Broken Bridges

by teenybirdy

Summary

An AU Love story: Andy loves Miranda, and deep down Miranda loves Andy. Can they mend the bridges Miranda broke when she rejected Andy's love?
Looking into the mirror he groaned as he took in his unkempt dark wavy hair and the messy lumberjack beard. He appreciated he needed to tidy himself up. He was trying to build his business as a Remodelling Architect and first impressions counted, so turning up to meet potential new clients looking like the wild man of Borneo wouldn't make a good impact.

Smiling at the simile, he examined the fine wrinkles around his eyes. His face was tanned to a deep olive from spending the last few months on a site in the Hamptons. His teeth were pearly white and his wide smile made his eyes brighten, the flecks of green and amber in the brown causing them to shine like sunlight on polished stone. He loved his eyes, holding the belief they were his best feature. When he was good-humoured, which was 98% of the time, they remained warm, lively, and sparkled with laughter, but when downcast they grew dim and darkened. The smooth green on the edge of his iris contrasted beautifully with the amber and green flecks in the middle. His eyes captured the interest of many women who gazed into them, yet there was just one woman who owned his heart, and she couldn't return his love no matter how he wished otherwise.

Sighing at the fleeting thought, he pulled off his sleeveless t-shirt and his muscles rippled with his smooth movements. He was proud of the way he had grown, spending the better part of his early twenties slim, he had bulked up over the last three years; it showed the hard work he put into his physique through his work and his extracurricular activities.

Pulling out his cell from the pocket of his basketball shorts he scrolled quickly and dialled his favourite barber. "Luce." He growled, unable to stop the grin that formed at the loud squeal on the other end of his cell. "I need a favour, honey. Can you fit me in this morning, I have lunch with a prospective client?" He laughed happily. "Sure thing, I'll be there within the hour." He disconnected quickly and placed his cell on the vanity. Stripping off the rest of his clothes he stalked to the shower.

Today would be a good day. You couldn't beat a free lunch and the potential to charm a new client. Ana told him nothing about the woman who may hire him, but she'd been impressed with the renovations on Ana's home. Unable to stop the smile he stepped under the warm spray and closed his eyes.

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He was about to pull into a parking spot in front of the restaurant when a sleek silver Mercedes town car cut in front of him.
In frustration, he slammed on his brakes and pressed his hand on the horn. Like any New Yorker would, he spewed profanities. "You goddamn, mother fucking cocksucker. How did you not see me here? Goddamn arrogant sonofabitch." The driver stepped from the car and discreetly flipped him the bird as he moved to open the rear door.

Pulling back into traffic he looked into his rear-view and his breath caught at the sight of the older woman, her silver hair falling just so. His concentration shot, he almost missed as another car pulled out of a spot. Slowing down he pulled into the spot and took a few calming breaths. Stepping onto the sidewalk he looked back towards the restaurant and shook his head. It was only a matter of time before he crossed paths with Miranda, New York was a small city in many ways, but he hoped he'd have more time.

As he meandered towards the Le Bernardin his thoughts were overtaken by recollections of the first moment he met the woman he loved.

Who are you?" Miranda asked, her blue eyes piercing into his soul.

"My name is Andy Sachs, I recently graduated from..." He tried to hand his resume to Miranda only to have it ignored as she looked down at the papers in front of her. She looked up and gave him a once-over, top to bottom. "...Harvard University..." He continued.

"What are you doing here?" Miranda queried.

"Well, I think I could do a good job as your assistant and...um..." Andy hesitated before continuing. "I came to New York to be an architect and sent letters out everywhere, but no-one's interested. A friend told me Elias Clark were looking for staff for entry-level positions. I met with Sherri in Human Resources and basically, it's this or nothing."

Miranda seemed pleased with his honesty, offering a small smirk. "So you don't read Runway?" She asked.

"No." He sputtered in shocked disbelief. Why on Earth would she think he'd read a fashion magazine?

"And before today you had never heard of me?" Miranda queried.

