal and her mouth watered to see fresh strawberries and plump waffles waiting for her. But, there was only one place setting. One chair. Looking at her demented daddy, her heart sank to see that smile on his face again. Anticipation.

"There's only one plate, Daddy," she finally said.

“That’s true,” he agreed, moving swiftly to lock her wrist cuffs together and giving them a brief tug as he pulled her to the table. Robert enjoyed how her eyes widened as he pulled down the zipper on his trousers, pulling his already hard cock out. To be honest, he’d been hard for at least an hour, planning Angelica’s “corrections” for the day. Seating himself and holding his thick erection upright, Laing inclined his head. “Come here, little girl.” He enjoyed watching his darling’s thought process on that lovely, mobile face. Even as she was still feeling the effects of the drug he'd injected last night, he knew she was rapidly calculating her chances of escaping her fate. Then, the lovely expression of frustration and resignation as Angelica looked at him.

"But... I'm naked, Daddy. You don't want... you don't want anyone to see me like this, do you?" She was only slightly digging in her heels as his hand on her bound wrists pulled her forward.

“No one will see you. The flats on both sides of us are now vacant.” The smile he gave her was knowing. “Come sit on Daddy’s cock and I’ll feed you. And fill you.” Her only answer was a slight hiss, but Robert nearly chuckled when he moved her hips and seated her on his shaft, sliding her down slowly. He stifled his amusement because he knew that his angel would be furious- and humiliated to know he could already feel how wet she was, and how easily she slid down his wide cock. Putting his hands on her hips, Laing closed his eyes and enjoyed the feel of her, wrapping around him like wet silk. Shifting her a bit from side to side, he grinned at Angelica’s gasp as he slid deeper. “Such a good girl,” he murmured, “making more room for Daddy.” He could feel her bound hands go tentatively around his neck, trying to stabilize herself as he rotated her hips again. Removing them and gently pushing Angelica’s shoulder’s back, he urged, “Lean your elbows on the table, darling.”

“Oh!”

The woman’s yelp was loud in the dead silence of the flat, even the exterior buzz seemed to have faded as everyone slept from the excess of the night before. Laing looked down to see Angelica’s back arched and her pelvis thrust forward in an angle that meant his generous shaft had to be rubbing against the most sensitive spot inside her. Pressing a big palm against her abdomen, the doctor pressed down with almost clinical interest, feeling the slight movement of himself inside her. Azure eyes rose to her face as Angelica's head dropped back, mouth open and panting as she tried to adjust to the intensity of the push and pull of his cock against her front wall. Casually taking a sip from his glass of orange juice, Laing licked his lips and smiled down at her lovingly.

"I can feel them, you know."

Angelica's face scrunched up in that pretty way she had when she was trying to concentrate as he was fucking the life out of her, Robert thought. "W-what? Um, Daddy?"
"I can feel the ripples that start squeezing through that tender kitty of yours when you're about to come," Laing continued conversationally, pausing for another sip of juice. "They start at the opening of you, then rhythmically squeeze along those satiny, wet walls, clenching just before your cervix, like you're trying to squeeze my come into you, breed you."

She froze at this, thighs gripping his hips with surprising strength. "I don't! I don't want you to breed me!" Angelica was furious, her eyes sapphire chips of rage. Surprisingly, Laing didn't seem to take offense at this, stilling the movement of his pelvis as his hand slid behind her neck and lifted her, urging the cold glass of juice to her lips.

"Drink, little one."

Startled, Angelica did as she was told, taking several grateful swallows of juice before shaking her head at more. She was excruciatingly aware of Robert's cock still buried firmly inside her. She could smell the bacon and the sweet, tempting crispness of the strawberries he'd sliced into a bowl. 'Where is he getting fresh fruit here?' She thought, 'In the High Rise? There's nothing left.' Then, all thought flew out of her mind as she felt his hips begin that sinuous swirl again, bringing that hard, hot part of him in and out, pulling just to the opening of her, then gleefully plunging down again. Against the wishes of her brain, her body was responding to Laing's skilled, smooth movement, legs tightening around him again to push against his clenched ass with one heel.

Laing smiled, leaning down to kiss her, tongue sliding through her lips to stroke along her mouth in the same rhythm of his cock inside her. Just as those tell-tale ripples began moving her to completion, he stopped. Angelica's eyes flew open, and he nearly chuckled at the look of consternation. "Daddy?" To her fury, he only smiled down at her in that hateful, knowing way.

"Sit up, baby," he soothed, "you must be hungry." He slid his hands under her shoulder blades and lifted her upright, smiling at her whimper as the movement drove her down on his cock. Settling her upright, Laing picked up a piece of crisp bacon. "Take a bite. It's delicious, much like you." Angelica did, and she moaned a little, flushing when her beautiful, cruel captor chuckled. "Don't be embarrassed, darling. You've been asleep for twelve hours and you must be starving." He kissed her again, savoring the taste of hickory against her mouth, then pulling back to allow her to finish chewing.

His excruciatingly close regard was making her uncomfortable, even as Angelica obediently took a bite of the waffles brought to her mouth. Robert took a bite as well, still watching her. The unaccustomed silence of his sunny flat, the strange weight of his heavy cock inside her, still hard, and the odd intimacy of sharing breakfast together in such a position made the woman excruciatingly, physically aware of every inch of skin. The feel of the worn cotton of his days-old shirt. The slight rasp of his bearded cheek against hers as Laing reached for a handful of strawberries, feeding one to her, then one to himself. Suddenly giving a little shiver, she tried to stop the odd sensitivity.

"Are you cold, little one?" Robert was looking at her with concern, rubbing her bare arms. He shifted his hips as he questioned her, and the movement sent a jolt straight up her spine. Watching a flush creep up Angelica's chest, her neck and then reddening her cheeks, he smiled darkly. "Ah. You're entering into that space, good."

"What space?" Angelica asked absently, wishing she could move her bound wrists and rub her eyes. Offering her another strawberry, Laing waited until she'd accepted the fruit, chewing as he watched her. "Tantric, love. I'm going to be inside you for most of the day, and you will not come. Not until I allow it. But the feel of my cock inside you as we spend the afternoon entwined..." He laughed out
loud at his angel's look of shock. "Oh, such a thing is possible, I assure you. And we will grow close together again. Spiritually."

To her dismay, Angelica found that Robert was as good as his word. They ate breakfast, staring into each other's eyes. Then, he picked her up and carried her to the bath, Angelica gasping and clutching at the feel of his cock, still hard and speared inside her. He ran a sponge along her skin, stroking in and out of her occasionally to keep himself hard. Laing would insist on stroking her enough to keep Angelica wet and swollen as well, stopping each time before she was able to come, enjoying the look of increasing misery and frustration those crystalline eyes.

The only hitch came as they rose from the bath, Angelica giving a little squeal as he abruptly rose upwards. He began drying her skin with a soft towel, then frowned as he realized his wet clothes would make it impossible to stay inside her—she would be uncomfortable from the damp.

"Take off my shirt, my Angel."

Angelica’s hands gladly rose to the first button, thrilled to see him take off the days-old clothing. They were a constant, terrifying reminder to her that the only soul she had left in this world to count on was, in fact, insane. Watching each inch of his skin unveil from his grimy uniform made her feel better and more hopeful. So when Laing carried her into his bedroom and swept her on to the bed, Angelica wrapped her legs around him, welcoming his movements as he started stroking in and out of her again. As the day moved on, the sounds from outside began to grow louder—thumps, cursing, the occasional shriek. Irritably picking up his remote, Robert turned on some music—Chopin, Angelica thought vaguely—to block out the intrusion.

"Daddy?"

"Hmmmmm?" Laing hummed idly, running his hands along the thin skin of her thighs.

Angelica pulled on her wrist cuffs, bound to a hook in his headboard.

"My arms… they’re getting sore. Could you please…?" Surprisingly, he did. She wasn’t sure he would, based on Robert’s terrifying promises of that morning. Stretching and twisting her arms gratefully, Angelica smiled at him tentatively. “Thank you, Daddy.”

He kissed her as he was pulling her up into a seated position on his cock, then swinging his legs over and standing, grinned at her little shriek again. Walking into the kitchen, Robert picked a narrow tray filled with cheeses, fruits and several kinds of bread and crackers out of the refrigerator, putting it in her hands as his own went under her ass to boost her slightly. Angelica’s eyes closed, feeling his cock grow harder again from the movement of her slick walls against him.

Sliding them gracefully back on to the bed, Robert moved to lean against the headboard, putting his hands behind his head as she sat upright on his rigid shaft. “Now, it’s your turn to feed me, darling.” One perfect brow raised as he watched her. Slowly, Angelica did as she was told, bringing a wedge of cheese to his lips, giving a little yelp as he lightly bit her thumb before swallowing the morsel. About halfway through the meal, he reached down to idly stroke along her clitoris, enjoying the feeling of new warmth and slick around his cock. Angelica’s back arched gratefully. Surely… surely this time Robert would let her come. It had been hours… But again, his hand pulled away just before she could find release. Frustrated, she began rubbing herself against the springy curls of hair on his pelvis, and Laing flipped her over.

"None of that, little girl. You're being naughty. Daddy decides when you come."

Angelica nearly started sobbing in frustration as Laing pulled out of her just long enough to link the
cuffs on her ankles to links he'd attached to the footboard. Putting their lunch tray aside, he swiftly clipped her wrist cuffs back together to the hook above her head and pulled some items out of his bedside table, laying them on to the mattress next to her. "No tears, my Angel," he soothed wiping away wet streaks from her skin. Angelica was humiliated to realize she didn't even know she'd been crying.

"You just need some soothing," he murmured in his most beautiful, persuasive voice. The smooth tone that flowed over her scrambled nervous system. The faint growl in his throat that rumbled through her spine, making her feel hollow. "You need care. Close your eyes, there’s a good girl." He couldn’t miss the look of appeal in his angel’s lovely gaze as she did what she was told. It inexplicably put an ache in his chest. The look that appealed to him to not hurt her. To be kind to her.

Running the delightfully fluffy feather down her cheek, over her neck and circling a nipple, Laing smiled, watching the goosebumps sprout along the path of the tickle. "Lovely," he praised, "watching your pink nipple tighten? And the other, darling? Ah, yes. There we are…"

Angelica was shivering a little, eyes still stubbornly closed and marveling at the delicate, silky touch after so much harshness in the past few weeks. Her pussy convulsed as the feather made its way across her clit, then back again. A faint groan from her beautiful captor told her he was enjoying the side effects, as his cock grew harder. But when his hand slid under her knee and raised it to tickle along her foot, Angelica shrieked with laughter, eyes popping open to watch his white teeth flash as he chuckled with her, watching her desperate wiggling.

"I'm ticklish!" She half gasped, half shrieked, "Daddy! Stop it!"

The feather was withdrawn at once. "Ah, my darling girl." His smile was warm, eyes cobalt with a strange affection. "That’s the first time you spontaneously called me Daddy." Robert leaned closer, kissing her mouth and then one stiff nipple. "Daddy is so very pleased, thank you." Her gaze darted to the left as he dropped the feather and reached for something else. "Ah, ah!" She heard the admonishment and closed her eyes before he could reproach her. "There’s my good girl," he purred.

What was it? Angelica squeezed her eyes tighter, trying to understand the bloom of warmth in her chest when her unpredictable “daddy” praised her? Why did she care? But she did, absurdly pleased when Laing gave his approval, called her his “good girl.”

A soft ‘clinking’ sound brought her attention back to the present, and the soft slide of five sharp points along her arm made Angelica moan.

"Ooooh… Daddy,” she moaned, “what is that?"

He playfully pushed one a little deeper into the soft divot inside her elbow. “Claws, darling. Sterling silver, sharpened to quite a point. They can scratch…” He paused, enjoying the sound of her pleased little croon. “They can jab-"

“AH! Daddy!”

Laughing, he smoothed along the pinched skin, running the claws on both fingers down her breasts, over her heaving stomach and along the swollen lips of her pussy, still cradling his cock between them. With a delicate precision born from years of operating on the infinite importance of the tiny nerves and ganglia of the brain, Laing flicked her clitoris, enjoying how the tendons in her arms and legs tightened against their bonds.

From there, it was a quick finish, Robert finally throwing aside the gleaming claws and releasing his
angel from her cuffs, pulling her up to face him by the smooth chain around her neck. Bouncing her
vigorously on his endlessly patient shaft, he purred, “Now my good girl can come. You’ve waited so
long, baby. Come now for Daddy.”

And with a relieved shriek and a grateful babble of “ThankyouDaddyoh!” Angelica did. Three
times, so hard that the convulsing pressure of her channel nearly choked Laing’s cock in the most
decadent way. When she felt his long arms wrap around her back and squeeze her tightly, Angelica
could only moan in relief and gratitude. It was silent for a moment, the shrieks and crashes from
outside their expensive oasis seeming far away.

“I feel so much better.” Angelica blurted.

When she felt Robert burst into surprised laughter, jostling her in his embrace, she could only join
him, both of them laughing helplessly as his arms tightened around her again, rocking her idly as
they both chortled and giggled their long-held release.

Chapter End Notes

You've likely heard the story of an interview Sting gave where the singer boasted of
enjoying tantric sex for "seven or eight hours at a time." He later amended this claim by
saying, "Well, that includes dinner and begging." Our Doctor Robert Laing does not
beg. (Frankly, if my husband intended to pack a lunch and stay all day in my girl parts, I
would tell him to get the hell away from me. Maybe I'm just not cool enough for tantric
sex.)
"Even You, Robert."

Chapter Summary

In which Angelica's motherly instincts come roaring back. At the worst, possible moment. Also, Laing is confused. Conflicted. And thus, infuriated.

Chapter Notes

Apparently the search engine issues AO3 suffered from over the weekend made my chapter 12 disappear, so hopefully you'll get this one... thank you as always for reading. My lovely Ray-of-Dawn is creating some artwork for this story! I am giddy with excitement.

Thank you to my dear Miss Roo for helping me with London transportation issues.

Robert woke sometime later after a particularly heavy something was thrown off a balcony some floors above him. The night soundtrack of screams, laughter, thuds, and crashes was at a crescendo, and with an irritable grunt, he rolled out of bed. Looking down at Angelica as he dressed again in his worn shirt and trousers, he couldn't help the genuine grin that crossed his beautiful mouth. Her lashes were a thick fan on her pale cheek, and his angel still had a small smile as she slept, peaceful at last. Hearing something scrape on his terrace, Laing growled, moving out of the bedroom to confront the intruder.
"The M-25 is blocked. On fire, mostly." It was Toby, Charlotte's odd son from 2605. He was using Robert's expensive telescope to sweep over London and jotting down notes in a grimy little notebook.

"What are you doing here, boy? Does Char- your mother know where you are?" Still buttoning up his shirt, Robert finally looked up to see Toby staring at him with a "Well, DUH," expression.

The boy's mouth quivered, and he turned to look through the telescope again. "I don't think Mum even knows where she is," he said matter-of-factly as if it was completely normal to have one's parent drifting vaguely through the drug and orgy-soiled haze of the High Rise.

Laing sighed, straightening his tie and smoothing it down his stained shirt. "You say the M-25 is blocked? Autos? Barricades?"

"Some of both," Toby answered, making another note.

"What do you have there?" Laing's head craned, looking over the boy's careful handwriting. "Ah, you've been tracking movement in the city?" His brow furrowed as he read some of Toby's notes. "This much violence? Really?"

Giving him another "Well, DUH," look, the boy took his notebook back, holding it protectively. "I've been mapping the safe routes out of the city," he said with a certain dignity. "There's still some clear spots."

"What about the M4?" Robert heard himself asking before giving a mental head-shake. Why on earth would anyone care? They had everything they needed in the High Rise. Why would they leave?

Toby was watching the play of emotion on the man's usually stoic face, and sighed. He wasn't ready.

Hearing someone pound on the front door, Laing turned his head, then looked back to the boy. "You're welcome to stay if you're hungry, I'm about to-" The balcony was empty, the telescope drooping. Scratching at his unshaven cheek, he headed for the door. To his shock, Royal was standing there was a few others in his entourage and Wilder, gripping a huge box of food and liquor, staring blankly at the scarred wall.

Laing couldn't recall the last time he’d seen Royal venture from his penthouse, and he looked ridiculously out of place in the filthy hallway.

"You haven't been by to fetch your delivery, dear boy," Royal drawled, his black eyes gleaming, "so if Mohammed will not come to the mountain, the mountain will come to Mohammed."

Laing raised a brow, "Please. Come in, Royal." The group filed in most looking around the flat avidly. The Doctor Robert Laing was not one to invite people over to his. While taking the box from a shuffling Wilder, he called over his shoulder, "I'm surprised to see you out and about, Anthony-" Catching a glimpse of the man standing at the doorway of his bedroom, Robert angrily shoved the box back in Wilder’s hands and strode over to the bedroom's entrance, one hand already on the doorknob.

"I see your pretty acquisition is still here, my boy." A filthy smirk crossed Royal’s face as he allowed Laing to shut the bedroom door, shielding his angel from any more unwanted views. "Now I understand why you've not been by."

"Thank you for bringing my supplies," Laing said politely. He stood between Anthony and the door blocking Angelica from the older man's gaze. He couldn't explain it, other than an unreasoning
disgust that his mentor's black eyes could crawl over the sleeping body of his girl. Smoothly moving Royal into the large living area he invited him to sit down.

"I can't stay, my boy," Royal waved his hand grandly. "We have guests upstairs..." His voice indicated being scandalized that he had to leave his position as "host" to come to see Laing. "But as we're here, I need you to stabilize Wilder again. In fact, I have another one becoming a problem; Cosgrove." His nose wrinkled elegantly. "Ideas above his station... making demands..." There were eagerly affirmative sneers from his entourage, which Robert realized for the first time did not include Cosgrove, Royal's longtime and extraordinarily unpleasant bodyguard. His attention diverted back to Royal as he drawled, "I believe he would make another excellent Wilder."

There was a strange twist of nausea in Robert as he looked at the swaying hulk of Wilder, still staring off into space as he obediently held the box of groceries and liquor. With a sigh, he moved to a locked drawer in his desk and pulled out the slim leather sheath that held the drugs required. "Wilder!" He commanded in a crisp voice, "Come here and sit down." Without a word, the lump of flesh that used to be a film-maker, who used to make documentaries and then became a vicious rapist in the insanity of their concrete womb, shuffled over and did as he was told. When he was finished injecting Wilder, making him a... Wilder again, Robert looked sternly at Royal, leaning against the couch and enjoying the sight. "If you're serious about Cosgrove, send word and I'll be up this afternoon."

The glint of malice in his horrid black eyes made Anthony repellant as he leaned forward to place a fatherly hand on Robert's shoulder. "Excellent. And do bring your lovely pet. Everyone's so looking forward to seeing her again." There was an ugly undercurrent of laughter between the men hovering close by, but it ended abruptly when Laing's polar gaze met theirs. Refusing to take offense, Royal chuckled as he swept out the door.

“Daddy?”

Turning to see Angelica standing in the doorway of the bedroom, Laing smiled. Her silver hair was flowing wildly over her shoulders, she was clutching a bedsheets to her breasts as she stifled a yawn. “I heard voices, is everything all right?”

Walking over to smooth down her hair and raise her chin for a kiss, he pulled open the sheet, enjoying her blush as he gazed appreciatively at her breasts, littered with little love bites and bruises. “Just a food delivery, darling. Are you steady enough to take a shower on your own?” Angelica thought about it, nodded. “Good. I’ll make...” he consulted his Christian Koban, “very early breakfast, apparently. We’ve slept an age.”

She smiled and nodded again, backing away to head into the bathroom. Letting out a long sigh, Angelica looked at herself in the mirror. Though she was still much paler than usual, her eyes weren’t as clouded, as dull from the drugs as they had been. Was Robert giving her less, or was she just developing a tolerance? Shuddering a little, she stepped into the shower. “The bad news,” she sighed, feeling safe talking to herself with the water running, “is that he’s back in those goddamn clothes. The good news, he’s trying to keep track of time, trying to keep to a normal schedule. That has to be a positive sign.”

Meanwhile, Robert was unpacking the box of groceries. He knew Royal had a conduit in and out of the High Rise where he was obtaining these luxuries for the upper strata, and for the first time, he wondered how. Did Royal have a separate elevator? A way out of the building Robert hadn’t seen? He pulled out a fresh bottle of Jameson scotch, still in its box. Automatically, his mouth watered. After that... creature made a fool of him, there was no question he’d begun to drink more. Certainly not to excess- other than a few benders that left the man in brutal shape the next day. Never before
surgery. Never. But… it was easier to face the day or the evening with a restorative glass or three. Maybe six. Royal had even taken to keeping a bottle on hand for him when Robert attended his parties, a small, thoughtful gesture he’d appreciated, one that showed he was one of those who mattered. Opening the box, Robert automatically reached for one of his squat, crystal glasses when he paused. He hadn’t even noticed he was out, Robert realized, hadn’t even had a sip in two days. How did Royal know his stock of Jameson was gone?

“Um, Daddy?”

Head up, Laing set the bottle and glass on the counter, heading into the master bathroom to see what his angel needed.

He walked in to see Angelica looking at her wet wrist and ankle bands ruefully. “I forgot I was wearing them,” she confessed, still vaguely disgusted with herself that she could actually forget such a thing- forget wearing restraints! “And now the leather is wet.”

Taking one hand and drawing it up to his mouth, Robert kissed the thin skin on the inside of her wrist, his tongue tracing the delicate path of the blue veins there. “Since you’ve been such a very good girl,” he purred, “I believe we may leave these off on condition of your good behavior.” His angel nodded rapidly, gratefully, and Robert pulled the keys to the cuffs from his pocket. He took her hand, leading Angelica to the rumpled bed, his expensive sheets draping onto the floor, the down coverlet thrown in the other direction.

Angelica smiled nervously, still holding onto the soft cotton towel she’d wrapped around herself. “Weren’t we going to eat, Daddy?” It wasn’t that her center wasn’t already moistening eagerly at the thought of another round with this dark and beautiful man, but inside, she felt rubbed raw. Even putting one foot down after the other sent a jolt of pain through her, reminding the woman of how long Robert’s overly generous cock had been inside her the day before. He chuckled, sitting on the bed and drawing her close by her hips.

“Poor darling. Is your lovely kitty sore today?” The heel of his hand pressed gently on her soft mound, just above her pubic bone. It seemed to send a surge of warmth through her sore channel.

Suddenly giggling, Angelica stopped herself quickly. Laing’s amused azure gaze rose to hers. “Now, what would be making my Angel giggle? Such a charming sound.”

“You’re um…” Nervously tightening the towel again, Angelica said, “You’re so knowledgeable about the um… the female reproductive system. I was thinking maybe you should have been a gynecologist instead of a neurosurgeon.”

To her relief, Laing laughed as well, moving his warm hand over her center again, cupping it gently. “I prefer to be an… amateur enthusiast when it comes to the mysteries inside this lovely body.” To her apprehension, he pulled her closer by her hips, briskly pulling the towel from her and enjoying Angelica’s startled yelp. Placing his mouth on her mound, he gave her a long, slow lick, then a kiss to her still-sensitive clitoris at the top. “Lie down, little girl,” she shuddered, hearing that dark tone of greed again. “Daddy’s going to make you feel all better.”

It was a nightmare version of deja’ vu, Angelica thought bleakly. Laing wielding his golf club with brutal accuracy as a couple of ragged residents of floor 25 attempted to attack them as they emerged from his flat. Moving as fast as she could as Laing not-quite dragged her to the lift, Angelica threw out a well-placed elbow, then a quick shove to move aside another would-be assailant. Turning just in time to see his angel knock a squealing man- more porcine than human- off his feet, Laing smiled
lovingly. “My clever girl,” his arm reached out with the club and shoved away a grasping hand attempting to stop the lift doors from closing. As he gathered her in his arms for a long appreciative kiss, Angelica eyed their multiple reflections in the searingly bright mirrored enclosure.

“I’m so proud of you, keeping your composure. I sometimes forget what a fierce lioness you can be.”

“Daddy,” she knew by now to begin every sentence that way, knowing by the way his eyes became warmer that Laing enjoyed it, “why are we going to Royal’s again? You didn’t seem to enjoy his last… uh… party.” ‘Filthy fucking stinking orgy stuffed with assholes like some kind of fucked-up haggis!’ Angelica hissed internally.

Leaning closer at the door opened, Robert murmured, “My medical opinion is required on another case, darling. Perhaps you’d like to hold Helen’s infant again? Or we can see if we can find Tiffen, so you can reassure yourself that she is well.” He enjoyed the look of pleased surprise in his angel’s eyes. He was so used to fear, or resentment, or anxiety- the look of gratitude gave him an almost embarrassing feeling of warmth.

“Thank you, Daddy. That would be- I would feel better knowing they are all right.”

It wasn't enough to keep her from wanting to vomit the moment the air of Royal's penthouse hit her-a fetid combination of weed, sweat, stale sex fluids and the stink of dozens of unwashed bodies. She could tell Laing was torn between addressing his "responsibilities" as a physician and making sure she was safe, so Angelica quietly followed him through his "check-ups" on various patients. As she stood quietly by him, her anxious gaze was constantly searching the cavernous room for Tiffen or any of the other girls from her flat. None were visible, but Angelica finally spotted Helen, amiably meandering through the clotted groups of drinking, fucking people, holding the baby in one arm and a lit cigarette in the other. Watching the new mother, her heart twisted in her chest. The parental instinct- it seemed to her the most precious and basic of all human genetic data- even though her own mother had been the exception to the rule. But Angelica wasn't stupid- she'd seen countless examples of mothers and fathers willing to do anything and everything to keep their children safe- down to the challenge of forcing parents to put their own oxygen masks on before their children's during an emergency. Yet... here in this concrete hell, it was as if any human emotion other than the most base and vile no longer existed. Watching Helen sloppily place her infant on an ottoman, Angelica surged forward.

"Hi Helen, I could- can I mind the baby for a moment?" She was uncomfortably aware some man she didn't know was dragging the woman's head down to his crotch, but Helen managed to agree before her mouth was full.

Carefully picking up the baby and cradling her as Robert had instructed her last time, Angelica turned to see a child blocking her way back to him.

“Hello,” she smiled nervously. The boy was staring at her intently, seemingly oblivious to the endless displays of sex surging around him. ‘He can’t be more than eight or so,’ Angelica thought, suddenly deeply sad. “You’re… Toby, right? From the 26th floor?”

“Yes.” The boy agreed, a light clear voice that seemed to cut through the murk of the penthouse. “You’re the stewardess. The one Dr. Laing likes.”

‘Fifteen years of public relations to correct it,’ thought Angelica, ‘and they’re still calling me a stewardess.’

“That would be me,” she simply agreed. “Do you and Robert know each other?”
The boy took off his round glasses, absently trying to wipe them clean on his filthy shirt. “He took me to a birthday party once,” he finally volunteered. “He gave me the biggest piece of birthday cake.”

A smile slipped over Angelica’s full lips despite her. She knew by now how much her darkly beautiful daddy loved sweets. “I’ll bet he had the second biggest piece.” Startled, Toby started laughing and she joined him. Suddenly, over the boy’s shoulder, she could spot Tiffen, the girl’s short hair wildly disordered, but she recognized the girl by the tattoo of a unicorn on her shoulder. “Excuse me, Toby,” she said, not able to take her eyes off her friend. Moving swiftly through the room, ducking bodies fucking, drinking or simply passed out on the floor, Angelica finally tapped on Tiffen’s back. "Tiff? Are you okay?"

The girl turned around, a bit unsteady but still giggling. "Gelica!” Tiffen shrieked happily, throwing her arms around her friend and not-quite crushing the sleeping infant in the process.

Squinting, the girl tried to focus. “You had a baby? When did that happen?”

Angelica blinked. “No, sweetheart, she’s Helen’s. Are you all right? I’ve been so worried about you!”

The man who’d been fondling Tiffen tried to drag her back with a sweaty hand on her arm. “We’re not done here, whore. Sit down.”

He could not have had any sense of self-preservation, Angelica thought icily, the powerful sense of protection she had for her “girls” roaring back with a fury. “What did you say, motherfucker?” Even she was shocked by the words coming from her mouth— but all her well-bred manners were gone and she felt like she was back in high school, the girl who drove men off with her vicious mouth. “Did you call my girl a whore, you douchebag?” There were low chuckles from the people around them, avidly enjoying the fresh entertainment.

“Who’re you, bitch? Who d’you think yer talkin’ to?” The man’s well-bred exterior was gone, too. “I manage over fifty million pounds worth of investments, you cow! You mind your betters, you-”

Angelica couldn’t stop the harsh laughter that burst from her. “You don’t manage shit, you drunken pig! You can’t even pronounce annuities right now, much less manage them— and you do not get to talk to my Tiffen-”

“ANGELICA!”

The room was suddenly dead silent, save for a few drunken snickers. Heart turned to ice, she turned on numb feet to look at Laing. He was almost unrecognizable, white face, a thin slash of mouth and eyes blazing polar blue in fury.


Her treacherous feet almost immediately obeyed him, before Angelica turned swiftly to her startled friend. “Tiff- honey- please come with me. Dr. Laing will keep you safe, I’ll take care of you, you don’t have to stay here!”

Offended, the girl drew back, unconsciously leaning into the man who’d just called her a ‘whore,’ who grinned malevolently at Angelica. “You always thought you were smarter than us!” Tiffen suddenly hissed, “Like you knew everything! Well, you don’t, ‘Gelica! I like it here- you think you’re saving me? Just… bugger off! You can’t tell me what to do!”

“Tiff, sweetie, I don’t think I—” Angelica leaned to her friend, desperate to help her understand what
was happening here.

“Angelica!”

“Bugger OFF Angelica! You’re not my mother! You’re not even my friend, bitch!”

Frozen, the woman could hear the drunken titters around her, the spiteful whispers. Tiffen had already turned back to the man, who was drunkenly attempting to mount her. Laing’s hand was around her upper arm, his breath warm in her ear. "It’s time to leave, little girl. You will keep silent.” Marching her through the vast room, he detoured long enough to give the infant back to Helen, helping her tuck the baby into a safer position while Angelica stood, shaking.

Hustling her to the lift, Laing pulled her in the moment the doors opened.

“Robert… please- Daddy? I was just-”

He held up one finger. “Not a word.”

Silent and terrified, Angelica tightened her hands into fists, forcing herself not to scream in fury and frustration.

Finally, safely back behind Laing’s four double-locked doors, Angelica backed away, bumping into the leather sofa. His blazing eyes stiffened her spine.

“Exactly what did you think you were doing back there!” He suddenly shouted, making her jump. She hated shouting, hated it when people shouted at her, reminding her of her mother during her binges.

“I found Tiffen- she was with this disgusting man who called her a whore and I wanted her to come with us and I could-”

Laing ran his hands through his already disordered hair. “Why do you think you must save everyone, you impossible creature! You can’t save the world, Angelica!”

“I can try!” She suddenly shouted back, horrified at her recklessness. “People can be saved- they just need someone who believes they can!”

“Really?” Sneered Laing, striding over to stand over her threateningly. “You foolish, naive child. You can’t even save yourself from me, can you?” Her shocked gasp should have pleased him, but Robert felt vaguely ashamed. He watched as his angel’s chin came up.

“I can,” she said stubbornly. “I can save you. You want to. You want to be better again, Robert.”

For the first time Laing could remember, his facile tongue, his extensive vocabulary failed him. Staring at the determined, terrified woman in front of him, Laing pinched the bridge of his nose between long fingers.

“Just… go into the bedroom, Angelica. Go and give me a moment to not be so fucking furious at you.”

Backing away, she nodded and turned, making swiftly for the door. Laing sighed, sitting down and running his hands over his face. How dare she think such a foolish, childish thing? Thinking he could be saved?
"Ask me no reason why I love you..."

Chapter Summary

In which dinner al fresco is a terrible idea. Also, deep conversation, sex, and Shakespeare.

Angelica sat on the tile, leaning against the railing of the deck off Robert's bedroom. He'd told her to go to the bedroom, but he didn't forbid her to sit outside... Her mind was startlingly clear- partly from the fear and adrenaline of opposing her terrifying daddy and having not recently been dosed with anything. Angelica's sharp eyes traced the lines of smoke, areas of unnatural stillness and any noise she could hear on the wind from downtown London. Whatever madness that had taken over the High Rise was not content with the destruction and horror it brought there. Her heart seized in her chest as the woman wondered if her friends were safe. What about her Aunt June? Her friends in Minnesota? Her work colleagues? Remembering her casual promise to see Tony in just a couple of days as they parted at Heathrow sent tears to her eyes. Who was alive? How far had this madness spread?

"What are you doing out here?"

She hastily wiped away any hint of moisture. Turning to Laing, Angelica stiffened her spine. "I just needed some fresh air." Waving her hand expansively at the glass slider leading to the master bedroom, she used her most persuasive tone, "I did as you asked. I didn't leave the bedroom..." Gathering her wits, Angelica hastily added, "uh, Daddy."

Even in his grimy white dress shirt and the remains of what were expensively tailored bespoke suit
trousers, Laing was intimidating. As he strode over to where she sat against the railing, Angelica instinctively tried to make herself smaller, like she was a child again and witnessing one of her mother's vicious, drug-addled diatribes. As one big hand came up, she flinched. Watching from the cover of her hair over her face, Angelica watched as Laing's arm retreated.

"Do you really think I would hit you, little one?"

Absurdly, Angelica felt near tears. Robert's tone here was so sweet, his deep voice at it's most persuasive, the tone of a dark angel luring her into the underground. Without thinking, she heard herself blurt, "My mother- she always said she wouldn't- but she did and then she would pretend she didn't remember afterward when she saw my face, and... It doesn't matter, uh, Daddy."

When he touched her, her cheek fell into his warm palm. "Not like... that, Angelica. Not out of rage or stupidity, or for the pleasure of watching you terrified and hurt. Not ever like that." His hand went under her chin and forced her to look into his eyes, a mesmerizing azure that was her favorite shade from him. It was a reassuring color. It meant Robert was- more or less- in command of his mental state. Thinking clearly.

With a sigh he stood, then sat down on the big, comfortable lounge chair on the terrace, lightly pulling her hand to sink down on to his lap. They looked out of the city in silence, a wave of smoke coming in on the breeze.

"Toby- the boy you were speaking with? He says the M25 is blocked. Part of the roadway is on fire. That's what we're smelling, I would imagine." Angelica felt Robert's lips move against her cheek as he pointed in the direction of one of the main routes out of London.

She angled her shoulders a little to look up at him. "Toby? He can't be more than... what, eight? And he's mapping out the city?"

His mobile mouth pursed, "He's extraordinarily bright, albeit eccentric already. He's been spotting the roadways through my telescope. I didn't even know the cheeky little monkey had been down here," Robert chuckled a bit. "He's the first child I've ever really spoken to at any... length."

Angelica smiled, "He said you took him to a birthday party here in the High Rise. Gave him the biggest piece of birthday cake."

Shockingly, the man holding her began to laugh, a genuine one. "Naturally, Toby would remember the cake." Sliding his hand through her tangled silver hair, Robert smiled at the little, unconscious purr Angelica gave.

"You like him," she ventured. "Why?"

Robert shrugged, hand still carelessly carding through her silky length. "He reminds me a bit of me as a boy, I suppose."

 Barely daring to breathe as she tried to avoid breaking the spell and losing the chance to know her beautiful captor better, Angelica calmly asked, "How so?"

"He's a clever boy but seemed ignored for the most part, unless Charlotte trotted him out to show off her 'brilliant' child. Then, she'd dismiss him with that... look. The same one my father used to give me. As I was covered in something... Mud. Jam. Failure."

There was a moment of crystalline silence as he mechanically stroked Angelica's hair. Sliding her hand over his resting on her stomach, she ventured, "Then your father never saw you clearly." His hand stilled and she could feel his muscled chest stiffen.
"It's time you ate," Laing finally said, his voice cold and composed again. "Come, darling."

Walking into the darkened bedroom, Angelica found a gauzy nightgown spread across the bed. Picking it up, she looked at Laing, his eyes cooled back to polar blue again. “Put that on, little one. Then come into the kitchen.” Fighting against her frustration- (they’d been doing so well! She’d been making progress with Sane Robert!) Angelica forced a smile and nodded.

Laing smiled darkly as he thought of his lovely girl changing, the smooth muscles in her back shifting under the frail wings of her shoulder blades. A vision of her upper arms tied behind her in an elaborate design, making those pretty wings just out made him groan, absentely rubbing the front of his pants over his swelling cock. One big hand hovered over his Jameson again, but then he turned to his locked wine cabinet, pulling out a good bottle of red to go with the steak dish he'd made. They would just share the bottle together.

Slowly undressing from "real" clothes and into the delicate nightie her beautiful captor had selected for her, Angelica's brain was on overdrive. It was exhausting trying to force herself to move from one scenario to the next in the way that had always been effortless for her. But after (Days? Weeks?) of being wrapped in the soft cocoon of drugs was making her thought process slow, weak like a muscle atrophied from limited use. Brushing out her hair and carefully hanging up her dress, Angelica lingered in the bedroom, even though the smell of the broiling steaks was making her stomach clench with hunger. She was past simple survival now with Robert- with her "daddy." 'He cares about me,' she thought, wondering if she was allowed to wear undies with the little nightdress. Realizing that none were laid out, the woman sighed and continued dressing. 'Now,' she thought, 'how to redirect his attention to giving up his dependence on this concrete hellhole and wanting to leave with me? And if I can convince him, where do we go? Where's safe?'

"Baby girl, where are you? Daddy's waiting dinner for you." Laing's exquisite, smooth voice poured into the room, making Angelica shiver.

"Sorry, Daddy! Just getting dressed. On my way..." Taking another look at her pale face, she sighed and pinched her cheeks pink before leaving the room. When Angelica walked into the main room, she could see dinner set on the terrace off the dining room again, the candlelit table looking surprisingly warm and welcoming on the concrete surface. Robert was just opening a bottle of wine, two delicate wine glasses before him.

"Since you've been enjoying being outside..." Angelica stifled a whimper as his aquiline nose slid down her neck, "...I thought we'd have dinner here this evening. Smoky or not-" he broke off and grinned as she giggled before putting a hand up to her mouth, "-I think it will be a gorgeous sunset. Shall we, little one?" Taking his hand and nodding, Angelica let herself be led on to the deck again. Looking up at the malignant Charlotte's balcony right above Laing's, she noticed that it was just set back enough to observe everything on the decks below, giving no privacy to anyone who lived beneath her floor. Another grand strategy from the Architect, Angelica bitterly surmised, no one 'deserving' privacy from those deemed superior to them. Nonetheless, she kissed Robert's cheek delicately as he held out her chair for her, enjoying with a little shiver the guttural purr of approval he gave her for the kiss.

It was such a battle, she realized, wanting to pounce on this intelligent, sophisticated man and beg him to acknowledge that the world was going to hell around them. That there was proof now that it was no longer just the High Rise, but that mankind's insanity seemed to be running rampant. Watching the fine lines around Laing's eyes crease as he smiled at her made Angelica ache to climb
over the table into his lap and wrap those long, strong arms around her. Make him listen and really understand-

"-only child?"

Embarrassed, her head jerked up, blue eyes wide and trying to focus on her captor. "I'm sorry...Daddy. I guess I'm not very focused." Angelica shoved down the stab of guilt at manipulating Laing and tried to look attentive. "You were asking me something?" His gaze was so keen, and she shifted nervously, wondering if he could read her mind. Was there something in his mysterious drug stash that could make her thoughts form above her head like a balloon, like in the graphic novels Marlene loved to read?

"Where are you, my Angel? Come back."

Angelica's eyes widened and she looked up to see Laing's expression was now grim, concerned and his eyes were traveling over her in a professional, appraising way. Taking a deep breath, she squared her shoulders. "I'm sorry, Daddy. I'm distracted because of what's happening. I thought it was just here, in the High Rise. But it's everywhere now, isn't it? At least in London. This... madness. What do you think is happening?" Her hands were shaking and she kept them clenched in her lap. When she forced herself to look at him directly, it was as she'd feared, The Doctor Laing's beautiful face was set and cold.

"What are you talking about, darling? You shouldn't be this confused, you haven't had a dose for 12 hours."

Without thinking, Angelica stood, making her way to his side of the table and sitting on his lap. Despite his frozen, set expression, Laing put a hand around her hips to steady her. "Daddy... do you remember that first day here in your flat, when you made me breakfast and you listened to my worries about the High Rise? I could tell you weren't humoring me. You really listened. Could you..." the woman paused, trying to see if anything she'd said penetrated through the blank expression on his face. Taking a gulp of his wine for her suddenly dry throat, Angelica continued. "Could you please listen to me like that... now? Please?"

There was a terrifying moment when she thought he wouldn't, that the Cold Doctor Laing would prevail and he would hold her down and inject her with something terrifying For Her Own Good. But then, the warmer azure sheen of his eyes stared into hers. His angel needed him. Of course.

"What's troubling you, love?" Robert's voice was so kind, her very most favorite tone in his rich, expressive repertoire. "I'm listening."

Relaxing into his hard body for a moment with a hug, Angelica sat up again, carefully straddling him and putting her hands on his shoulders. Robert's hands stayed on her lips, long fingers idly stroking the skin from where the little nightie rode up on her thighs. She looked at his exquisite, fine-boned face, concentrating on the kindness she saw there, praying it would stay. "Here I am..." she paused, desperately searching for the words that would reach him, sink past the layer of filth the High Rise had built like a wall in his sanity. "Here I am, completely clear-headed. Nothing to soothe me, except for you. And you were right all along Rober- I mean Daddy- I do need you. I do feel... feel for you." Here, Robert smiled, leaning in to kiss her, but then returning to his original position and nodded for her to continue. "There are fires all over London. That's not normal, is it?"