"No," His nervousness was clear in his voice as he fell into the deep pools of blue.

"And you have no style or sense of fashion." Miranda declared, looking at his sports jacket, chinos, pale blue shirt and loafers as if they carried the plague.

"I think that depends on..." He stammered.

Miranda raised her eyebrow, "No, no...That wasn't a question." Finally picking up his resume Miranda glanced at the information as he stood shuffling from foot to foot.

Miranda held up her hand and made a shooing motion. "That's all!"

Started with the abruptness he let out a nervous laugh. Shaking his head as Miranda stared at him, he turned away. As he reached for the door he spun around. "Okay, okay you're right. I don't fit in here. I am not interesting or particularly fashionable but I am smart I learn fast and I would work very hard for you..." Miranda said nothing. "...Thank you for your time..." He left quickly.
Stepping into the elevator he let out a sigh of relief, his heart was beating furiously and his palms were sweaty. That woman was something else. She was the most beautiful person he'd ever seen, and those eyes, he'd happily drown in their depths. Stepping from the elevator he moved towards security to hand in his visitor's pass to the burly security guard. He caught his name being called urgently. Looking back, he spotted the uptight redhead from upstairs beckoning him with her index finger as she shook her head in wonder. He let out a sharp laugh as he made his way to the woman. "You have got to be shittin' me?" He exclaimed when he reached the redhead.

"There's no accounting for taste, Andrei," Emily stated coldly.

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He faltered as he arrived at the doors of Le Bernardin. Looking down at himself he nodded once. Wearing slate grey Dolce and Gabbana trousers and a matching vest, paired with a black Tom Ford shirt, he was dressed to impress.

His hair was tamed. He'd let Luce talk him into having it cut much shorter than he usually preferred. It had been clipped short at the back and sides while the front was kept longer and his wavy hair swept back off his forehead in a side parting. His beard had been trimmed to precision, so it looked like 3-day-old stubble, fading into his sideburns. She'd wanted to leave him clean shaven, but he was worried he'd be left with a patch of pale, untanned skin.

Luce stated he looked classy when he came back from getting changed in her back room. He grinned, a dimple flashing in his cheek, and shrugged. She didn't understand the details of his life but had realised he'd been burnt by love and often told him it was a shame he didn't date.

Taking a deep breath he stepped into the cool restaurant and was greeted politely. Explaining that he was here for a meeting with Ana Jacobson he was led to a table where once again he hesitated. Sat beside Ana was no other than Miranda Priestly.

As she looked up and beheld him, her mouth dropped open and shock flash in her eyes. Schooling her features she leaned back confidently. Ana stood up and smiled, her hand extended to him. As he stepped up to the table, he clasped Ana's hand in his. "It's lovely to see you again, Ana, how are Cody and Jon?"

She grinned. "The boys are well, Andy. Jon won his first soccer match, he really appreciated you taking the time to practice with him." Ana gestured to Miranda. "This is Miranda, she is interested in your work."

"Hi Miranda," He stated nervously.

"Andrei..." Miranda licked her lips before smirking. "Are you going to stand there like a statue of Adonis or will you join us?"

Ana looked at her friend and the young man, who was blushing, confusion clouding her eyes. As he sat opposite the two women, she asked the one question running through her mind. "You know each other?" She was amazed.

"We did, once upon a time. Andrei was my one and only male assistant many years ago." Miranda stated softly.

"The one that left you in Paris?" Ana choked on her drink. Turning her face away from them she wiped her eyes and tried not to laugh at the sheer absurdity of the moment. Miranda had spoken in length to her one night about the disappearing assistant who had declared his love before vanishing
off the face of the Earth, and she was aware just how much Miranda had searched for the young man. She had never mentioned his name, however, stating it caused her too much pain.

"Yes, the exact one." Miranda clarified. She turned appraising eyes upon the man in front of her and offered him a genuine smile. "You look wonderful, Andrei."