Laing frowned, but he nodded. "Of course not. But I'm sure the authorities will have it under control shortly."

"Here in the High Rise, people are hurting each other. Attacking each other for food. Taking their
neighbors as captives, or slaves or something." Angelica swallowed down the anxiety threatening to choke her. If she upset him, Laing would inject her with a horrible drug, make her a Wilder. "Does that seem normal to you?" Wide eyes, the color of the sky at dawn, stared into his. "Does it, Robert?"

He was staring back, mouth half open as if to answer, dark brows furrowed as Robert struggled for the right answer. "Sweet girl, I know it seems-"

An ugly burst of laughter from above them cut him off, Angelica and Laing looking up to see a brunette and three men laughing, dangling overflowing glasses of alcohol, liquid spilling over the side as they bumped against each unsteadily. "Such a tender moment!" shouted Charlotte, a savage, manic grin on her face, "Hope we didn't interrupt, just enjoying the show! Do go on." The women's gazes met, eyes narrowed and furious.

"See you've tamed the American, Laing!" Drawled one of the men, and Angelica flushed with fury, recognizing Pangbourne, one of the men she'd faced down in the hall that morning- the moment all the madness started for her. "Lovely little arse, bring her up here, we'll have a party!"

Smoothly pulling down Angelica's nightgown and lifting her off his lap in the same movement, Laing stood, eyeing the interlopers thoughtfully. He didn't say anything, simply looking them over, but it was enough. The laughter died down and the men began pulling Charlotte away from the edge. With an ugly twist to her mouth, the brunette suddenly shouted, "Is that the same table we fucked on, Robert? Such an enjoyable evening..." She was cut off as her face disappeared and they could hear the glass slider upstairs slam shut.

Closing her eyes, Angelica took a deep breath, smelling smoke on the wind as she tried to center herself. Robert put a hand under her chin, raising her face to his. "They are of no consequence, little one. Come, help me bring the dishes inside. We’ll eat there." She found herself smiling back at him and picked up her plate.

Dinner finished, Robert placed Angelica on the hugely comfortable couch facing the windows and the lights of London- about half the amount there should be, she noticed. Robert smiled down at her. "Would you like me to read to you?"

"Yes, please!" Unbidden, the memory of Marlene teasing her about having 'voice kink' returned to her, and Angelica started giggling helplessly.

Stroking her silver hair, Robert shook his head and chuckled. "Care to let me in on the joke, darling?"

"Oh, um, I was remembering a comment one of my friends at the airline made- she teased me about having a voice kink?" Seeing his brow raise, Angelica tried to explain, "It’s like having a thing for men who wear beautiful suits, um, suit kink?" Eyeing Robert, she watched a slow smile spread across his face.

"Darling," he purred, "are you saying my voice turns you on?"

Angelica put her hands to her hot cheeks, this was not going the way she’d intended! "I just. It's. I." She let out a sigh. "Yes."

He turned then, walking over to the bookshelf. Returning, Robert seated himself, stretching his long legs out on the couch, spread a bit and patted one thigh. "Come to Daddy."

Groaning inwardly, she did as she was told.
Settling her comfortably in the cradle of his pelvis, Robert waited until his angel was relaxed, then opened the book.

"Not marble, nor the gilded monuments
Of princes, shall outlive this powerful rhyme;
But you shall shine more bright in these contents
Than unswept stone, besmear'd with sluttish time.
When wasteful war shall statues overturn,
And broils root out the work of masonry,
Nor Mars his sword nor war's quick fire shall burn
The living record of your memory...
"

Angelica turned, resting the thin bone of her temple against his chest, feeling his words vibrate through her, suppressing a little shiver. The world seemed utterly silent, except for Robert's elegant elocution and deep tone.

"'Gainst death and all-oblivious enmity
Shall you pace forth; your praise shall still find room
Even in the eyes of all posterity
That wear this world out to the ending doom.
So, till the judgment that yourself arise,
You live in this, and dwell in lovers' eyes."

Robert's beautiful voice stilled, and he looked down at her, seeing those pink lips open, barely breathing so as not to break his spell. Leaning down slowly, he put his mouth over hers, delicately brushing his lips back and forth, testing her. Feeling herself shiver, Angelica made the first invitation in their time together, drawing his head back down to her and deepening the kiss.

This time was different than the others. Laing took her slowly, tenderly. He kissed up and down each long leg, nuzzling the space between her breasts and kissing below her ear, breathing her in and feeling the silkiness of her hair stroke across his cheek. He continued to murmur bits and pieces of sonnets as he kissed Angelica’s breasts, playing with her nipples and blowing cool air on them, enjoying how they tightened for him.

“O, she doth teach the torches to burn bright!
It seems she hangs upon the cheek of night
Like a rich jewel in an Ethiope's ear;
Beauty too rich for use, for earth too dear…”

Angelica wrapped her arms around Robert’s shoulders, stroking along the smooth, freckled skin, enjoying the feeling of the muscles shift as his head moved upward again, his lips and tongue teasing along the sensitive shell of her ear as he continued to purr the Bard’s lines. When she gave a full body shudder, he chuckled and gathered her into his arms, going back on his heels and lifting Angelica, centering her over his rigid cock and letting her slide down it, slowly. Her head dropped back and she moaned, feeling the girth of him spread her, that now-familiar sting and stretch that felt ridiculously good. Robert's big palms settled over the globes of her bottom, squeezing them before helping her lift up, and then slide down, going deeper inside her as her sensitive clit began brushing against the coarse, springy hair at his groin. Then, squeezing again, Robert repeated the motion, over
and over as Angelica grew wetter, slicker along his cock, her breathless little gasps and moans in his ear making him tighten his grip on her as her arms went around his neck, kissing along his jaw and down the throbbing tendon in his neck.

"Mmmmm..." Robert purred, "my lovely, delicious girl. would you like more?"

"Yes please," Angelica gasped, "more Shakespeare, more you inside me."

Groaning, he pushed her on to her back on the bed, hovering over as his shaft shoved deeper inside he, enjoying the feeling of her legs tucked around his hips, heels digging in just under his taut ass. His quick mind began flailing for another of his favorite sonnets. Laing had loved Shakespeare, studied the writer at Eton. But when his father found he had signed up for some English Literature studies at Cambridge, he'd put a quick end to it. "Wasting time on such nonsense when your role is to be a doctor? A man who saves lives? Are you going to save a dying man by quoting Shakespeare to him?" But here they were, his angel under him and asking for more.

"Ask me no reason why I love you; for though Love use Reason for his physician, he admits him not for his counsellor..."

His lips moved through the words, even though Robert's brain was signaling frantically that he was speaking of love to this woman, a woman who now had the power to hurt him. A woman who knew his weakness. But his traitorous lips continued, enjoying Angelica's shining eyes and little moans, how her arms and her pussy tightened around him. "It's time, baby girl," Robert managed to groan, "time to come for Daddy." And as his lean hips pushed hard enough to slide Angelica halfway across the bed, she did, crying out as she clenched around him, all the heat and slick and clutching of that satiny walls making Robert groan and come too, both sweating and shaking. Dropping his forehead to hers, he fought to catch his breath, enjoying how she was still squeezing and stroking along his spurting cock inside her.

"So beautiful..." Angelica finally managed to gasp, "thank you, Daddy."
“Again?” Angelica was trying to keep the whining tone out of her question, but she knew it was creeping in, based on Robert’s irritable expression.

“Yes, darling. Again. I have rounds to make and patients to see. The thought of leaving you alone...” he actually shuddered, and she felt a strange sort of warmth, knowing he felt so strongly about her safety. Now, if she could just focus that towards leaving what was currently the most dangerous place on the planet. It didn’t matter what was exploding in downtown London, she’d rather face that than another hellish “party” with their psychotic host in the penthouse.
Besides, if she were being honest, Angelica felt dangerously soft this morning after that evening of Shakespeare and beautiful Robert. It seemed the doctor was similarly affected, as he would kiss and nuzzle her as she tried to get dressed. His choice- laid out on the bed for her- seemed a little strange for early in the afternoon, but she obediently put on the white cocktail dress. Robert watched her shift, trying to pull up the zipper, and walked over to finish the job. Hesitantly relaxing into his chest, Angelica watched his cobalt gaze, clear, focused. 'No drugs for either of us today?' she thought hopefully. The woman felt the sharpest she'd been since entering into Robert's flat that fateful day, no creeping miasma or befuddled thoughts. And the man behind her- who was currently running his cool mouth down her throat- wasn't wearing that terrifying blank expression she'd seen so many times. Which led her to wonder... was Robert being drugged, too? The Doctor Laing was such a control freak, she thought, unable to imagine him willingly taking anything that dulled his razor-sharp senses.

Feeling her stiffen against him, Robert frowned, running his big, warm hands up and down her bare arms. "What are you thinking, little girl?"

Angelica quickly smiled. "I was just appreciating feeling so good this morning, and it seems like you do, too?"

He tucked his chin on her shoulder, catching her gaze in the mirror. "Do you remember the first time we met, darling?" Chuckling as she barely controlled an eye-roll, Robert placed a kiss on her jaw. "You were wearing this dress- the light shining on your silver hair and very much living up to your name."

Smiling despite herself, Angelica marveled, "You really remember what I was wearing?"

"Of course," the doctor pulled away, fastening the little hook and eye at the top of the dress. "How could I forget? It was the moment I found the most exquisite girl in the world... and managed to instantly offend her. I'm surprised you didn't slap me."

Giggling, Angelica still shook her head, eyes wide. "I was so angry- but hit you? I can't imagine. I can't imagine anyone having the nerve to try to raise a hand to you." She shivered as his eyes cooled, turning polar.

"Few have tried," he not-quite hissed, "but they certainly regretted it." Straightening the straps of her dress with a jerk, he looked at her in the mirror again. "Ready to go?"

Forcing another smile, she nodded obediently.

Opening Laing's well-locked door was always a surge of fresh hell. This time, there was a couple vigorously humping in the open doorway of Angelica’s old flat, framed by the shattered doorway- and to her horror and disgust- the woman was wearing her lingerie. It felt violating in a way she hadn’t expected, and she turned her head, trying to focus on the obstacle course of human detritus and trash that blocked their way to the lift. She could tell by Robert’s concerned gaze that he could see her misery, but Angelica firmed her lips and pushed through, helping her beautiful captor smash a clear path to the mirrored contraption that would carry them to another hellish orgy on the penthouse floor. Her eyes lowered from his satisfied smile as Laing leaned against the searing light bouncing off the reflective surface around them.

"Once again, Angel," he crooned, "you prove how brave and strong you are, refusing to bow down to the more... bestial element on the 25th floor. Daddy is so very proud of you."
Angelica rubbed her pale eyes, hurting from the light bouncing off all the mirrored panels. "Thank you, Daddy. But I would never leave you to do all the work alone, you know." There was a sudden stillness in the way Laing held her that made the woman look up apprehensively.

"You don't think I could protect you?" There was a chill in the doctor's voice that made her want to cry, suddenly weary from her delicate balancing act with her mercurial captor.

"No, Daddy- that's not what I meant- I..." Angelica rubbed her eyes again, tired of placating this beautiful and terrifying man. “You already have, Daddy,” she looked up at the cold expression on Laing’s face, using her sweetest tone, and putting her hand on his chest. “You protect me all the time, don’t you?” She could feel herself sag a bit in relief as he suddenly smiled, staring down at her lovingly.

“Yes, sweet girl. And I always will.” Robert gave her a kiss on the forehead as the doors opened. But inwardly, he was puzzling over his sudden irrationality. Why would he become upset with her for nothing, really? Laing prized his logical thinking. Why would he… Brow furrowed, he walked through the huge entry, stinking from trash piled by the door, the haze of weed in the air and more naked bodies, sleeping or lounging on every flat surface. And for the first time, the doctor felt disgust go through him.

‘Royal’s letting these people live like animals,’ he thought, lip curling, ‘my god, have any of these swine even bathed in the last month?’ For once, his instant excuse of the “upper strata” didn’t knock out his logical thought process from beginning to end.

Angelica was still, watching his face avidly. Laing was by nature not one to share his thoughts easily, and he traditionally wore an expression of urbane amusement. But this- his brow furrowed, and a look of distaste on that beautiful face. Holding her breath as if it would keep the moment intact, she cautiously allowed herself to hope, that maybe Robert was finally-

“Dear boy! Thank god you are here,” drawled Royal, sweeping between them and attempting to make off with Laing. “Wilder’s worse than a rabid dog, and Charlotte’s needing a touch-up…”

“Wait.”

Royal paused in surprise as Laing dug in his heels. “I shall be there in a moment, Anthony. I need to see to Angelica’s comfort first.” Maybe it was the phrasing, but the woman could see a sneer cross the older man’s face before he turned to Laing.

“Of course. Join me in the master bedroom, if you would.”

As the architect passed her, Angelica could feel the hate coming off him in waves- she could practically smell it- ‘well, that might just be body funk, booze and…’ she shuddered, ‘fluids.’ Not wanting to think about just what that might involve, she hastily turned to Robert, who’d taken her by the arm and was looking around the room. His expression cleared and he guided her past a writhing knot of people to a woman seated grandly before them.

“My darling Sulk,” said Laing, bending to kiss her regally offered hand while keeping hold of Angelica with the other.

“Doctor…” The woman's voice was a purr, more feline than human and it made her even more attractive. Angelica’s brow furrowed as she tried to recall who she was. The domme was clad in black leather- of course, with high heels boasting sharpened points. A silver shag and piercing green eyes looked Angelica over as well. “What have you brought me, Robert? Is she a present?”
“No!” Laing not-quite shouted, ignoring Sulk’s little giggle as she enjoyed his discomfort. “Angelica darling, this is the Lady Sulk. Sulk, my Angelica…” he paused as the two women nodded at each other. “Would you do me the great favor of keeping Angelica safe with you for the moment? I need to attend to a few patients and it’s not a thing she needs to see.”

“You’re giving me a babysitter?” It burst out of Angelica before she could stop herself, flinching inwardly at Sulk’s hearty laughter and a warning look from her stern daddy.

“No, darling. You have shown yourself quite adept at protecting yourself. I merely wish to keep you out of trouble. And Sulk is delightful company.” Giving her a hard kiss, Laing moved towards the master bedroom, pulling his parcel of syringes from his jacket pocket.

Turning to look at the amused woman, who was idly flicking her riding crop every now and then if it looked like one of her "toys" were slowing in their frenzied fornication, Angelica smiled bravely. "Hello. I think we've spoken before? The laundry room on the 25th floor?" Suddenly, the incongruity of folding sheets and discussing the merits of detergents with the leather-clad vixen made her start laughing. Fortunately, Sulk joined in.

"Yes, things used to be much more mundane, didn't they?" Sulk agreed. "Spending our time running little errands and other meaningless bits..."

Angelica's brow raised. Even while overseeing her little group of sweating "toys," this woman still seemed sane, a sharp intelligence on her lovely face. "Do you prefer this life, then?"

Stretching elaborately, the domme moved over and patted the couch space next to her. "I do enjoy a good orgy, though this one's certainly for the record books. Wake, fuck, sleep, wake..." Looking sideways at an appalled Angelica, she chuckled again. "Not your ideal way to spend the weekend, then."

Tearing her eyes away from a curiously knotted couple attaching body parts in places that seemed anatomically impossible, Angelica decisively shook her head. "I'm apparently more old-fashioned than I knew," she said wryly. Looking into Sulk's clear eyes, she took a chance. "You seem more... present than the rest of Royal's party guests," she ventured carefully, "do you know what's happening outside? That the madness isn't just here in the High Rise?"

"Of course," the domme drewled, picking up a small device and flicking someone's dildo on high, given the shriek that came from her puddle of flesh, "it's cyclic. It's certainly wider-spread and more sinister this time, but it's not as shocking and unthinkable as it may seem."

Angelica found herself getting more comfortable on the grimy sofa, folding her arms and watching this unusual woman. "Really? How so?"

Giving her a saucy wink, Sulk explained, "I'm- was- a professor of history at London University. In centuries past, people flooded the streets during a revolution. In our paranoid present, society is devolving by hiding inside... just like we are." She smiled at Angelica's look of disbelief. "Look at the '70s, darling. It was remarkably similar, though certainly not as... dramatic. The Trades Unions, representing the lowest of society, destabilized a government. Bin men went on strike, litter-filled back yards, and street corners. Then, there was the summer of '76; a heatwave made the tar on the streets melt. I was regularly told off for treating it like playdough! It was still light as day at 11 o'clock at night. The water shortages had me and my mother queuing for hours at a stand pump for buckets of water. As more unions went on strike, there were electricity brownouts. The BBC had several evenings when they could not broadcast programmes. They just displayed a test card. But there was always the upper crust- they were untouched by the chaos, still getting their cocktail onions and fine liquor, no matter how bad things got. Because the wealthy will always be insulated from the
struggles of the 'common man.'" Here, Sulk sneered, looking around her.

"The government fell, to be replaced by a firm and viciously stable conservative rule, spearheaded by Margaret Thatcher." Sulk rolled her arresting eyes, "Maggie was efficient and ruthless. She practically knocked trades unions to their knees, she spearheaded modern conservatism." She shrugged, prodding a man's back with one of her sharpened heels. "We'll see that again. But the de-evolution must come full circle first. More disintegration. More violence. When we're all softened up and ready to see the trains run on time again, we'll get just the sort of new overlords that we deserve." Giving a contemptuous sniff, Sulk side-eyed Angelica, who'd been listening raptly.

"I'm... not sure if I'm encouraged by getting a sense of what's going on, or even more in despair that this has happened before, and we never seem to learn from our mistakes," Angelica admitted. The domme's words made sense, in a horribly matter-of-fact fashion. "And here we are, Royal's still getting all his special items." Her silver head cocked, deep in thought. "The question is, Sulk. Where is he getting it all?"

The domme laughed. "Darling. Do you really think our Lord and Master would be caught dead in the lift with the common folk? He has his own way up and down. I'm sure a clever girl like you can figure it out."

Angelica smiled tentatively, feeling a burst of warmth for this woman who accepted her without mania or hate. "I'm so happy to have met you, Sulk. I was beginning to wonder if there was a sane person left in this concrete hellhole."

Her blood turned to ice as the other woman gave her a long, strange smile that showed too many teeth. "Sane?" Sulk hummed something off-tune, looking across the landscape of sweating, writhing bodies. "Not exactly, darling or I wouldn't be here, would I?" Idly flicking her crop, the woman glanced back to Angelica. "I'm here as Nero. Just fiddling while Rome burns..."

"Darling?"

Angelica jumped and gave a startled shriek, sparking laughter from around them. Laing was looking down at her, his polar eyes examining her. "I'm sorry Dadd- Robert, I didn't hear you come up."

His frigid gaze shifted between his shaken girl and a smiling Sulk, lounging in a decidedly cat-like fashion. "I trust you two had a nice visit?" Laing intoned, chill radiating off him in waves.

"Your Angelica, she's very clever," drawled the domme, running the back of her hand down the shaken woman's cheek as she briskly slammed a flogger onto the unprotected ass of one of her "toys." Her green-eyed scrutiny was suddenly sharp again, penetrating. "I imagine this is goodbye, Angelica. Take care of each other. 'Bye, Daddy." Sulk chuckled unrepentantly at Robert's flared nostrils and turned back to the clutch of bodies, whining for her attention.

"What was that?"

"I- excuse me?" Angelica was desperately looking for a glimpse of any of her flatmates, even more worried about their safety, now that sanity seemed optional in the penthouse.

Laing briskly pulled her into the lift as the doors opened. "That odd exchange with the Lady Sulk. What was she referring to?"

Angelica got her first good look at Robert as he loomed over her. The trembling started in her gut, traveling down to her legs as she recognized the glassy, distant look. "Daddy," she croaked, trying to
clear her throat. "Did you uh, eat anything, take anything with Royal?" She got a brisk shake for her trouble as Laing took a firm grip on her upper arms.

"I asked you a question, little girl."

It was if the beautiful man who'd made love to her the night before, whispered Shakespeare into her ear was gone, his tall body hijacked by the chilly stranger who'd first taken her. "We were talking about Sulk's profession. Did you know she was a professor of history? London University?" She watched as one big hand left her arm to press a red button on the chrome panel, halting the lift's descent.

"What was the nonsense about 'this is goodbye, take care of each other'? What were you telling her?" Angelica could smell it now, the faint chemical undertone that told her that sick bastard ruling over his fetid penthouse somehow drugged her Robert.

"I didn't really say much," she protested, "she was telling me about cycles of revolution here in Britain, that's all!"