"Andy." He growled deeply. He kept his eyes averted, unable to let himself fall in the depth of blue. It would hurt too much to have those eyes upon him and walk away again.

Miranda chuckled. "So forceful, Andrei. But no, I much rather your given name, as you are aware."

He looked up into those baby blues and felt himself sinking. Tearing his eyes away, he looked at Ana for help but she seemed to be gathering her things. As she looked up, she caught his eyes. "I'm sorry, Andy. I have an appointment and wasn't meant to stay this long. Now the introductions made you can thrash the deal out between you." She stood, and he followed her to his feet as she swooped in and gave Miranda the usual air kisses. With a final wave, she was gone, leaving him alone with the Devil herself.

Closing his eyes he counted to ten before sitting down. Miranda eyed him hungrily as he rubbed his jaw. "So, what do you want?" She arched her eyebrow and smirked. "Miranda, I am serious. This is a business lunch, nothing more. What work do you need doing and where?" His tone remained firm and confident which had the older woman sitting back in surprise. She looked a little pleased if the quirk of her lips was anything to go by.

"There are multiple areas your expertise would be welcome, Andrei. Firstly at the house in the Hamptons. I am holding my benefit there in August and need work doing to the ballroom, kitchen and bathrooms. Men's Runway is also launching at the end of the year. Level 16 has been vacated and Nigel and his team will set up there. I need the space cleared and redesigned, with its own closet."

He looked down at the menu as their server approached. Scanning the menu he decided. "Dover Sole, please."

"Filet Mignon." Miranda annoyance at being interrupted was clear. "Wine?" Miranda questioned.

"No, thank you, I am driving out to Queens after lunch." He stated. He also needed to keep a clear head with the editor. They both watched the server retreating, and he grinned. Miranda's reputation preceded her, and everyone understood not to linger.

"Why are you going to Queens?" Miranda asked. Now she had Andrei in front of her, she did not want to let him out of her sight.

"Rockaway Beach, I'm going surfing." He told her.

"In Tom Ford and Dolce and Gabbana?" Miranda's tone was teasing, and he caught the laughter behind her words.

"Well, I'm sure that would be a sight, but no. I have a change of clothes and my board in the car. The waves won't be fierce or anything, it's best in autumn when it's the hurricane season. But it'll be good enough." He explained lightly.

Miranda swallowed audibly. "Well..."

He wanted to steer them back to a professional level. He'd forgotten how engaging the older woman was when she focused her sole attention on you and displayed an interest. "Now, back to
business. Tell me more about what you want for Men's Runway and the house?"

Lunch passed quickly with her explaining her vision as they ate. After clearing up a few points, Andrei understood what she needed. He'd assured her once she provided floor plans he would draw up designs with a quote. He would send them to her once complete. If she was unhappy, he would make revisions, or she was free to use an alternate source to have the work completed.

As they stepped out into the afternoon sun, she turned to the young man and frowned. "The twins have missed you." She said. "I have..." She trailed off, biting her lip. She had never identified what it was about this man that had her world spinning off its axis. She had been devastated when he'd disappeared from New York. "...You can visit them if you wish. They would enjoy that immensely."

She noticed the pain reflected in Andrei's beautifully expressive eyes. "I don't think that's such a good idea, Miranda."

Roy pulled up and Miranda watched as he exited the car quickly and moved to the rear. She observed him gazing at Andrei curiously, almost doing a double take when he realised it was the person he'd flipped the bird to, and then when he realised it was Miranda's ex-assistant. "Hey, Andy." He grinned, a flush creeping up his cheeks.

"Hi, Roy," Andrei stated quietly. He turned to her. "I should..." He gestured towards his new Toyota Tacoma. "I'll be in touch."

"Andrei..." Miranda faltered. She did not want to let him go.

"I'll see you soon, Miranda." She was stunned when he bent down and placed a light kiss on her cheek. "It was good seeing you again."

She called after him. "Was it?"