"Hmmm..." he was staring at her, running over Angelica's anxious face, her pretty breasts demurely peeping from her neckline. "I knew you'd be delicious in this little white dress." As Laing leaned down to kiss her, the girl could smell the scotch on his breath, tainted with the sour synthetic odor that sparked the familiar fear in her.

"Turn around, baby."

Shaking, Angelica did as she was told, feeling his eager hands pulling down the zipper on the dress. When her hands fluttered up to cover herself from the multiple reflections in the mirrors on every wall of the lift car, Laing growled, pulling her arms wide. "You know you are never to hide from your daddy." They watched as her dress slipped over her hips and dropped to the floor. Left only in undies and high heels, she flushed, closing her eyes. All of Angelica was exposed- the curve of her ass in one panel, her breasts in another, the shadow of her pubic hair in the sheer knickers in yet another mirrored surface. And he turned her around, enjoying each angle of his little girl's body, finally yanking the offending scrap of lace off her hips to enjoy the sight of his fingers sliding down over her mound, two long fingers stroking along her slit, spreading her lips to tease her opening.

"There it is..."

Humiliated, Angelica could feel herself getting wet, the slick shining along her pelvis in the harsh lights of the lift. His dexterous fingers were playing in it, spreading wet trails through her lips, over her clitoris and dipping back inside her to gather more.

But she tried, she did- not wanting to be laid bare in this harsh, unforgiving box. "Daddy, could we please go back to the flat? I want to be in your bed, sucking you?"

As expected, Robert's groan rumbled through his broad chest, tingling against the thin skin over her spine. "I don't believe so, darling. I think right." His cool mouth sucked against her throat. "Here." The next pressure was against the bend of her neck to her shoulder. "Is." Down to her left breast, sucking harshly against her nipple. "Perfect." By the time those treacherous lips attacked her right nipple, Angelica was shaking and moaning, knowing the battle was over.

"On your knees, baby."

Reluctantly, she did, trying not to look at her reflection, not wanting to witness her submission. So naturally, Laing's hand went under her jaw, pushing it up. "Open your eyes."
Angelica sucked in a breath. Her silver hair was wildly scattered, livid bruise and bite marks on her shoulders, throat, and breasts. And those breasts were heaving—desperate for more of his mouth. What had happened to her? Who was she? As Laing thrust abruptly into her from behind, holding her hips to pull and push her along his lengthy cock, the woman had to admit that at the moment, she was whatever her terrifying daddy wanted her to be.

It was unfair, she thought, dazed. Laing knew how to use her body against her, how to pull and kiss and bite. That sliding her clit between two long fingers would make her shake. That hoisting her on to his lap— as Robert was doing now— and rubbing her clit against his protruding hip bone would make her moan and grind against him. That he knew the feel of his big, warm hands tightly gripping her ass and ruthlessly hoisting her up and down on that huge and invasive cock would make her back arch, driving her to madness as the tip of him would press harshly against all the soft, tender, sensitive bits inside her. And when he gripped her silver fall of hair and yanked it to make her look down to where they were joined, she would see his glistening cock shoving in and out of her and it would set Angelica off, crying and moaning and tightening down so hard on that battering cock that it would force Laing into a round of cursing as he’d spurt wildly into her.

Which was exactly what happened under those harsh, unforgiving lights, the multiple reflections that showed their bodies arching and pushing against each other. Angelica dropped her head to Robert’s shoulder, clinging to his sweaty back and trying not to notice that their combined slick was seeping out of her, wetting their thighs and stomachs.

Chapter End Notes

A: On the bright side, an orgasm is an orgasm.
B: Angelica at least has some idea of what the hell is going on, and
C: Royal is the treacherous, roofie-pushing bastard that we knew he was. But now that Robert remembered what lucidity felt like, maybe he won't be so eager to sink back into the chemical-laced fuckery of the penthouse floor.
The Tipping Point

Chapter Summary

In which Robert sees clearly. Also, Shakespeare and terrifying balcony sex.

Chapter Notes

Thank you so very much to the very lovely and wonderful rayofdawnworld for creating this beautiful art! I'm so honored, truly. This incorporated so many of the dark and dreamy images from the story...

After they'd reached their frenzied finish on the grimy floor of the lift, there wasn't much Angelica remembered. It almost felt like she was the one drugged again, rather than Robert. And even poisoned by the ghoul who ruled the High-Rise, her beautiful and terrifying daddy still ruthlessly tore a path to his flat through the human and other detritus. It was becoming harder and harder for the woman to see their fellow residents on the 25th floor as human. The woman in 2511 who used to drop by some cookies when she knew the girls were home from a flight- she wore nothing but a tattered bra and an apron now- littered with bloody stains that looked more at home on a butcher's cover than one used to avoid flour and egg spills as she rooted through the trash left by the incinerator chute.
"Mrs.- Mrs. Milken? It's Angelica? You used to-" she backed up against Laing as the woman's head darted up, nostrils flaring like an animal's. With a porcine grunt, she began leaping her skinny little body over the debris, hands out and stiff like claws. Angrily, Thomas swung his tennis racquet at Mrs. Milken, knocking her off her intended destination of Angelica's throat.

"What the HELL were you thinking back there!"

The door slammed and multiple locks engaged, Thomas took Angelica by the shoulders and shoved her against the scarred oak. Heart pounding, she tried to take a deep breath. "I..."

"You. WHAT? Angelica! She could have torn your throat out like a dog's! Where do you think her three dachshunds went?" The man looming above her was livid, pale eyes a blazing steel blue.

Sagging against the door, she swallowed hard against the lump in her throat, trying to explain. "She used to make us cookies... I thought..." childishly wiping her nose on the back of her hand, Angelica continued, "I thought maybe she was still in there, somewhere."

Her explanation did nothing to calm Laing, who hoisted her higher against the door, eye to eye. "There is nothing left that is human here, Angelica! Nothing! You cannot risk your life thinking you can save them!"

Spine suddenly stiff, she angrily thrashed until set on her own feet again, grasping the collar of Robert's filthy dress shirt. "IF THERE IS NOTHING LEFT THAT IS HUMAN HERE WHY ARE WE STILL IN THIS HELL HOLE?"

Though the expression on his face was still thunderous, his big hands loosened their grasp on Angelica's upper arms, setting her down carefully. "Because... we..."

"Why, Robert?" she pleaded, "We can go- we can find a safe place together! If we stay here we'll end up just like Mrs. Milken- rooting through the trash, not even human!"

The Doctor Robert Laing drew up in his most haughty fashion, glaring down at her contemptuously, but Angelica could see the confusion simmering under the arrogance. "Really, darling," he drawled, "and where would we go?"

Hands still clutching his shirt, her mind raced. "Your cottage? Your home, in- in Devon, right? Sandbridge? It's secluded enough that it must have escaped the violence, and Toby said there are still clear ways out of the city?" Angelica's heart was pounding so hard that Laing could see the pulse fluttering in her throat. She took advantage of his hesitation. "It's home, Robert! You could- you could take me home, Daddy." Heart sinking, she could see she'd gone too far, the confusion in his crystal clear eyes sharpening into a polar glare again.

"Really, pet. Do you think to manipulate me with such transparent tricks? I thought you were brighter than that." His hand pulled hers off their desperate grip on his shirt. "Go into the bedroom until I call for you." His eyes narrowed when Angelica's mouth opened as if to plead with him again. "GO!"

Gritting her teeth against a scream, she whirled and marched into his room and closed the door, not daring to slam it.

Robert furiously paced the length of his living room, back and forth, rubbing his forehead and fuming over that ridiculous, impossible girl! Can't she see he's kept her safe here? Why won't his
angel accept that this is the safest place to be? Unbidden, an image of their summer home rose in his tangled mind. A big stone cottage, situated on a hill over the surf... stout oak doors... down a private, locked lane... it was doubtful looters, even anyone from the area would have been there...

"What in the hell is wrong with me?"

Stopping dead, Laing rotated his stiff shoulders, opening the terrace door to head outside. Maybe some fresh air would calm him down. Breathing in the slightly smoky air, he closed his eyes as a weak breeze ruffled his hair. What had he been thinking? Silly girl- and letting her get to him like that! Escaping to the cottage. Such nonsense.

"I didn't know adults got sent to their rooms, like kids." Robert nearly brought the golf club he kept out on the deck for emergencies up and around when he recognized the voice. Toby was clinging to the railing, like a ragged gargoyle. "Were you really going to hit me with that?" he asked, wide-eyed.

Dropping his improvised weapon, the man glared at Toby, who'd hopped off the railing and was looking through his telescope. "I'm going to put a bell on you, boy," Laing muttered irritably. Walking over to where the child was scribbling numbers in his battered little notebook, he asked, "And what part of the city are you studying today?"

"Escape routes," Toby said matter-of-factly, looking into the scope again. "We don't have much time, now."

The words, spoken by the grubby child sent a bolt of ice through Robert's heart. The tall man stared down into the broken lens of the boy's glasses. "Why do you say that, Toby?" Laing asked slowly.

"Don't you see?" The boy didn't seem frightened, more resigned. "We're at the tipping point."

The shard of ice worked it's way deeper into the organ in the center of Laing's chest. It had been so long since he'd used it- until Angelina, of course- that he wasn't sure it could work anymore. But he definitely felt this- the alarm, turning into horror. "What do you mean?"

"The Tipping Point," Toby recited calmly, as if from memory, "Gladwell defines a tipping point as 'the moment of critical mass, the threshold, the boiling point'. His book explained the mysterious sociological changes that mark everyday life until society reaches the tipping point and collapses."

Robert frowned thoughtfully. He remembered reading something similar- an interview with a sociologist who asserted that as the civilized world decayed during a crisis, society would desperately pretend normalcy until there was nothing left.

"Exactly," Toby agreed. Laing pinched the bridge of his nose. He didn't realize he'd said that out loud. And he was getting another of those damnable headaches that could only be soothed by a shot of Jameson, like the one he'd shared with Royal upstairs...

Sighing, he forced his attention back to the present. "And what happens when we reach the tipping point, Toby?" Smiling faintly at the boy's look of disapproval, he admitted, "I didn't finish the article."

"Violence." Toby said flatly, "Murder, enslaving the weak, taking what's left of the resources. And then the strong turning on each other when nothing is left."

A moment passed as the two stared at each other, the breeze picking up again and blowing Toby's too-long hair into his eyes. It was blessedly silent, their savage neighbors not yet awake for that night's terrifying "festivities." "Do you truly think that London's reached this level of disaster, son?" Robert was incredulous. He didn't believe this brilliant, strange child. But then, he'd been a brilliant,
Toby looked at him with the contemptuous incredulity that only a child can muster for a dim-witted adult. “It already has, here in the High-Rise. Now we just wait for the strong to turn on each other. Mr. Royal wants it. He’s waiting for it.” The boy turned and scrambled up his makeshift rope ladder to his mother’s terrace above Robert’s. Craning his head, the man watched him go. Toby’s head peeked over the edge for a moment.

“There isn’t much time left.”

Angelica stood half-hidden behind the floor to ceiling drapes in Robert’s bedroom, listening to the conversation between the curious child and a clearly agitated Robert. She’d seen him angry, lustful, occasionally humorous, but never the way he was now, pacing again with one hand on his hip, the other ruffling through his hair. It would be ironic if he chose to believe a child’s reasoning instead of hers, but she’d take it. Anything that got him to see they needed to leave this horrible concrete prison before it buried them. Toby’s final, bleak statement chilled her.

"You can come out, Angelica."

Stiffening, she looked at Robert again from her hiding place. He was staring out to the city, but his request was clear. Stepping around some broken glass that had landed from an upper floor, she walked over to him and looked over the silent buildings as well. The fresh air was mildly surprising, and the woman realized it was because it didn't have that never-ending taint of petrol she'd come to associate with London. It was hard, Angelica thought, keeping her mouth shut and waiting for him to speak. She was so used to cutting off conversations or directing them where they needed to go for efficiency and speed. This... waiting was so alien to her. Thinking back further into her childhood, she shivered as she realized silence also meant her mother was building another drug-fueled rage. Silence was to be avoided.

"Are you cold?" Robert's arm was around her shoulders then, rubbing her warm skin. Her silvered hair was unbound, flowing down her back in the way he liked it best.

Angelica shook her head. "Just thinking about the past."

Placing an absent kiss on the top of her head, Robert thought about the changes in her—how silent she'd become, waiting to see what he would do before responding. It was such a polar change from her firm, "take charge" personality of before that it suddenly made him feel very sad. He’d come to love that part of the girl—fierce, refusing to be intimidated by anyone. But those flares of independence and strength still came through—like her implausible plan to escape to Sandbridge. Rubbing his throbbing forehead again, Laing tried to remember what the boy said. "Royal wants it," he’d said, "he’s waiting for it."

"Do you have a headache?"

He looked down absently. his angel was looking up at him with those concerned, beautiful eyes. In the weak sun, they were just the shade of a tidepool in from of his summer- 'Goddamnit!' he thought, 'Why do I keep thinking about the cottage?' Taking a deep breath, Robert forced himself to smile at her. "Yes, it's nothing."

"I could rub your head and shoulders?" Angelica offered tentatively, "It used to help a friend of mine who always had migraines."
Robert was about to wave away her offer- The Doctor Robert Laing required no one’s assistance- but he found himself nodding instead. “Thank you, darling.”

Seating him on one of the comfortable chaises, Angelica angled Laing so he could still see the city as she slid behind him and on to the back of the seat so she could bracket him between her knees. He almost let out a groan as her hands began to knead the rigid tendons in his neck. Such little hands to be so strong…

“And though she be but little, she is fierce.” His voice deeper, smooth and sonorous, and Angelica shivered a little as he spoke.

Moving her thumbs to run along the base of his skull, she chuckled. “A Midsummer Night’s Dream. Am I Hermia?”

Laing’s brow raised. “Well, she is beloved. All the men yearn for her.” The strength of her hands was pulling his fragmented thoughts into some order, not as dazed by the pain from the never-ending headache.

“Hmmm… I preferred to think of myself as Helena when we studied the play in school.” Angelica’s tone was matter-of-fact, not as tentative as usual, he noticed. Enjoying this fragile moment, he leaned into her hands a bit more.

“But Helena begins the play as a love-sick fool, spurned by the man she wants.” Laing countered.

“True,” she admitted, those clever fingers sliding over the sharp ridge of his cheekbones, then his forehead and circling gently around his temples. “But Helena was still a rebel for her time, refusing to go with her father’s choice for a husband. Though Demetrius is deliberately cruel towards her, Helena remains honest in her devotion to him. And she is loyal in her friendships. She is the constant in the middle of love potions and fickle hearts.”

Her hands slipped to his shoulders as Robert twisted to look at her.

“Ay me! for aught that I could ever read,
Could ever hear by tale or history,
The course of true love never did run smooth.”

Angelica’s memory darted back to the hot, stuffy room where she’d read this play in college. Cupping Robert's lean face, she answered him.

“Love can transpose to form and dignity.
Love looks not with the eyes, but with the mind;
And therefore is winged Cupid painted blind.”

She was somehow not surprised when his hands shot out and lifted her swiftly into his lap, wrapping
her legs around his waist. But looking into Laing's eyes... Angelica tried to glance away, but his fingers on her chin pulled her back. Studying him, the woman couldn't tell what was happening. Not as clear and sharp as he'd be when Robert was fully in control of himself, but not the muddled blue that meant he'd ingested more of the High-Rise's chemical madness. But he was clear enough to examine her face, look into her eyes.

"Beautiful..." he mused, "I'd thought earlier how much your lovely eyes resemble the shade of a tidepool. I used to walk along the beach in the morning and collect shells and examine all the life swimming in those perfect pools of seawater." Laing bent his head and kissed her, enjoying the little sigh Angelica would give when his tongue coaxed her lips open. Rough thumbs traced along the slope of her cheekbones as his mouth moved lazily over hers. She put her arms around his neck, running her fingers through his close-cropped hair. It was everything he'd wanted, this exquisite girl pressed willingly against him, the fan of her lashes along her pale skin as she returned his kisses, twined her tongue along his.

Gasping as Robert suddenly stood up, Angelica's long legs tightened around him, clinging like a monkey as he strode over to the edge of the terrace, placing her on the broad lip of the retaining wall. By habit, she nervously looked right and left, and then up to make sure no one was watching. He met her eyes with a knowing smile. "You don't think I would check first, darling? No one is allowed to see you but me." Arching her back as he unzipped her wrinkled dress, Angelica felt herself press closer to his center, already heated and hard for him. Unthinkingly, she rubbed against him with a little moan, amazed that she could already be getting wet for him, eager for more.

Robert rested his head between her breasts, breathing deeply, hands squeezing her ass. "The smell of you, baby girl," he murmured, "your skin, your hair…" he pulled back and gave her a dark smile, "your lovely pussy." Chuckling as her eyes widened in shock, Laing braced his elbows on the railing, forearms holding her steady as he slid down between Angelica’s parted knees.

"Take your panties off for Daddy."

Angelica closed her eyes and shuddered. There it was again, the Voice. The murky, knowing tone from Robert that told her he already knew she would obey him. And she was, of course, arching her hips slightly without even thinking about it, pulling the scrap of silk off.

"Will you be able to come quietly, baby? Or does Daddy need to take you inside?"

"I uh- I don’t know, Daddy," she admitted. It was true, she was so far past fighting her need for this confusing, beautiful man, the desire for his mouth and that talented cock.

“Oh!”

Laing’s mouth fastened over her swelling lips, sliding his tongue along the seam of her pussy and slipping inside, stroking along her clit, down to her opening and back again. She felt the vibrations of him chuckling and nearly went backward over the edge until her thighs clamped down around his waist. He was diving into her like a starved man- shaking his head and rubbing his stubbled cheeks into her achingly sensitive flesh. If Angelica’s eyes were open, she would have been terrified to see how far out she was past the balcony, suspended in the open air and anchored by the lean muscles bulging in Robert’s arms, holding her motionless as he continued to play with her. When his mouth finally drew away from her, Angelica was embarrassed to hear her protesting whine.

"What, darling? What do you need from me?"

'Damn him!' Angelica groaned internally, knowing that if she opened her eyes, his gaze would be on her, watching her reactions, feeling how she trembled against him, knowing what she needed and
"Use your big girl words, Angel." His stubbled chin was cruelly rubbing into her terribly sensitive clit, and she was torn between holding on for dear life and yanking his face away. Panting and dropping her head back, she was terrified to see how far she was balanced, that her dazed view of the balconies above was quite clear and how grateful she was that no one was watching them.

Finally, desperate and not sure what else to do, Angelica gave in. "Please, Daddy. Would you please put... could you please be inside me?" Her tongue felt clumsy, and she knew there was likely a more effective way to ask for what she wanted, but it was all her tangled brain could muster.

Fortunately, it was enough, and she gave a strangled shriek as Robert slammed himself inside her, so wet already that she was more than ready for him, even while it felt like he'd split her in half. He gave a low grunt as her legs tightened into an iron grip around his narrow waist. "I've always admired your strong legs, darling..." he laughed breathlessly, "even though I'm certain you've pulverized my kidneys." In retaliation, he slammed into her harder, jolting Angelica a few inches further over the balcony. "My Angel, as much as I'm enjoying this," he purred into her ear, "my arms cannot hold you much longer. So you have exactly three strokes to come, or I will take my cock away and you will go to bed unsatisfied." Laughing unkindly at her protesting whine, Laing collected himself, pausing with the tip of his shaft just inside her.

"One," Angelica screamed as it felt as if he'd plundered through the top of her, hands clutching desperately to his filthy dress shirt.

"Two." Laing's eyes closed, if he looked at that beautiful, blissful face he would not be able to hold.

"Three." To their mutual relief- and satisfaction- the final thrust set off a chain reaction of explosive energy between them, the desperate clutch of her velvety walls around him squeezing Robert's erupting shaft in a merciless embrace that made him come harder, mindlessly shoving his hips into her spread thighs and trying to find a way deeper inside his delicious, perfect girl. Leaning heavily against the concrete barrier of his balcony, he waited until his legs were steady enough to lift a limp, panting Angelica and carry them unsteadily through the master bedroom and into the clean white tile of his bath.

To her embarrassment, Angelica found her shaking legs wouldn't hold her when Robert attempted to set her down in the bathroom, but he merely chuckled and sat them both on the edge of the tub as he filled it. They groaned together when he disengaged from her pussy in order to slip Angelica into the warm water, sliding in behind her. They both sat in silence, enjoying the feel of the water and their wet skin. When the hellish symphony of the night began playing, the shouts outside their haven, the thuds against the wall and shattering of glass, Laing suddenly said, "It's the Tipping Point."

Arching her neck to look up at him, Angelica said, "You see it too, don't you?"

His eyes were polar blue again, but not in fury. "We'll speak to Toby tomorrow."

Overcome, Angelica whirled in the water and wrapped her arms around his neck, pressing as closely as she could. "Daddy, I-" she choked on a sob, "thank you."
Important note- I've been accused of plagiarism and need to address it immediately.

So, I've been accused of plagiarism by a writer here on AO3 I actually admire, Drabble Distillery-and while this has been a big, ugly mess here tonight, I tried my best to address her accusations and be responsive. The dust has settled it seems, so I'll hold on to the screen shots and put this behind us. She's made an effort to stop the slander from other sources- which I appreciate. I wish her the best of luck in the future in her work. I'm so deeply appreciative of the community we've all created here on AO3, and I'm so happy to have you all in my life. I'll keep writing, though I've developed an unwillingness to read anyone else's work. Thank you all for your support.
Chapter Summary

In which sanity comes in the form of a small, filthy child.

We're coming to the part of the story that always gives me crippling anxiety. I promise you a happy ending- always! But the concrete Hel of the High Rise is not easily escaped. We'll all get through it. Even if I'm cramping with the terror of letting you (and Laing and Angelica) down.

Chapter Notes

Just letting you know that our beautiful misreall has an epic new Crimson Peak fiction here: http://archiveofourown.org/works/13706409

And Hurricanerin updated her deliciously hot Johtunn Loki story "I'll Never Tell" with some lovely, dirty, filthy smut here: http://archiveofourown.org/works/13157154/chapters/31295967

You're welcome.

The next morning found Angelica again leaning on the balcony, but this time she was vigilant, tracing lines of grubby paper left from Toby as the main routes out of London. Using Robert's
excellent and rarely-used (aside from Toby) telescope, she re-mapped the lines, looking for roadblocks, new damage or another fire. Seeing the city streets more closely through the magnifying lens was horrifying. Windows shattered, expensive shops burnt out and smashed cars piling along the streets. It was obvious that police- maybe military?- had tried to keep paths clear for rescue workers. Frowning, she noticed something else. The streets were almost completely barren. She could occasionally catch a glimpse of someone scampering across to another structure, and there were a few filthy faces looking out, but just like the High Rise, daytime seemed to be when the mad inhabitants of the city slept their restless sleep as well.

"Anything interesting to report, Sweetness?"

Laying her cheek briefly on the hand that slid over her shoulder, Angelica turned to smile at Robert briefly. "Toby's notes are really detailed- he's such an amazing boy!" She laughed and shook her head, "There's some additional damage, but pretty much what you'd expect."

Laing looked down at her silvery-blonde head, enjoying the sun's effect on the sheen of her hair. "Good news, then. I've calculated how much time we might have to draft petrol from some of the other cars in the parking lot. I believe the tank on the Jaguar's about half full- we'll need a full tank to make it to Sandbridge- it's 325 miles from here."

Sighing, Angelica smiled teasingly. "You couldn't have found something in Brighton, Daddy? What's that, about a third of the way?" Genuinely shocked, she watched his lean face widen in a rueful chuckle.

"Yes, darling. The next time we encounter a complete societal collapse, I shall be certain to keep a full tank and a military-bunker style cottage quite close to here." He enjoyed her astonished expression before his Angel could compose herself. Her lovely face was always so expressive, far more than she knew, of course. But he'd become an expert on her smiles, what it meant when she tilted her head one way or another, the little gasp of air she made when she was about to come...

Mentally groaning, Laing forced himself back on track. "Based on the boy's notes, we need to take a less direct route to M25 to merge onto M4. So we might need some additional fuel. I'm putting together a list of petrol stations off the freeway that aren't as easily accessible. And we'll need to travel during the day-"

A peremptory knock on the front door made both of them freeze, listening carefully.

"Laing! You reclusive bastard! Is this how you greet the man bringing you provisions?" Angelica shuddered a bit to hear the oily, amused tone of Royal. Robert kissed her briefly on the forehead and rose.

"Go into the bedroom, darling. Lock the door and don't open it for anyone but me."

As he tried to move away, she grasped his filthy shirt. "Daddy- please, please- please don't drink or eat anything with Royal, all right? Please?" Seeing his brows draw together, Angelica moved closer, burying her face in his chest. "Please? For me?" Laing was still for a moment, then she felt his big hand come up to cup the back of her head.

"All right, darling. I won't. Now, be a good girl and go lock yourself in our bedroom." He was surprised by a brief but fervent kiss from his Angel and she slipped between the glass doors of the terrace soundlessly.

Forcing a smile from his thin lips, Robert opened all the locks on his door to reveal Royal, the Wilder, Dr. Pangbourne (Why him? Robert wondered,) and two other men he recognized from the architect’s parties. Suddenly aware that he was allowing 5 men into his secure space, Laing hesitated
“Gentlemen,” he smiled with a rueful twinge, “I fear my flat is not… in the proper order to receive guests at this moment.” He gave the men a meaningful leer, feeling vaguely disgusted at their avid expressions. “It was quite a night.” The knowing sound of the men’s laughter made him want to pull out his golf club and swing it in a furious arc across those revolting faces, shiny with lust and overindulgence. Gracefully taking the box of supplies from The Wilder’s slack arms, he put them just inside the door. “Shall I come up later, Royal? Are there patients that need tending?”

“Oh, it’s time for more than that, Laing.” The pompous drawl of Pangbourne came to the forefront, the man strutting closer to the surgeon standing guard at his flimsy fortress.

“Really, Pangbourne, enlighten me.” Robert smiled coldly, not moving but giving the man the old “We’re both doctors here, _healers_,” kind of smirk that his colleagues at the hospital always seemed to wear.

The other physician took a clumsy sniff of coke first, blustering into his handkerchief like a Victorian gentleman with his snuff-box. "There's so much to be done in the penthouse, Laing! Servants getting above themselves, arrogant little bitches demanding more of the drugs, the cocktails..." he gave another contemptuous sniff. "At any rate, Something Must Be Done About It."

Laing raised an elegant brow. "And your solution, doctor?"

Pangbourne leaned in, his skin greasy with sweat. "The icepick is ready when you are, old boy. Even in the penthouse, there are only so many vials of coke. So many vodka bottles. And the fresh limes and lemons! It's a disgrace."

It almost felt like a punch in the face, Robert thought dimly. That he had stood with these men before, saying such things and having them make complete sense. The logic of "caring" for his patients and ensuring their tractability. Their servitude. Angelica's captivity. But even as his gut recoiled, a smooth, superior smile spread across Laing's beautiful face. "Well, if supplies are limited, it is clear that... arrangements must be made."

“There is generosity, and there is wastefulness, my son,” intoned Royal, finally inserting himself into the conversation, “in times such as these, we must prioritize.”

“Of course,” Laing agreed blandly. Rubbing his hands together in a “let’s get this done” sort of fashion, he angled a slightly unsteady stare at the man he’d always viewed as a role model, perhaps even a substitute father. “Allow me to… correct my darling’s behavior and we shall be up this evening. I have not fully addressed the importance of quiet and obedience with her.”

“Well,” murmured Royal supportively, “American, and all that.” Clapping Laing heartily on the back, he leaned in, the scent of an unwashed body, booze and the heavy chemical undertone of the architect’s breath nearly strangling him. “I’m sure you’ll bring the girl back into line. Do let me know if I can assist in any way.” With the eager giggles of the men nearby, Laing forced himself to smile.

“Till tonight, then. Is there a special theme for the evening?”

Royal raised his head, pondering. “Roman orgy,” he purred, “such glorious excess.”

“Are they gone?”

Turning, he saw Angelica hovering by the bedroom door, watching him anxiously. Laing forced
himself to smile and hold out his hand. "Come to Daddy." He noticed she was still looking up at him, examining his face. "What are you looking at, darling?" He watched as a variety of expressions flitted across her face- hope, anxiety, and finally, determination.

"I was just... seeing how you felt, Daddy."

Laing raised his brow. "There's certainly more to it than that. Tell your Daddy the truth." He felt oddly good, sharp. He was absorbed in the energy and the warmth surrounding his beautiful creature. He would be calm.

"Do you remember when we went upstairs to Royal's yesterday?"

Laing nodded. "Of course."

Angelica was obviously searching for the words and her hand came up unconsciously to rest on his chest, smoothing the filthy dress shirt. "When we went up, you were very... lucid. When you came out of his bedroom, your eyes were bloodshot and you smelled like, uh, chemicals. You became that scary daddy-thing again."

Stepping back to look at her more clearly, Robert ran his hands up her bare arms. "Scary daddy-thing?" He fought a smile at her label but continued to listen.

"Do you ever feel like you've lost time, Daddy? Like you're thinking things that don't make sense? You're a man of almost epic proportions of self-control. You know who you are. What you want-"

Here, he bent his head to kiss Angelica's upturned face. He'd wanted her. He'd taken her. For a moment, the thought sounded completely wrong. Take? Not seduce, charm, all the usual ways he obtained women when he'd wanted them? But that hadn't worked on her. Stronger measures had to be taken, and here his Angel was, happy and in love with him. "Yes darling, as I wanted you. Desperately."

For the first time as he'd offered that kind of sentiment, Angelica's face turned into a genuine smile-the happy one that she wore when she was running, hair flying behind her. Not the one she'd been giving him- the tight-lipped version that presented itself as a smile when inside he knew she wanted to be anywhere but at that moment. He'd seen it often enough in encounters she'd had with the more unpleasant residents of the High Rise.

"You're a healer." Her pale hand slid up into his tousled curls, stroking them flat. "A protector. A lover. A good brother and a kind man to random small children who show up on your balcony."

Groaning a bit, Robert bent to kiss her again.

"Not that I don't appreciate this detailed list of my so-called virtues, but what are you getting at? Be direct with me." One of his big, warm hands was on her cheek, the other still stroking her arm.

"Royal- he's drugging you. He has been for weeks, months, probably." Angelica swallowed. There it was. Either he believed her, or he still considered her a pet he liked to fuck and banter with. He believed Toby, for god's sake!

Laing was still, his first instinct was to grab a fistful of the waterfall of silvered hair and drag its owner into the bedroom and teach her what happens to bad girls who sass their daddy- how DARE she- He even watched his hand twitch into a fist. And forced it open again. Taking a deep breath, he was overcome suddenly with the paint fumes from the kitchen. Such a stench. "Tell me what makes you think that, baby. I'm listening."

Giving a half sob of relief, Angelica launched into a rapid-fire list of symptoms and behaviors, how
he changed and what happened after an encounter with the filthy architect that loomed over the building like a venomous insect. Laing pulled her over to the kitchen, perching her on a stool as she continued. As she finished, she watched him walk around the kitchen, opening cabinet doors and even looking into the refrigerator.

"Do you remember feeling odd or suddenly off after any of our meals?" Laing had the grace to look chagrined. "Not an accurate barometer, darling. Let me re-think. Have you seen me react strangely after eating or drinking?"

Nodding enthusiastically, Angelica let herself smile at him. He was listening. He might even be believing her. "Yesterday, after your visit with Royal. Did you drink anything?"

Frowning, he nodded, "Just a glass of Jameson."

"When's the last time you've had any Jameson from your stock here in the flat?" Angelica was settling herself cross-legged on the narrow stool, looking a bit like a silver stork.

Laing's memory was excellent. He didn't even need to try. "Almost a week ago. While I was making dinner for you three nights ago, I remembered I'd not had any for two days. I picked a bottle of wine for us instead."

"So, five days," Angelica mused. "Have you noticed any changes over the last few days? In you?"

It was a slow alteration, Robert thought. Gradual. He'd been furious with his Angel's resistance several times but moved at her sweetness and the times she'd return his attentions with appreciation instead of fear. With a sigh, he put one hand on his hip and rubbed his forehead with the other. The calm, mathematical part of his brilliant mind- the section that wielded his scalpels and clamps with precision during surgery- that part blazed through drug interactions, dosages, the metabolic life of mood inhibitors... psychotropics... Which of the drugs in his arsenal could alter behavior and consciousness most quickly and unobtrusively? Royal had quite the well-stocked medicine cabinet. Could this be possible? Could he possibly have been such a fool that he'd not seen it? After Megan- the lies about the baby- he'd swore no one would be close enough to make a fool of him again. All those feelings of humiliation and fury began to rise. He was a neurosurgeon! A Cambridge graduate! His IQ tested at 180! His hands played God in his patient's brains and he was no fool! The emotions formed a cyclonic swirl through his consciousness and his blazingly pale eyes suddenly focused back on Angelina. She was watching him with concern- one hand raised as if to touch him. This stupid, manipulative girl! This ridiculously foolish Yank! She thought she could tell him what to do? Angelica had always been the sane and sensible one that solved the problems before they happened and why would he just goddamn

Angelica watched the internal war, her heart, and her nerves shredding. Laing hated her for doing this to him. Making him remember things. Making him... feel things. And when his dark head came up and glared at her cruelly, she knew she'd lost her chance to drag her Robert back to sanity. His hands clamped around her upper arms like shackles and she managed to gasp, "Please Daddy, you know this makes sense! You're back here with me now, please stay with me- don't go back to what you were-"

"NO ONE MAKES A FOOL OF ME!"

"DAMN you, Robert! Why won't you?" She was clawing at his chest, so furious that this beautiful, lethal man would not listen to her! She was the voice of reason! Angelica had always been the sane and sensible one that solved the problems before they happened and why would he just goddamn
"Do you have the new map coordinates?"

The warring couple both turned to look at their short intruder. Toby was standing in the middle of the kitchen, holding his notebook and examining them both impassively. Laing was struck with the child's appearance- always turned out in neat little blazers bearing the crests of expensive private schools. Here, Toby was filthy, clearly having not taken advantage of the running hot and cold water in the penthouse- not that any other of the residents had. He was wearing an outfit crafted from something out of "Lord of the Flies" and mixed with a pith helmet and a jaunty ascot.

He looked ridiculous.

Laing stared at the boy, impassive and standing his ground. It was a look he knew very well from all the times his father made it clear how very much Robert had disappointed him as a son. But Toby believed in his clever little mind that Robert would get him out of this place, this hell. The boy maintained his sanity as the adults around him gladly embraced the madness. His Angelica had maintained her sanity. Everyone, in fact in this flat but him.

He took a deep breath in, holding it a moment and letting it out again.

“I apologize, Angelica. Unequivocally. For doubting you. For… for everything. I know more will need to be said, but for now- I will not doubt you again.”

Her smile was radiant with relief and somewhat startled happiness, and his Angel went up on her tiptoes, laying her mouth against his. Behind them, a faint noise of disgust came from Toby and they laughed, parting.

“Sorry to gross you out, Toby,” Angelica smiled down at the boy, “I’ve been tracking the route today, why don’t you and Robert talk and then we’ll go over my new coordinates from this morning, all right?”

The man and boy stood by one of the floor to ceiling windows, conversing in low tones about the state of things in the penthouse. Robert noticed Toby never mentioned his mother, and the man didn’t have the heart to ask. When they turned, they found Angelica laying out pieces of paper on the dining room table.

“I’ve been thinking that to find the secret access lift it would be easier to map out Royal’s penthouse,” looking at the boy, she asked, “have you seen anything, any doors or cabinets that never seemed to be used, you’ve never seen open?”

Toby shook his head. “There’s many rooms they still keep locked. People come and go from them, though.”

Laing leaned over, shifting a couple of pieces of paper. “I believe the secret lift has to be on the exterior of the building, perhaps hidden by some of the terracings. Having to walk through the building to the outside would be an extra danger Royal wouldn’t risk.” The three went through the diagram of the top floor of the building, foot by foot and finally settled on only two places that could hold a service lift sufficient to carry the massive influx of supplies. When Toby reluctantly admitted he needed to go back to the penthouse "to scout," Angelica impulsively hugged him.

"Be careful, Toby. All right? Don't take any chances, we're the ones who should take the risk. Not you." Surprised, she felt his arms cautiously move around her waist, suddenly tightening into a desperate grasp. Laying her cheek over the top of his filthy head, Angelica fiercely hugged him back.
"You've been so brave," she whispered, "I'm so proud of you."

His wide eyes looked up to her, cartoonishly enlarged by his spectacles. When she nodded firmly, Toby nodded back resolutely before stepping away and picking up his battered backpack. "Tonight, then." The boy scrambled over the balcony railing with a casualness that sent Angelica's heart into her throat. "Be careful," Toby was still dangling there like a bedraggled spider monkey, "this party is something else. Not a party but... a party." With that ambiguous warning, he shimmied up and out of sight.

Laing looked at Angelica, brow raised. “Any idea what that might mean?”

She shook her head. “I'm not sure Toby does, either.”

He sighed, walking over and running his hands along the curves of her waist, feeling the smooth slide of her skin against his sensitive palms. “The boy has survived this long by paying attention. If something’s off-” Robert laughed as she rolled her eyes, “even more off,” he corrected, “then we must be on guard.”

Angelica leaned her forehead against his hard chest. “Even more on guard,” she corrected. They held each other in the dust-filled silence of the afternoon. She could feel the soft rasp of his whiskers against her hair, the worn cotton against her cheek. It was strange, she mused, that her dark daddy carefully tended to her- baths, fresh clothes, and good food- while ignoring his own deteriorating state.

“Daddy?”

Laing shifted, enjoying the feel of her soft breasts against him. “Hnnnn?”

“Are you…” Angelica chewed her lower lip, “are you afraid to leave the High Rise?”

He stilled, and she wondered if she'd gone too far. One huge hand was resting at the small of her back, the other on her neck, his thumb idly stroking the thin skin there. The size of his hands was never more apparent than when he laid them upon her, bringing home so vividly Laing's capacity to heal. Or to hurt. "I... remember a moment about two months ago," he answered slowly. "I walked out into the parking lot- all the buildings under construction circling me. I was standing in front of the dry lake bed and I couldn't- I didn't know where my car was. I didn't know where I was for a moment, which building belonged to me. I just knew I was out in the open." She felt his lean body shudder against her, and Angelica tightened her arms around his waist. "I remember pushing my way back into the building- all the morning commuters pouring out like sheep and-" Laing let out a sigh. "I closed the door to the flat and felt safe. Protected."

They stood together in the lengthening afternoon light, clutching each other, rocking slightly.

Angelica pulled her head out from under his chin and looked up at the beautiful, troubled face above her. "You are safe with me," she said clearly, calmly. "You'll protect me, and I'll protect you." She suddenly smiled, a huge smile, happy like the one she wore when joking with her roommates, the girls she cared for. "I'm stronger with you."

Those huge, rough hands slid up her neck and cradled her cheeks as Robert dipped his head, kissing her Feverishly. "You are the best part of me, my angel," he admitted hoarsely, "perhaps the only good."

"No," she disagreed, suddenly desperate to put her hands on his flesh, to scratch it and lick it, suckle the hard plane of a bicep and circle his nipples with her tongue. "You are so much more than that,
Daddy. No matter how little love you were given, you shower it on me. Can I-" she raised her hands to his ragged shirt collar. "Can I..." His hands gripped her hips convulsively, but Laing kept his gaze on her, nodding slowly. His chest was pale, not having seen the sun or even fresh air for days, maybe weeks- she couldn't remember. Carefully peeling it off his broad shoulders, Angelica hummed as she ran her fingers softly over the beautifully defined musculature of his arms and back. Keeping her eyes on his, her hands went to his belt, loosening it and sliding his pants- no underwear, of course- down Robert's long legs, kneeling to pull one foot free and then the other. Still on her knees, sliding her hands up to squeeze the globes of his ass, Angelica sighed, watching him as she opened her mouth to suckle the spongy tip of his cock.

His face was perfect in profile, dropping back as Angelica slowly slid him down her throat, enjoying the warmth and the heft of him, heavy, the silky skin covering the granite surface. Rubbing her nose in the nest of hair at the base of him, she forced herself to relax, inching Laing's cock deeper. He was bared to her- naked. And she would show him how beautiful he was. One hand slid into her hair, stroking along the silvered curls as Robert's blue eyes narrowed, looking down at her mouth pursed tight against him, her bold gaze. Running his fingers along her hollowed cheek, he groaned, "Perfection..." When her hand slipped from clutching his ass to cupping his heavy scrotum, playing with his balls and squeezing them gently, Laing hissed between his teeth, pulling her off his cock. Watching one hand come up to daintily wipe away her spit at the corner of those pink lips, the doctor could hear himself growl. Like an animal. Like the beast he'd pretended he hadn't devolved into.

Hoisting Angelica inelegantly onto his rigid cock and pressed against the wall, Robert bit into the skin of her shoulder, feeling her soft passage clamp down viciously against the shock of his entry. "I feel as if I am starving for you," he groaned, "as if I've been denied the feel of you around me." Robert shifted his stance to wrap her legs around him, but it managed to hoist Angelica even deeper onto his shaft. "The inside of you, darling," he managed, "it flutters against my cock like frantic bird’s wings. Your tender, wet pussy. It’s heaven." He could feel her hands running greedily over his muscled back, enjoying the feel of his bare skin, the intimacy of being bare for each other.

Angelica rested her head against the wall, panting and trying to gather her scattered senses back together. "It's yours, Daddy. Only yours. And I- AH!" The man inside her and around her couldn't wait any longer and was thrusting in and out, long and luscious strokes that made her feel the broad tip of him drag against her swollen entry and pop back in again. Part of her was still amazed at his strength, easily bouncing her up and down on his bloated shaft as if she weighed nothing when Angelica was quite aware her sturdy, muscled form was by no means light. Shivering in pleasure, she smiled when Laing groaned at the feeling of her breasts rubbing against his chest. Moving abruptly off the wall and plonking her down none too gently on the granite counter, he pulled her arms behind her, making Angelica's back arch and presenting those pink tipped breasts to him.

The feeling of his hot mouth on her was heaven, suckling her tightened nipples as he continued thrusting inside her. There was a sudden urgency between them as Robert pulled his mouth away from her breasts. "I'll get you out of here, love. I swear it." His eyes were wide, a beautiful cobalt and he stared into hers, "I'll keep you safe, and Toby. This concrete hell does not rule us."

Shuddering, Angelica arched her hips, raising higher on him and angling Laing's shaft deeper inside her while gripping him with her strong thighs. Dropping her forehead onto his shoulder, she gasped, "We'll save each other- I love you, I do I-" He began slamming in and out of her recklessly, not as careful as he should be but somehow unable to stop himself. Robert kissed and bit along her neck, holding Angelica tightly by her ass.

"Then come for Daddy, baby. Come all over Daddy's cock and make me wet and sticky." The filthy words resonated along her spine and Angelica keened as she did just as she was told, crying out and
coming, then trembling and coming again with Laing, hearing his breath puff harshly in her ear as his shaft swelled and spurted inside her.

Angelica giggled helplessly as Laing staggered towards the bathroom, seating her inside the shower as he brought the water to the right temperature. They cleaned each other, kissing scratches and little wounds with licks and suckles. Fortunately, they'd rinsed off the soap when the pipes shuddered in the wall and the flow of water cut off with a loud 'clank!' The sound was final, like a death knell.

Finally dressed back in his disreputable "uniform" of ragged dress shirt and pants to avoid suspicion and Angelica in a pretty silk shift that still allowed for movement, Robert and Angelica held hands as he tapped the button of the last working lift on their floor. As the chromed doors opened, she was suddenly struck with the vision that they were walking into an open mouth. Pulling her gently, Laing looked down. "Angel?"

Taking a breath, she forced a smile and nodded, stepping aboard and watching one of the 25th come howling at the doors, unrecognizable as human and sending a spurt of blood from his nose into the lift as the panels slid shut.

"We do not separate," Laing's voice was calm and deep, and Angelica squeezed his hand and nodded, taking strength from his certainty. "We stay together at all costs. We are calm. We will find our way out." The doors opened to the penthouse floor just as he finished, displaying Royal standing directly in front of them.

"Welcome to the soiree!" he shouted gleefully, "We've been waiting for you." His black eyes sparkled as one of his men cracked Robert over the head with the butt of a gun as Pangbourne lunged for Angelica, thrusting a needle into her neck as she began to struggle. Chuckling at the unconscious couple on the floor, Royal crooned, "There's so very much to celebrate."
It was dark, nothing.

Then Angelica felt like she was drowning, fighting to breathe and break the surface.

"There you are, darling. Wake up, now."

She came to, gasping and choking and sputtering, fighting to breathe and coughing, suddenly terrified that she was dying.

"Stop struggling, pet. You're all right. Just breathe for me."

Once Angelica could draw a full breath, she opened her stinging eyes to see the silver-haired Sulk
hovering over her. "M- my blood feels like it's boiling," she managed between frantic gulps of air.

Sulk angrily rolled her eyes. "That bloody idiot Pangbourne jammed a full syringe of Scopolamine and a barbiturate combined into your neck. You overdosed."

Trying to sit up, Angelica gasped, "I what?"

Gentle hands pressed her back against the grimy pillow. "Just rest for a moment, pet. You stopped breathing so I had to give you an injection of Narcan. You're probably feeling like you're in withdrawal right now. Sorry. Side effects."

Nodding, the woman tried to control her shaking. "Where's Robert? Is he all right?"

Sulk's sudden gloom was not comforting. "They cracked him over the head with a pistol, but he's conscious again. They tied him up in Royal's dining room, I don't know why. But it's clear our host has plans for the two of you."

Vision finally clear enough to look around the room, Angelica eyed her savior. Sulk was clothed in a fitted white shirt buttoned up to her throat, black pencil skirt with a dark grey pinstripe, seamed black stockings, five inch heeled black patent-leather heels, and hair bound in a severe chignon. "I like your skirt," she finally offered.

The woman’s smile was warm, reassuring. “Thank you, poppet, I do too.”

Looking down at herself, Angelica was not at all pleased with her wardrobe. She was wearing a white, lacy corset, matching undies, stockings, and garters. “What the hell happened to me!" she gasped, terrified, “Who touched-"

“Shhhh, hush pet.” Sulk made soothing motions with her hands, not quite touching her. “I changed you, none of the men laid a finger on you. But, Royal demanded your wardrobe and I had bigger fish to fry.”

“Such as?” Angelica was forcing herself to sit up, arms shaking as she gritted her teeth, trying to force her body to obey her again.

“Jamming a syringe full of Narcon into your thigh,” the Domme said flatly. “Those pigs are worked up enough that they’d likely be just as happy to fuck your corpse as fuck you conscious.” Rolling her eyes at Angelica’s attempt to not gag, she leaned forward. “Do you want to save Robert, or not?”

The answer came in an instant. “Of course.” Stiffening her spine, she nodded firmly at the suddenly serious Sulk. “Tell me what’s happening. Do you know what that sick bastard has planned for us?"

Robert's heavy lids dragged themselves open, his first thought jolting his body into consciousness. "Angelica!"

"Now, now my boy. she's just fine,” drawled Royal, who was lounging at the head of his ridiculously lengthy dining table. Robert was tied to a heavy oak chair, seated at the foot. Flexing his hands to test his bonds, Robert found his hands were already blue from being bound so tightly to the seat. Another rope looped around his waist, tethering him to the chair's back and his ankles secured to the legs. His eyes were blue flames of fury when he looked up again, glaring at the architect, who was enjoying his struggles. "Truly, she'll be out in a moment. She's just..." here, Royal giggled shrilly, the sound feeling like a buzzsaw on Laing's skull, "...dressing for dinner. You know how women like to primp."
Robert's gaze turned to the table, where a gigantic platter decorated with a border of flowers and fruit waited. With a rising sense of nausea, he found thick leather straps attached just where wrists and ankles would be on a human-sized meal.

"Yes, son." Royal's tone was loving, almost tender. "We're having your angel for dinner."

Inside Royal's filthy bedroom, Angelica was stubbornly pacing back and forth, drinking water as fast as her stomach could hold it and forcing feeling back into her arms and legs. Sulk had slipped out and locked the door behind her, and the anxiety of wondering if Robert was all right was killing her. A knock on the window nearly made the woman scream, but she slapped her hand over her mouth just in time as she recognized Toby's pale face. Opening the glass slider as quietly as she could, she impulsively hugged the grimy little boy.

"Toby!" Angelica whispered, "Are you okay? They haven't hurt you?"

He shook his head solemnly. “No, ‘m fine. I found the lift! It’s behind a series of pantry doors in the kitchen.”

She hugged him fiercely. “I’m so proud of you!”

“But-” the boy looked apologetic, “it doesn’t open without a key.”

His face fell, and Angelica hugged him again. “No matter. We’ll find the key. You did all the hard work.”

When Toby looked up, tears were making clean, pale tracks on his dirty cheeks. “They’re going to hurt you. Kill you. In front of Dr. Laing.”

For a moment, Angelica thought her heart had turned inside out. Taking a deep breath, she forced a smile and cupped his face in his hands. “We are going to do everything we can to not let that happen, sweetheart. But if—if something happens to me— you lead Robert to the lift. And if you can—” she swallowed a sob, “—if you can, please get Helen’s baby out, too, all right?” Pulling him to her again, she felt his short arms creep around her corseted waist. “You’ve been so strong,” Angelica whispered fiercely, “you shouldn’t have to be. You should just be allowed to be a kid and have fun—” Looking at his ever-serious face, she made a wet chuckle, “the whole ‘just have fun thing,’ okay, maybe not you, but—this was more than anyone should ever ask of you. But you’ve been amazing. I’m so proud of you.” It hurt her heart to see Toby looked vaguely shocked as if he’d never heard the words before. “You have,” she insisted, “you have, Toby. And you’ll be all right. You know the plan and you have the map. And we have the advantage here,” Angelica whispered into his ear, “we’re the only ones in this shitheap that aren’t stark, raving nutjobs.”

Toby giggled a little in shock from her deliberate profanity. Looking down at him fondly, Angelica finally gave into a long-held desire. Carefully removing his glasses, she cleaned the smeared lenses on the remains of her dress that had been cut off her in favor of the lingerie. Replacing them, she nodded. “Much better.” They heard the key turn in the lock, and she frantically pushed him to the window again, shutting it and flopping onto the bed just as the door opened.

"Darling..." purred the oily, disgusting voice of their host, "at last. We've all been so looking forward to getting to know you better. You've been quite the tease, haven't you?"

Angelica never would have been a successful actress, she only knew one expression that kept her emotions concealed. A firm set to her lips, an authoritative air. But she tried desperately to remember
how she looked and felt when under Laing's narcotic influence. Stumbling as Royal's men lifted her from the bed, she drew a shaky hand across her face. "What're you..." she slurred. "Wh're we goin..."

Fortunately, the men were wildly excited, drunk and so focused on her breasts- barely kept under control by the restrictive corset- that they didn't notice her feeble attempts to seem under the influence. Half dragging, half carrying her through the huge main room, she ignored all the hoots and howls, vaguely thinking it sounded like she was in the middle of some nightmare zoo. Angelica was painfully aware of how much of her was showing in the perverse bridal getup Royal had insisted she wear. She could only pray that Sulk was telling the truth and was, in fact, helping them. Her history with the mysterious woman was sketchy- she didn't fool herself into thinking that having a conversation while the Domme reprimanded her orgy knot, and a couple of nods "hello" in the laundry room made them best friends. So by saving her life with that jolt of Narcan and promising her assistance, it seemed clear that Sulk had a history with The Doctor Laing. She could only hope it was strong enough for the woman to really want to save his life. It was when the men hauled her into the dining room and she saw the macabre centerpiece that she dug in her heels. Instantly, viscerally, she knew that horrible platter was meant for her. Her frantic gaze turned to see Robert, who was furiously straining at his bonds and swearing viciously at a laughing Royal.

"I will tear your fucking head off your shoulders if you touch one inch of her skin, you piece of-" his enraged monologue was cut off as The Wilder slammed his fist into Robert's stomach. It made Angelica thrash so desperately against her captors that she got one arm loose, and her elbow went back in a brutal strike against the throat of the man behind her, who promptly dropped like a sack of flour.

Royal, who'd dropped back into his seat at the head of the table waved an irritable hand. "Really? You halfwits can't contain one underfed girl? Pathetic."

The rest of Angelica's embarrassed guard hauled her harshly onto the table, holding her down as a laughing woman wearing a Hawaiian lei and nothing else gleefully fastened the thick leather straps around her wrists and ankles. To her horror, the men, grinning lecherously, pulled her knees apart so the naked woman could fasten a spreader bar to hold Angelica's legs apart. Her position made the reality of the situation flood over her like a bucket of ice. Toby's frightened explanation of "They're going to hurt you, then kill you," became terrifyingly apparent. she stifled a sob as her head turned to the left to see several sharp carving knives laid out neatly next to her body. The architect had positioned her just so that she could not see Robert, though she knew the spreader bar put her completely on display for him.

"Robert!" she called out, longer listening to the bizarre murmurings of the crowd, "I love you! No matter what happens-" her voice broke, but Angelica furiously cleared her throat, "I love you and don't forget it, promise me!" The laughter of the men and women around her pealed as someone harshly shoved an apple between her teeth, deep enough that she couldn't dislodge it.

Royal rose majestically, primly tapping his fork on his crystal goblet. "Welcome, honored guests! While we must admit that some of the important provisions have been lacking during this spate of... unpleasantness, I am pleased to offer you both entertainment and a most unique version of steak tartare tonight!" He leaned over to look at Angelica's hate-filled expression, enjoying the way her lip curled in disgust. "Always thinking you were better than us," he observed fondly, "putting on airs around those who are clearly superior. You should have BEEN ON YOUR KNEES, YOU CUNT!" A huge cheer rose up as he screamed the last, his spittle hitting her in the face.

"ROYAL!" Angelica knew the power of Laing's deep and resonant voice, and it stilled the manic
laughter and cheers around them. "Let her go, you bloody fool. It is beneath you to hold a female and pretend you've captured some great prize." She lifted her silver head, desperately trying to see him, her Robert. "I shall take her place. I will not even fight you. That is what you've wished all along, isn't it? That you would own me? Body and soul? Why waste this spectacle on a simple slut?"

She knew he was trying to work his magic, his authority, but it hurt just the same. Despite her desperate attempt to be strong, tears trickled unknowingly down her face. It wasn't going to work. Royal already knew destroying her would break Robert, make him soulless and the sadistic architect's creature.

"Because, dear boy..." Royal was rising, stepping elegantly from his chair to the table, walking to where Angelica lay bound. "Because you need to see what this worthless sow has cost you. Allowing yourself to be fooled by her! And when you watch her moan like a whore as we all take her-" The laughter and howling rose to a feral scream, and Angelica shuddered, turning her face away. "- you will first beg me to stop. Then you will beg me to allow you to join in. You shall be the last to tenderize this meat before it is served, fresh and steaming."

She could hear the stout oak of Laing's chair cracking as he savagely fought against his bonds. Royal straddled her, grinning down as he slowly, deliberately undid his pants and Angelica laughed breathlessly, spitting out the disgusting apple gag. "Oh, such a tiny threat!" she taunted, "I'll enjoy biting it off. Do come closer, you undersized piece of shit!" Royal's face darkened then, and he hit her across the face. Feeling her lip split, Angelica spat the blood back into his face. His hand was rising again when the scream came.

"FIRE!"

There was pandemonium as a thick, choking smoke spread rapidly across the room, screaming, as Royal's monstrous party guests shoved and kicked at each other, trying to get to the doors first.

"FIRE! FIRE! FIRE! WE'RE GOING TO DIE!"

If anything, the desperation and panic grew worse, pained squeals from those knocked to the ground and trampled as the others stomped over the fallen bodies in their mad rush to escape. Coughing, Angelica thrashed against her bonds, suddenly feeling someone yanking fiercely at her cuffs as Royal turned, kicking her in his confusion, trying to find the source of the flames.

"Royal."

He suddenly went still, almost like a dog knowing to sit at its master's call.

"Be a good boy and come to me."

Angelica sat up and rolled off the table into Robert's arms, feeling his arm go around her and help support her as they headed for the doors to the terrace. Looking back, she tried to squint her streaming eyes. Dimly, she could see the slack form of the architect bow his head to a silver-haired woman before she was hauled out into the balcony and the doors slammed shut. Fortunately, there were only a few of the coughing, gagging guests outside, most having raced for the open doors of the great room. No one attempted to confront them as they staggered to the left, Robert desperately feeling the line of concrete with his hands in the choking smoke. She heard his shuddered sigh of relief when he found what he was looking for. Pushing open a steel door, he guided Angelica through it, and they found Toby holding a crying infant, anxiously rocking the baby as he looked up in relief to see them.

"Do you have the key!" he cried urgently, and Robert laughed breathlessly, pulling something from
around his neck.

"Sulk lifted it from Royal," he gasped, shoving it into the lock. The baby started crying again as angry blows against the door started rattling the exterior door.

Angelica whirled and looked at the lit display, desperately watching the numbers sedately light up as the lift rose to their level. "Pleasepleasepleasepleaseplease..." she chanted softly, not knowing who she was pleading with. As the doors finally slid open and they raced inside, the exterior door finally slammed open, bouncing off the wall from the strength of the kick of...

The Wilder.

Toby moaned in fear, and for a desperate second, Angelica wondered if he'd seen- if he'd known what the monster had done to his mother. The Wilder howled and raced for the lift, shoving one huge arm inside to block the doors from closing. Hissing in desperation, Angelica jammed her finger on the "close" button, mindlessly trying to make the doors close, make The Wilder go away. Toby was crying and crouched against the back wall, still holding the wailing infant. Robert growled and stepped through the doors, slamming his fist with every ounce of fury into The Wilder's face, watching his nose shatter and blood spurt in a graceful arc across his face, the doors, and Robert's filthy dress shirt. As The Wilder staggered back, Angelica's hand shot between the closing lift doors to yank Robert back in and to safety, but he shook off her hand and went after the hulking bloody man again. Laing may be a neurosurgeon, but there must have been a time he used those elegant hands for more violent work because he easily ducked under The Wilder's swing and nailed him again, this time in the thin bone of the monster's temple, dazing him and causing him to reel backward. Grimly, Robert ducked another attempt and his elbow this time handed a bruising blow on The Wilder's chin. It was then that Angelica saw his plan- The Wilder was staggering back towards the railing, and Laing was landing blows only on his face to keep him upright and moving backward. With a dog-like snarl, The Wilder managed to plan his fist into Robert's face, sending another graceful arc of blood upwards, but by then it was too late, and the next blow from the surgeon's fist sent Royal's bulldog into the railing, and over it. Angelica turned Toby's face away, trying to hide him from the sight that seemed even more horrible than the bloody fistfight that sent The Wilder on his long fall down. Impatiently shaking the blood off his hand, Robert raced back to the lift, even as the exterior door slammed open again to reveal more furious "party guests."

Inelegantly, Angelica flipped them her middle finger as Laing pushed a button and the doors closed with a pleasant "ding!"

Angelica turned on numb legs to gently take Helen's nameless child from Toby, who was shaking so hard that he was barely standing up. "There, there," she whispered, stroking the baby's cheek. "There, there." When the doors opened again, there was a van parked right in front of the lift. They looked at each other before racing for the doors, finding them open. Robert groaned to find no keys in the ignition, but on impulse flipped the visor, watching in incredulity as the needed item dropped into his hand. Starting the vehicle and praying under his breath, he watched as the gas indicator sedately rose to nearly full.

"Strap in," he said hoarsely, and put the van into gear, hitting the gas pedal as they watched their concrete prison grow smaller and smaller in the rearview mirror. Angelica rocked her baby as she heard the soft sounds of paper being unfolded, Toby clearing his throat as he shakily said, "Make a left on Belson Avenue."

The thick, choking waves of the black smoke had receded, no one finding the flames that should have created them. There was confused silence, broken by the occasional whimper or moan from
someone attempting to seek solace through shoving something into an anonymous orifice.

Sulk walked through the bedroom door, slammed it shut, then purred, "Kneel and face the floor!"

Naked, Royal dropped like a stone to his knees, face, and eyes to the floor space between his spread thighs. His hands, on reflex, were grasped at the small of his back.

"You have so much to atone for, you filthy little beast!", the Domme whispered.

Royal, seemingly desperate to be back in her good graces, leaned forward, tongue outstretched to lick the glossy leather of her shoes. Taking two slow steps back, Sulk made a noise of disgust.

"You... are not fit to lick the soles of my shoes. There is one way, and only one way, in which you can redeem yourself."

Royal looked slightly ill as his gaze flickered to his soiled bed, then back to his Domme's shoes.

Sulk seemingly had all the time in the world for her least favorite submissive to make his choice: truly be Mistress's submissive, and allow Mistress to bind him during punishment, or lose his Mistress.

The tortured expressions crossing Royal's face bored Sulk. She looked down at Royal and arched an eyebrow.

Coming to a decision, Royal skittered over to his bed, lying back, placing his arms above his head.

"Good boy," Sulk murmured, sauntering to the armoire that housed her weapons of mass submission.

The leather cuffs were soon buckled in place around the wrists and ankles of a nervous Royal, securing him to the bed's iron frame.

Sulk wandered back to the armoire, selecting something to deliver vengeance. The tawse's handle was a beautiful piece of oiled oak, the two thick leather pieces projecting from the handle were as wide and long as her forearm.

Standing imperiously at the side of Royal's bed, forcing him to crane his neck to see her, Sulk smiled.

The tawse was teasingly, slowly drawn up his left leg and over his stomach. Royal's achingly erect cock jumped and throbbed at being lightly brushed, then ignored, as the stiff leather was drawn up to his chest.

"Yes!" Royal pleaded, "Please, I want this!... Please, Mistress..."

Sulk smiled as she spoke. "You are an abomination. You attempted to rob the Doctor of what he needed to heal himself."

The Domme raised her tawse, Royal tipped his head back to scream, and beautifully exposed his throat.

It was when the architect was dead, blank eyes staring up at the ceiling when Sulk leaned close to his ear, whispering with the dark and terrifying promise that enchanted him in the first place. "The crushing of one's larynx and hyoid bones leaves one writhing for breath that will not come. As you now know, Abomination." Humming idly, the Domme strolled to the bedroom doors, closing them behind her. The gigantic main room was littered with the human detritus left from Royal's endless
party, mostly drunk or unconscious. Looking at the huge mirrors the reflected the space, Sulk stepped between them, watching as the endless stream of her elegant image grew smaller and smaller in the reflection, the moment to be recreated in an intimate scene, to be given the demand to view herself submitting forever in those reflections... "Ah," she said thoughtfully, striking open her lighter and holding it to the floor to ceiling curtains, "Mise en abîme."

The flames grew so quickly this time, not the false, choking haze of the homemade smoke bombs she'd set off before. This was a cleansing flare that swept across the soiled room, purifying as it destroyed. "If only I had a fiddle," Sulk laughed, just before the fire took her, and the rest of the penthouse floor.

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From my beautiful muse: 'Mise en abîme' is an art history term given to a picture within a picture. More recently it has been used to describe standing between two mirrors and seeing yourself become smaller and smaller, becoming infinitely small.

'Mise en abîme' translates as 'placed into abyss'.

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Chapter End Notes

I must thank the beautiful and brilliant Sulk for re-structuring this chapter for me. It kept me up at night, trying to figure out the logical conclusion. But Sulk- our beloved reader and writer here on AO3- wrote a mesmerizing segment for me that clarified what had to happen. So thank you, you glorious and clever creature!

I'd always intended to end this story here, with Angelica and Robert and their new, little family striking out for his cottage, the beacon of (hopefully) safety miles and miles away. Then, I realized such an ill-defined and ambiguous finish would make me a complete asshole. So, there is one more chapter. Thank you all so much for reading.
Hopefully, It's A Zombie Apocalypse

Chapter Summary

In which Robert and Angelica make their escape. And find themselves settled into a strange kind of domesticity. As domestic as one can be in the Apocalypse.

Trigger warning: slight inference towards child abuse

Chapter Notes

I've been torn on how to finish this story, wrote two chapters, irritably erased them, started over... I'm still not sure this is right, but it seems I owe these two a couple more chapters. Thanks for your patience... if any of you are still here to read it. *chagrined emoji*

No one had ever asked Angelica what she thought the Apocalypse would be like, but one of her secret vices was doomsday movies. In fact, if such a thing were to happen, the woman had hoped it would be a zombie apocalypse, like the one shown in "The Walking Dead." Walkers aside, it seemed more survivable than some of the other even more grim scenarios.
What they found really wasn't like any of her beloved films. The streets of London- a major metropolis and filled to bursting with nearly nine million people- were nearly empty. Abandoned cars, some burnt-out buildings, and trash blowing everywhere with the wind. As Laing steered the big van around car crashes and most horribly, a pile of dead bodies, they still didn't see a single soul. Angelica nudged the surgeon at one point and nodded toward an office building, there were filthy faces peeking out from broken windows to stare, ducking as the van's passengers looked back at them.

"It's like everyone is following the same form of insanity," she said softly to Laing. She'd made a little bed from a couple of rough wool moving blankets she'd found in the back, and Toby was sitting there, staring at nothing and holding the sleeping baby. She glanced back at them before continuing, "That pile of bodies shows they've been turning on each other, too." Shuddering, Angelica continued, "But there are no real signs of any widespread violence- half the city would be on fire now. No blood. No weapons."

Laing frowned, but his face softened as he looked back at her. "Take a look at the map, darling. I know there's a turn coming up in a street or two."

Angelica shuddered a bit as she remembered their trip to Laing's summer home. Maneuvering in and around the hundreds of crashed or abandoned cars made the three-hour trip closer to eight. They'd stopped twice to siphon gas from stalled autos and Angelica paced around the van with a crowbar, the only weapon she could find while Robert did the messy work of getting fuel into their tank.

"You know, the timing really couldn't be more perfect," she said with a certain amount of sarcasm. "Royal had to wait for me to wake up from being drugged, so his little cannibal feast didn't really get going 'till around sunrise." Angelica shuddered. "Imagine trying to get through London at night?"

Gagging a bit as he wiped petrol off his mouth from having to gain suction into the tube leading to their tank, Robert nodded. "It's a bit hard to consider anything that happened in that hell as 'perfect timing,' but it was indeed fortunate." Rapidly putting the cap back on the tank, he looked around them. "Back into the van. We're almost there."

Despite the horror of what they'd endured, Angelica desperately smothered a bubble of laughter as Robert steered the van to the locked gate of the "beach cottage."

He hopped out to open the gate- deftly plucking a hidden key under a rock- so casual a hiding place for the over-prepared Dr. Laing. And then as they edged down the long drive, she pressed her lips together when Robert's casually described vacation home was an imposing two-story stone home with sturdy walls and well-protected from sight from the road or the beach. As he pulled back into the van he looked at the mischief in Angelica's eyes. His eyes narrowed in the old, sexy way as he looked her over. "You look like you're ready to giggle, pet. Care to share the joke?"

She tried to hide the slightly hysterical giggle behind her mouth. "I, um... you described it as a 'cottage,' and this might be just a bit smaller than Windsor Castle. And so much more beautiful than your flat..." Angelica paused, but Robert simply kissed her hand and set the van in gear.

To their immense relief, the heavy oak door and paned windows seemed intact, undamaged by looters and while Laing made a circuit of the property with the crowbar in hand, Angelica ushered
the exhausted Toby and sleeping infant into the kitchen, disappointed by the flick of the light switch that left them all in darkness. Using the glow of Robert's charged, but useless phone, she rooted through the cupboards and managed to find some oatmeal and canned milk. The gas stove still blessedly worked, and the woman made some hot bowls of food for them as she carefully warmed some milk for the baby. Coming in just as she doubtfully eyed the small pan of milk, Laing smiled as he washed his hands, pleased to see the water supplied by a well dug on the property was still pumping.

They all sat around the kitchen table in silence, eating their meager dinner by the light of the candles Angelica found in the pantry. The silence was broken this time by Robert, examining his spoonful of oatmeal. He chuckled, idly turning the spoon over and watching the cereal cling to it upside down.

“I can’t remember the last time I had… what is this? Mush?” Laing’s fine-boned face was just as unfairly beautiful by candlelight, she thought with some resentment.

Toby and Angelica looked at each other with smothered giggles. She was trying to eat a spoonful every now and then and still keep the bottle propped to the baby’s mouth. Looking between them, Laing’s smile grew. “What are you two grinning about? Hmmm?”

Surprisingly, it was Toby who piped up. “I can’t picture you ever eating mush. Like… ever in your lifetime. Not even as a baby.”

Robert leaned back gracefully, relaxed in a way Angelica had never seen him before. “Really…” The tone was so close to the one he used in his deep, purring “sex voice” that she almost expected him to pull out a shibari rope to bind her. Shockingly, the thought made her press her thighs together, her center suddenly wet. The instant response of her body after the horror of the last 36 hours stunned her. His narrowed eyes told her Laing had seen her response. “So what,” he drawled, “do the two of you think I ate as a child?”

“Stocks and bonds,” offered Toby.

“And the souls of lesser men,” included Angelica. They looked at each other and burst into helpless laughter, and after a moment, Robert joined in. They all laughed far longer than was deserved for such a small joke, but everyone was giddy suddenly, overwhelmed by the normalcy of the beautiful old kitchen. It seemed almost bizarre after the hideous, warped routine of the High-Rise.

When they all managed to calm down a bit, Angelica finally took the empty bottle away from the sleepy infant. “We should put her down somewhere safe to sleep?” she said, uncertain.

Robert smiled at her, his eyes kind as he reached out to her. “We should burp her first.” He watched her look a little helpless and took the baby, rising to find a dishtowel to put over his filthy dress shirt, carefully placing the tiny body face down and patting her back gently. Both Toby and Angelica stared at him, clearly unsettled, though they both smothered another giggle when the baby burped a little splatter of milk down The Doctor Robert Laing’s back. Looking back at their shocked expressions, he unbent enough to shrug, still patting the baby. "It is a rather common biological function.”

Leading the way upstairs, Robert took them down a long hall and opened the door at the end. It had to be his bedroom, Angelica thought, it screams ‘rich, hot and dangerous.’ Gleaming wood floors and a ridiculously lengthy bed meant for long, long legs. As he pulled back the covers on the bed, she almost shivered in delight over the sight of clean, white sheets.

Laing was frowning, however looking down at the immaculate bed as if it just released a fart. "It's terribly dusty," he scowled, "but we'll pull off the top comforter for tonight to get rid of the worst of
it." While Angelica changed the baby again and nervously rocked her to sleep, he took Toby's arm and led him to the big master bath. "The well water's freezing, but I heated some pots of water on the stove." Looking at the boy's uncomprehending expression, Robert smiled kindly. "When did you last bathe?"

Toby then flushed and looked down. "I don't... I'm not certain."

"Of course," the doctor calmly cut off his embarrassment, "I can't imagine any of us can. But you'll feel so much better and then sleeping on clean sheets- a good night, don't you think?" Toby nodded and suddenly grinned in relief.

Finally getting the water lukewarm in the tub, Robert helped the boy undress, lips pressed in a furious line to see bruises up and down the child's skinny back. As his fingertips trailed over them lightly, carefully, Toby cleared his throat. "Most of 'em are from falling off things. Mostly." He was startled to see the hugely tall man suddenly kneel down to his level, looking at him closely.

"No one," Laing enunciated precisely, "no one will hurt you here." Watching the boy's uncertain eyes, he smiled, cupping the back of Toby's grimy head in one big palm. "We will all look after one another, yes?"

With eight-year-old logic, Toby shrugged. "Except for the baby. She's pretty useless so far." He didn't understand why Robert burst out laughing, but he smiled tolerantly and stepped into the tub.

Robert was re-heating more water when Angelica came down the stairs. "I put Toby in with the baby and made them their own... nests, I suppose, with pillows. He was out the minute his head hit the pillow." She watched as he raised his hands to cup her cheeks, eyes fluttering shut for a moment, enjoying the warmth of him. She was no longer in shock, but she couldn't seem to recover from the sensation of being dipped in an ice bath, skin chilled. With his usual intensity regarding all things Angelica, Laing noticed it. "You're still pale, darling, and your circulation isn't moving as well as it should, your hands are so cold."

Forcing a smile, she shook her head. "I'm just feeling the... enormity of everything, I guess. I'll be fine. How are you?"

Unbidden, she reached up to smooth her hand over his stubbled cheek. He hid his surprise, but he leaned into her hand slightly. Robert couldn't remember his angel ever touching him spontaneously like this. "Quite well, oddly. It's not been exactly our usual day, has it?"

To his surprise, Angelica burst out in uproarious, slightly hysterical laughter. "Actually, given the last month in that hellhole, it was pretty much exactly the kind of usual day we'd have." He looked at her for a moment, expressionlessly, and a bolt of terror went through her heart. Was her fearsome Daddy still... insane? Was this all an act? Was he reverting back to the beautiful monster who held her captive? Then, to the woman's inexpressible relief, Robert's eyes lit up and he laughed with her, a lovely, rich laugh she'd never heard before.

"You are quite correct, my little one," he agreed, still chuckling as he kissed her on each cheek and then her lips. He hovered just over her upturned mouth, for a moment, breathing deeply. Even under the ugly notes of drugs and smoke and blood, the sweet smell of Angelica still lingered. His beautiful, strong angel was still there. "Here," Robert took her by the hand, pulling lightly, "we have a moment while the water heats again. Come sit outside with me. It's very warm."

Watching him pick up a slightly dusty wine bottle and some glasses, Angelica followed him.
obediently. The wide stone deck was, of course, just as beautiful as the rest of the house. Opening a door, he pulled some plump cushions out and put them on the big wicker chaise lounge. "Sit down, darling," Laing patted the space between his spread legs, and with an eye on that wine bottle, she did as he asked. She held the wineglass as he filled it, then watched him raise his own in a toast.

"What are we toasting?"

Leaning in, he kissed the side of her head. "Surviving."

"Hear, hear," Angelica agreed, clinking glasses. She closed her eyes and moaned a little, the wine was crisp, deliciously tangy and soothing. Sitting with Robert on this beautiful terrace, hearing the waves roll up on the wide sand beach, it was hard to believe the horror of what they'd escaped. That if Sulk hadn't helped them, if they hadn't fought, she would be inside the stomach of a madman right now. With that, she started shuddering again, teeth chattering even as she tried to stop. His warm arms went around her, and Robert began rocking her gently.

"Shhhh..." he soothed, "I've got you, my angel. You're safe." She swallowed hard and nodded, shakily taking another drink.

Some time later, they recalled the pots of simmering water and went back in. Angelica tilted her head, watching him deftly carry the heavy pots up the stairs. Looking over his shoulder, Robert narrowed his eyes a little playfully. "And what are you smirking at, little girl?"

Shrugging, she admitted, "It's kind of surreal seeing The Doctor Laing carrying pots of water around, like... I don't know, like a dad."

As they poured the water into the big tub, he leaned over and murmured, "Ah, but you are incorrect. I poured hot water for Toby like a, ah, 'dad.' For you, I am drawing your bath as your Daddy." A shiver went down her spine as he purred the last word into her ear, and Laing grinned rakishly. Gently pulling her clothes from her, he helped her into the bath and began stripping himself. "Shall we conserve water, darling?" Angelica hid a smile under her hand as she leaned forward, happy to see he'd brought the wine bottle up, too. He settled behind her, enjoying his angel's little sigh of content as she leaned back against his broad chest. Kissing the top of her head, he poured her another glass of Bordeaux and tucked her head under his chin. Gently smoothing some fragrant body wash over the parts of her that he could reach, he enjoyed the feeling of her chilly body growing warm again.

"Better?"

"So much, Robert, thank you," she sighed, finally feeling she was drawing a full breath at last. Angelica's lids fluttered shut, enjoying the feeling of his rough fingertips traveling over her skin. "Robert?"

"Hmmmm?"

She sat up, turning slightly to look at his face, beautiful and angular in the candlelight. "How far do you think this... thing has spread? Is it everywhere? All over the world?" Before she knew to be afraid of him, she'd always loved Laing's eyes, clear, like the ocean. They were that way again, the strange polar sheen was gone.

"It's hard to say," he answered slowly. "The devastation of London tells me it's spread through the UK, at least. I did notice that the damage seemed less as we moved further into the countryside, but I
don't know if that's just because the population density lessens as well... fewer people..."

"Less destruction," Angelica finished, frowning thoughtfully. He was right. She'd seen less carnage, less of the horrid, creeping feeling that they were being stared at the farther they moved from London. Watching the sorrow and anxiety move over her mobile features, Laing felt a sudden tenderness for her. He'd always felt protective- he'd always fought the urge to kill anyone who even looked at this beautiful creature with ill intent. But now... just seeing her worry was painful. Sliding up his hands, he began to slowly massage her stiff neck.

"How sore are you, sweetness? This has been a rather brutal 24 hours."

Angelica shrugged, careful, he noted to not dislodge his hands. "It could be worse," she said matter-of-factly. "I could be dead. I prefer the alternative." She enjoyed the feeling of Robert's muscled chest behind her, shaking in quiet laughter. As his long fingers dug into her knotted muscles, she gave a little sigh, relaxing into his hands. He could feel the moment she gave herself over into his care, and the man's heart gave an odd lurch. Everything he'd wanted in his mania when he captured her in the High-Rise, given to him freely now by this stubborn, infuriating woman. Robert bit his lip against a groan as he felt her hand slide down his abdomen and to his rapidly swelling cock, shyly stroking it, tentative fingers moving over the surface and toying with the veins bulging from the smooth surface. Hearing his indrawn breath, she began moving her hand with more confidence, enjoying how quickly that hard, lovely part of him rose to attention under her touch.

"Aren't you- darling, you must be exhausted," Laing forced out, "I'm trying to be a gentleman." He stopped when Angelica turned slightly, the moonlight glinting off her silvered hair and giving her a strange, fey-like quality.

"I don't want you to," she said slowly, "I don't want you to be a gentleman, daddy. I want you to make all the... stuff in my head go away. Can you do that for me?"

Gazing down at her lovely face, Robert felt the grip around his chest from the last day loosen. His angel still needed him. "I can do that," he said tenderly, fingers sliding to her center.

It was strange, they both thought, trying to hard to be careful and quiet, not letting the splashes of the water from the tub be loud enough to wake the children in the next room. Neither being parents, the awareness was strange and a little amusing. But everything else- including caution- faded from Angelica's treacherous awareness when Robert moved his hands to her waist, lifting her against his chest. "Take my cock in your hand, little girl." His voice was rough and dark again, and she shivered, grateful for the sudden buzzing in her brain that prevented thought for anything other than the thick organ of the man behind her. Biting down on the hand he put over her mouth to silence her, the woman was absorbed in the feeling of him spreading her again- so strange to feel relief and gratitude instead of feeling as if he'd conquered her. He was breathing in harsh gasps against her ear, occasionally murmuring how beautiful she was- how deliciously warm and tight- and Angelica shivered rapturously, loving the sound and feel of him inside her again. Why did she ever fight this? She wondered vaguely, tensing her thighs to assist him in moving her up and down on his granite shaft.

"You belong to me, my angel. No one will ever touch you. No one will hurt you. Do you feel my cock inside you?" Laing's voice was a little sharper, and Angelica knew he was close. When she didn't answer, he lifted her and dropped her back down abruptly on him, making her feel like a spike was driven up inside her.

"Ah!"

"Shhhh... little darling," he purred, that unreasonably dark and sonorous voice making her shake,
"you don't want to wake the children, do you?" He waited, thrusting harder when she didn't answer.

"N- no, Daddy," Angelica managed to gasp, "I don't I swear..."

"Hmmm..." he purred in her ear, still lifting her up and down on him. "How fortunate. Because good girls get to come, don't they?"

Angelica was past the point of reason, the stretch and pull of him inside her was unbearably good, the feel of his muscled arms moving her as if she weighed nothing, his filthy, measured tone as he whispered dirty, lascivious things to her. But when one hand left her waist to slap her slit sharply, she gasped, stiffening and biting her lip to keep from yelping. There was a certain satisfaction to hear Robert grit his teeth against a moan as her sudden clench made her tighten down on his invading shaft.

"Don't." Thrust, pull, "They." Thrust again. Laing smiled as Angelica's head dropped back against his, her wide sea-blue eyes finding his. With an effort, she focused on what he was asking for.

"Yes, Daddy... I want-" she bit back another groan as his hands moved to hers, putting them over her chest, "-I want to be your good girl."

Robert's grin was feral. "Of course you do, baby. Now squeeze those lovely nipples for me, pull on your breasts and show your Daddy was a dirty, good girl you are, and Daddy will let you come."

It was a relief, she thought vaguely, almost comforting to slide back into that dark, erotic talk. Knowing that if she just did what he demanded, he would make her come, and all those ugly memories would go away, washed clean with his come and her tightening against his lovely, thick cock. "Oh, please..." Angelica groaned, "please Daddy I need to come, please-"

To hear the beautiful man bouncing her almost cruelly on the spike inside her growl lowly in approval almost made her weep in relief. "There's my good girl, my sweet slut. You may come, baby. Come for Daddy."

And with a final gasp she smothered in her hand, Angelica did just as she was told.

Sitting quietly as Robert dressed her after, Angelica looked down and smoothed her hand over the soft shorts and tank top she was wearing. A sudden, ugly thought made her freeze. "These aren't-"

"No, darling," he soothed, "these belong to my sister, Lucy. Megan-" his elegant features twisted briefly in distaste, "never liked the cottage. She was rarely here."

"Good," Angelica said bluntly, daring to swoop in and kiss him when Robert looked up in surprise. Taking her hand, he rose and led her into the bedroom, where without saying a word, she curled in behind the baby and he spooned the little, crumpled figure of Toby. Reaching over to take her hand, he smiled at her briefly before their lids fluttered shut gratefully, finally feeling safe.
What Happens Now?

Chapter Summary

In which Robert and Angelica struggle to make a life in the middle of madness.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Thank you to RayofDawn for this beautiful fan art!

"What troubles you?"

Angelica turned from where she was eyeing the nearly-empty shelves with pursed lips and a little frown. Robert was standing close enough for her to feel his heat radiate through the thin cotton of the tank top he'd given her the night before. 'The man's a blast furnace,' she thought fondly before smiling for him. "We've only got one more can of milk," she admitted, "and the poor little one's been crying and fussing so much- I don't think it's suitting her newborn tummy." Shutting the cabinet door and leaning against it, Angelica asked, "What are the chances, do you think, of a store nearby that hasn't been completely looted?" She chuckled ruefully, "Or a neighbor with a friendly cow?"

Laing's brow went up and he was clearly thinking. "That's brilliant, darling. There are some small farms around here, even though this section is mainly summer homes."

But when he mentioned that he planned to leave them here and go out searching on his own, Angelica lost her calm. "No! No, you won't, Robert!" She watched his eyes narrow warningly and shook her head in spite of it. "I can't- I won't chance losing you again. I can't just wait here with
these kids and just hope you'll make it back. Wondering if you're hurt? Days going by before I realize you're not coming back? I can't-" He gently shushed her as Toby came around the corner of the hall into the kitchen, looking at them both, worried eyes behind his cracked lenses.

"What's the matter? Are we going to starve?" He still sounded like odd, matter-of-fact Toby of the High Rise, but they could see his skinny shoulders curl in as if expecting a blow.

"No! No, sweetie..." it was Angelica who went to put an arm- gently- across his shoulders. Robert had told her the night before about the boy's bruises, a set, furious expression on his face. "Robert and I were just talking about some basics and where to find them." Smiling, she drew him to the window, sweeping a hand out. "Look at that giant, saltwater refrigerator! Full of lobsters, clams, fish... all we need is a lemon tree and we're in business! Or, a butter tree, maybe." She chuckled as Toby looked at her sideways.

"You're a bit mad, aren't you?" he asked calmly.

Her pale gaze meeting Laing's over the boy's head, Angelica's smile grew wider. "Only in the non-scary way, I assure you."

As it happened, it was Angelica who made "the first contact," and she didn't have to go far.

While Robert was going through the mechanics on the generator- of course the "cottage" had a generator- Angelica was sitting on the clean white sand of the beach, watching Toby suspiciously poke at the surf with his big toe as if waiting for the seawater to bite it off. The baby was delightedly snuggling in her arms, vaguely registering the tickle of warm sand slide through her tiny toes. Her silver head lifted abruptly when something came clanking through the bushes leading to their dune.

"Toby!" she said sharply, "come over by me, please." Vaguely registering with relief that the boy did, without questioning, Angelica bent and picked up a length of driftwood with her other hand. The relief she felt when a goat came ambling through the underbrush nearly sent the woman to her knees, and she wheezed out a chuckle. The animal was staring blankly at her, chewing something that looked vaguely like- "My underwear!" she gasped, "You smelly bag of hair, let go-" Growling, she realized her only pair of panties was currently being consumed by the horrid creature in front of her, cheerfully gnawing through the cotton with absolutely no guilt. Gritting her teeth, she was about to chase the goat off when she stopped. "Goat's milk..." she murmured. Angelica remembered an article she'd read about infants being able to better consume goat's milk over infant formula. "Toby, please come get the baby, okay?" Not taking her eyes off the insolently chewing animal, she passed off the baby and began inching closer to the goat. Angelica was a city girl. Her only experience with barnyard animals was a field trip once in elementary school. "Goatie... goatie... goatie..." she implored, trying to look friendly, even though it was terrifying her. Placidly chewing up the last of her underwear, the vile animal continued eyeing her. "Come here, now. Good goat..." Her eyes were looking for some kind of collar to grab it with- aren't animals supposed to wear those things?- but she couldn't find a specific area to grab the creature.

"OW!"

The goat, unimpressed with Angelica's efforts to capture it, lowered it's head and knocked her off her feet. A shadow suddenly above her showed that Robert had heard her yelp. "Darling..." his silky voice smoothed over her. "Why are you thrashing around in the mud?"

Angelica narrowed her eyes at his amused face, panting angrily. "Well, I was trying to capture this stupid goat so our baby would have milk! But this goat is a total assh-" Looking at a deeply
interested Toby, she closed her mouth and forced a false smile and spoke with just a touch of sarcasm. "Perhaps, Robert, I could trouble you to- whatever it is that you do with a goat- do you leash them? Leash this goat and bring him by the house? He's currently finishing off my only spare pair of- well, I don't know what goats eat but maybe we could give him some... grass or something? Does he need a pen?" She could see Laing's face turning dark red in his effort not to laugh, and it unreasonably angered her more, hoisting herself up from the mud and stomping up the stairs with the baby while the two males contained the goat. Angelica was quite aware her backside was covered in mud and she wanted to punch someone.

"Oh, little one." His beautiful voice, purring behind her and making the woman shiver. "Give me the baby, I'll put her down for a nap and get Toby settled. The goat is tied to the deck and will be fine for the moment." His big, warm hand took hers and led Angelica over to the side of the house where a surprisingly luxurious outdoor shower was stationed. "Take off those muddy clothes and have a nice shower. I'll bring you some clean clothes, all right?" Robert noted with some humor that his sweet pet's lower lip was thrust out. "Where's my good girl?" He appreciated that her cerulean gaze darted behind him to make sure Toby was out of sight. Leaning in close, he murmured, "Daddy will be right out."

It did the trick, and Angelica turned to the outdoor shower and began undressing. When she turned on the water, she sighed, deeply grateful the day was hot and had warmed the outdoor water supply, simply enjoying feeling clean again- not just her skin, but her soul, breathing clean air into her lungs and not the stench of the High Rise. "This is sooo good," Angelica groaned blissfully. And when two hands slid around her waist, she'd been distracted enough to jump and shriek- a sound that was halted when a big palm slapped over her mouth.

"Shhhh... bad girl. No screaming." Robert held her up as Angelica sagged in relief, peeling his fingers off her jaw, she tried to turn, but he held her in place, so she settled for looking over her shoulder.

"Given the events of the past few weeks, you can why I'm jumpy as hell!" Not that she shouted her displeasure, more of a hiss between her teeth. Breathing in deeply, Angelica tried to refocus. "Where are the kids?"

Laing had taken the soap from the little stall and was running it over her shoulders. "The baby is deeply asleep, Toby dozed off in our room upstairs with a book far too complicated for his age and the goat is tethered, out of sight in the side garden and eating my mother's prize roses." Feeling his lovely pet relax a little against him, he delivered one harsh swat to her bottom, hand over her mouth again as she yelped. "That," he said, "is for not remembering what you call me." Running his teeth lightly along her shoulder and up her neck, Laing murmured, "What do you call me?"

There were many answers, and Angelica was still as she pondered the consequence of her next step. Robert was many things: captor, savior, hero, madman... daddy. If she called him 'daddy,' she was signaling the games- and her role- continued, even out of the terrifying confines of that concrete hell. Into this new, confusing world, where they were responsible for two children and... He was being uncharacteristically patient, mouth kissing along her jaw and hands holding her body in the warm water. Suddenly, she sagged against his broad front, knowing that she was getting his shirt wet and not caring. The warmth and solidity of this man... how safe he'd made them. How safe he made her feel.

"I call you daddy."

He pulled off his wet t-shirt then and used it to tie her hands together and loop them over the top of the showerhead, immobilizing her in seconds.
"How-" Angelica shook her head, "how do you do that?"

Laing didn't answer her, but one foot kicked the two of hers apart and spreading her legs made the pull on her wrists tighter, making it harder to move at all. She could feel one hand wind her hair in a coil, just as he'd stated his intent that first day in Royal's penthouse, in front of the grotesque painting from Artemisia Gentileschi. The other slid down her stomach and his fingers spread her lips, stroking along her clitoris and dipping teasingly into her channel. His jeans had been peeled off at the same time as his shirt, and Angelica could feel the hardness of him pressing into her lower back. Yanking her head backward, Robert sent her body into a sharp arch and she gasped as her wide eyes found his amused ones. "There's my good girl," he approved, "pressed against her daddy's fingers and aching to come. You're already getting slick, darling. Such an eager little thing for daddy's cock. That is..." he pressed two fingers harshly up her channel, enjoying the sudden clutch of her silky walls around them. "if you deserve it. I'm not sure you do. Pouting and fussing when you fell in the mud. Stomping around like a spoiled brat." His fingers were slicking along her walls, poking and pressing on terribly sensitive spots that hurt or felt a bit too good. And, of course, distracting Angelica's rapidly scattering senses and making it hard to concentrate on his words, only on the spike of arousal his beautiful, smooth voice always gave her. When he was using his vocal alchemy on her, it was always a cross between a purr and a growl, making her melt but never allowing her to relax.

"I'm sorry daddy," Angelica groaned, "I don't know anything about animals! I'm scared of that thing! It ate my underwear and it has creepy eyes!"

"Oh, my poor girl... I must remember to thank it for taking your knickers away," he soothed, grin still evident in his voice. "You're such a brave little thing, everyone has something they're uncomfortable with. Daddy will take care of the livestock, and you'll take care of daddy's rather hard-" his treacherous, clever fingers moved faster, setting her up on tiptoe and she could feel a silent chuckle move through his chest, her back arched and pressed against him. "Daddy's rather engorged cock." His calloused thumb was rasping along her clit, and Angelica closed her eyes, gritting her teeth. If she came before he allowed it, she was certain the repercussions would not be ones she would enjoy.

Nodding, she agreed, moaning. "Of course, daddy- please, I really need you right now- my- my self-control is- AH!" Laing slid his entire length inside her, holding her legs wide open by looping her thighs over his elbows and began thrusting aggressively, giving no solicitous moment to stretch with him or even enjoy the overwhelming sense of fullness she loved when he paused inside her. His teeth fastened into a soft chunk of skin at the base of her neck as Robert's cock jolted her, made her gasp and arch her back helplessly.

"Shhh... be a good girl," he soothed, "no noise. You wouldn't want to wake the children." Angelica knew his master bedroom was on the other side of the stone cottage, but her voice did carry and the windows were open.

"OH!" she yelped after a particularly hard thrust and then gritted her teeth again. His pleased chuckle made Angelica want to growl, but she wanted that orgasm- oh, god she wanted to come, so she kept quiet as she felt Laing's strong thighs tighten and he hoisted her higher, making her drop harder on his shaft and the blonde almost lost her grip on her silence.

Laing's dark head nudged hers. "Look down, my sweet girl. Look how filthy and open you are to me, your sweet slick covering my cock, sliding down my balls? And you're still clutching me inside you, greedy little thing." Without knowing how he did it, Angelica felt him move slightly and then the warm patter of water from the shower was landing directly on her pelvis streaming between where they were connected and more to the point- tapping rapidly on her embarrassingly swollen
clit, quite visible and red. He listened as his precious girl's breathing changed, speeding up even as she tried to control it, and her pussy was tightening against his cock and an extremely distracting way, slowing down his thrusts but making them hit harder. "Do you want to come, sweetheart?"

Angelica was so far past needing to come that his words felt like they were delivered wrapped in a blanket, thudding meaninglessly against her ears and forcing Robert to repeat himself. "Yes, please daddy. Please!"

And with a rasp that surely came from Satan himself, he hissed into her ear, "Then do it now, sweetness. Do it this instant or you will not come at all." That was all the warning she needed and the poor woman let out a strangled squeak, teeth still clenched against a scream as she came harder than she'd ever come in her life. So hard that Robert's last, vicious thrusts actually hurt against her desperately convulsing channel. She dimly felt him undo her bonds to the shower head and they collapsed against the wall of the house, his cock still spurting inside her and her knees finally allowed to close as the water continued to stream over them like a warm summer storm.

Meeting the neighbors came a couple of days later, where Angelica was attempting to cook some fish on the outdoor grill that "the men" (as both Toby and Robert insisted on calling themselves) caught in the surf that day. The woman was so quiet that she didn't hear her until she stepped on their terrace.

"That goat's mine."

Angelica's heart nearly lurched out of her chest and she whipped around, metal spatula raised high as if she'd bludgeon the woman with it, looking over to make sure the baby was still safe in the wicker laundry basket they're repurposed into a bassinet. "Where did you come from?" she managed to say calmly, civilly. The woman was around 50, careless about wrinkles or windswept hair and looking like the sort much braver about handling a goat. She was looking at Angelica with her arms crossed, assessing her.

Jerking her head north, the woman replied, "About eight kilometers that way. We have a small farm. And that's my goat you got penned up there."

Trying to stay civil while looking for Robert, Angelica nodded. "I see. We found her wandering through our bushes, eating my underw-" she stopped short but the woman laughed, a thousand tiny wrinkles springing to life.

"That sounds about right. Juliet's quite fond of underwear."

"Juliet?" Angelica suddenly flashed back to the night she and Robert had made love, reciting "Romeo and Juliet" to each other and the irritable visage of the goat suddenly inserted itself, making her laugh and simultaneously shudder.

"Aye, so I'll be taking her back now-"

"You can't!" Angelica registered the woman's scowl and how she put her hand to her sweater pocket. "Easy, just listen, please. Our baby- we don't have any formula for her- your goat saved her life." She defensively stepped closer to the bassinet as the farmer did.
Looking matter of factly at Angelica's chest, she queried, "You've got no milk?"

Blushing as she shook her silver head, she added, "She's... adopted."

The woman's expression darkened, but she nodded her head. "Aye, there's a lot of those kinds of families recently. Eliza Taylor. Dunham Farms, you'll see it on the tag on the goat's ear."

"Angelica Fraser," she was about to continue but realized she wasn't sure how to introduce her new family.

"Dr. Robert Laing," said the deep voice behind her. Robert strode past her, hand extended to Eliza. "Toby, our son-" Angelica could see the wary boy lingering by the door to the kitchen. "Thank you for the providence of losing your goat. She's saved our little one. Perhaps we can come to a financial agreement?"

Eliza laughed sardonically. "Really? Paper money now? My, my. How useful." She looked him over for a moment. "You said you were a doctor?"

Angelica sat next to the bassinet, rocking the infant inside as she started to stir a bit. She knew Robert introducing himself that way was deliberate. Medical care was a priceless currency these days.

"Indeed," Laing was all business. "Do you have a patient?"

"My oldest," the woman allowed, "got a deep cut on his leg from barbed wire and it's going bad."

"Red streaks running up and down his leg?" he asked, brow furrowed.

"Aye."

"I have a kit here," Laing said. "Why don't you take me to him?" He turned to see the look of alarm in Angelica's eyes, her instant head shake before she composed herself. Eliza saw it, too.

"You won't remember, Doctor, but I knew your mum and da. They'd come by the farm for fresh eggs and butter when you and Lucy were little. You were always fascinated by our horses."

Robert's beautiful face changed, lit with remembered excitement. "The Clydesdales?"


Which is how they found themselves in the big, warm central room in the farmhouse at Dunham Farms, the baby on Eliza's youngest's lap, being bounced and sung to enthusiastically, which surprisingly the infant was enjoying. Toby was out by the barn, throwing rocks at something with another boy who'd showed up, bleeding and dazed by the farm's gates. He was close to Toby's age, but Eliza quietly filled Angelica in while Robert was upstairs treating their son. "He wouldn't talk for days," she said, hands already busy with a bundle of yarn. "Just stared. We're thinking maybe a car accident, but we drove around for a while and never found anything, he's still not talking much so we just call him 'son.' He doesn't seem to mind."

Angelica blinked away sudden tears. "You're so kind." She leaned her tall body in to look at the woman more closely, bent over her knitting. "Why?"

Eliza looked up, a little distracted, "Why, what?"

"Why... are you so kind?" she asked slowly. "We've seen-" Angelica shuddered but continued on.
"We've seen every manner of monstrous cruelty. Why are you kind? Why aren't you eating us?" It was meant as a joke, but the sudden keen stare from the older woman told her Eliza had caught on.

"Ya' saying someone..." she paused disbelievingly, "they tried to eat ya'?" When Angelica wouldn't look at her, wouldn't say anything, Eliza nodded slowly and went back to her knitting. "Bastards. The lot of them."

It was her husband who finally offered their theory. "There's less of us here," Jonathon Taylor surmised, "summer season not begun and quiet. We think... we think the madness fester when there are more people all stuck together. When we all thought of it, we've taken care not to be in bigger groups, preferring to get together with only a few at a time. We've not seen the madness here, though sometimes we get some refugees from bigger towns." He nodded subtly towards Toby and their boy, eating sausage sandwiches and wiping their greasy faces with their sleeves. Angelica thought of getting up to pointedly offer Toby a napkin, but he looked so happy...

Robert was washing his hands in the sink, listening to the man's theory. "And no violence here? How many in your community, do you think?"

Taylor shifted uneasily, his face grim. "Less than a hundred, or so. We've had our casualties... two homes burned-" his voice lowered, looking at the children, "-we're not sure by passers-by or the families inside. But since we've all been careful, no one else has the madness." He looked at the four newcomers, one brow raised. "You say you came from London?"

Looking at each other, Angelica and Robert nodded. "It was bad-" she shuddered, "-very bad where we were. A huge, luxury high-rise full of people."

Eliza's hands slowed on her knitting. "How did you get out?"

It was Robert who replied, shocking the Angelica with his warm smile. "Luck. And love."

Slowly, they met other nearby residents, everyone careful to keep their distance. Laing did a calculated raid on the only two pharmacies within 80 kilometers, stripping everything of value and writing a meticulous prescription guide so that everyone could avoid poisoning themselves. When the first group of men claiming to be British military showed up with uniforms and guns, Robert and Jonathon sent the word- "don't trust them, offer no information." Sure enough, it took less than a day for the men to get drunk at the sparsely populated pub, getting loud and vicious, firing off their rifles and demanding to see the women. "You've got women here, you motherfeckers, don't you! Bring 'em out!" The next morning, thanks to Laing's carefully dosed beer, there were no more "soldiers sent to rescue" and more guns in the hands of the town. No one dared create an armory. Each household suddenly enjoyed professional weapons and a few well-hidden military vehicles.

Angelica was smiling out over the sight of Robert dipping the baby's toes in the surf, the infant screaming with excitement and his handsome face lit with humor. Her hand slowed on the dish she was drying. How could it be that... she'd never been happier? The world had ended- for most intents and purposes. She and Robert had laid back on the sand nearly every day, searching the skies for jet trails, never finding anything. Angelica was the one who floated the theory that seeing planes in flight would show recovery- no one could fly a jet while insane. Months later when they spotted their first jet, Laing celebrated by putting her on her knees and pounding into her savagely, Angelica's
cries drowned out by the surf as she came. But she was, she'd never imagined that being a mother, and a wife- it was how Robert introduced them to everyone they (cautiously) met- would give her such peace. They celebrated the baby's first steps and the area's residents slowly began meeting in slightly larger groups, testing how they felt, looking for signs of the madness. But there was nothing. Every now and then. they could see huge plumes of grey smoke billowing into the sky in the direction of a larger town or city. But these became less and less as summer passed and moved into fall. And so while Angelica finished the dishes and watched her family, her sharp ears also heard the heavy rumble of trucks. She was out the door in an instant.

"Robert!"

Moving the children inside and out of sight, they watched two of the trucks make the turn and roll slowly down their private lane. Stopping far from the house, one door opened. Squinting to see the writing on the truck, she whispered, "It says United Nations, what do you think?"

"I'm not sure," he answered softly.

One man stepped out of the truck, arms spread and looking at the house. "Hello? We're members of the United Nations relief squad. I'm Captain Hamblin." Angelica heard his American accent and relaxed a little. Not that it was proof of anything, but... "We don't blame you for being wary. We've know there have been rogue military squads masquerading as assistance. But we are here to help. London is back under control. We're moving through the countryside town by town. We've heard... we hear you're the town doctor."

A sudden smile quirked her lips, hearing the feared neurosurgeon The Doctor Laing referred to as the "town doctor." Narrowing his eyes in amusement, Robert turned his attention back out the window.

The captain was continuing. "We have a couple of men who aren't doing well. Gunshot injury- the other's- we don't know, we don't have a medic on this unit. We'd like to ask for your help, doctor."

Watching their expressions as a few of the other men stepped out of their trucks, Angelica looked for the madness, the glazed eyes, the cruelty. They were still in carefully separated groups, she noticed. Robert looked down at her. "What do you think, sweetness?"

Warmed that his habit of checking with her on these things continued to grow, she nodded. "I don't see it. They're not faking the nonsense about 'saving us,' the way the others did."

"Agreed," Laing said, and taking her hand, they stepped out into the crisp afternoon. "Captain," he said, voice deepening in a challenge.

The American's face brightened, and he put a hand out. "May I approach?"

"Of course," Laing answered, watching the others stay back, as if protocol, while their commander came closer.

"It's good to meet you," Captain Hamblin said, "good to see so many survivors. This is a smart town."

Toby suddenly appeared in the doorway, holding the baby and staring at the newcomers carefully. Angelica wanted to scold him- but maybe she wasn't the only one who could spot 'crazy?'

Looking down with a smile, Hamblin asked, "And who are you? I have a baby girl at home too."

Taking the baby, Angelica smiled at the man while Laing still hovered carefully. "This is our son
Toby," she answered, watching the American grin at an accent from home, "and this is our daughter, Hope."

Chapter End Notes

Thank you again all so very much for reading, commenting and supporting the story. It's definitely been one of my darker tales, and even I struggled every now and then about just how freaking dark this sucker was. Surprisingly, it's also one of my popular, so apparently my beloved community here isn't unduly offended. I'm always torn between over-explaining a finish and just letting the reader come to their own conclusions. But I feel like there's been enough ambiguity in this sordid little story to give you a clean, happy finish. Because my stories ALWAYS have happy endings. There's enough dark and awful in the world, and we come here for a universe filled with Hope. Just like the littlest Laing.

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