She watched as he spun around, walking backwards as people parted around him like the red sea. His face split into a wide smile, showing his dimples. "Always."

Miranda returned to Runway but found her attention was scattered. She entered her office, closing the door with the advice she was not to be disturbed. Spinning in her chair she looked out of the window, her mind on Andrei.

Seeing him enter the restaurant had shocked her and when he stepped towards their table and Ana rose to greet him, it was all she could do not to growl at her friend. She experienced an overpowering sense of possessiveness. Andrei was hers, he had been hers since that first day he'd stepped into her office. There was something about him that made her firing off the demand for Emily to fetch him.

Being in his presence again after so long left her wanting more. The changes she discerned in him, his growth, it left her astounded. Rugged and fit, his biceps were well defined under the sleeves of his shirt and his chest broad. His entire persona caused a jolt of desire to run through her deeper and more ferocious than anything she'd experienced before. She wanted to run her hands through his wavy hair, trail her fingertips up his stubbled jaw. And that ass, before he'd turned to walk backwards and called to her, well, it was simply divine.
She acknowledged how she felt for Andrei, but she was initially slow on the uptake, living in a state of denial. By the time she had worked out what she felt it was too late. He was gone. Broken by her harsh attitude to his gentle declaration of love. She had not believed him at first, she was scared by the failing of her previous marriages and that fear increased with the force of her own feelings for her young assistant as he told her of his deepest hopes for them. She told herself his words were lies meant to pull her in before discarding her or a ploy to gain something from her. Yet upon seeing the pain she caused flickering in his eyes she recognised his words were the truth and her own heart broke.

She remembered that final day in Paris as if it had occurred just the day before, the moment ingrained in her mind.

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She knew he had spent the night with Christina Thompson, the woman's bright red hooker lipstick was unmistakable on his neck when he banged on Irv's door to warn her of his manoeuvring. At that moment, seeing him flushed and with the signs of a night spent in someone else's arms, she had been apoplectic. She had never experienced such a rage. "Have you completely lost your mind?" She seethed.

"Miranda I need to talk to you," Andrei whispered, seeing Irv lurking in the background.

"Do not disturb me." She hissed, dismissing him entirely. She saw his shoulders slump dejectedly as she slammed the door in his face apologising to that poisonous dwarf for the disruption.

Hours passed, and she outmanoeuvred Irv before announcing at the luncheon that the James Holt position was going to Jacqueline Follet. From the stage, she observed Nigel and Andrei's reaction and her smile of congratulations came out more like a grimace. She took no joy in dashing her friend's hopes, but Nigel would succeed, she had plans for her oldest friend and closest ally. Andrei's disappointment in her was clear and she was certain she had dashed the high esteem and respect he held for her.

After the lunch she recognised Andrei wanted answers, they were visible in his eyes as they sat side by side in the car. Turning towards him, she spoke quietly. 'You thought I didn't know?" She asked. Andrei nodded his agreement. "I've known what was happening for quite some time. It just took me a little while to find a suitable alternative for Jacqueline, and that James Holt job..." She sighed. "...it was so absurdly overpaid; of course she jumped at it." She let herself smile. "And so I just had to tell Irv that Jacqueline was unavailable. Truth is there is no-one who can do what I do, including her. Any of the other choices would find the job impossible and the magazine would have suffered." She gazed at the young man sat beside her. "I was very, very impressed though, with how intently you tried to warn me." Studying his reactions further she continued to speak. "I never thought I would say this, but I really do see a great deal of myself in you. You can see beyond what people want and what they need and you can choose for yourself."

Andrei looked at Miranda in confusion. "I don't think I'm like that. I...I couldn't do what you did to Nigel, Miranda, I couldn't do something like that.' He claimed.

"Mm, you already did..." She stated coldly. "...to Emily."

"That's not what I..." He stuttered. "No no...That was...that was different. I didn't have a choice." Andrei declared.

"Oh no, you chose, you chose to get ahead. You want this life, those choices are necessary." She told him.
"But what if this isn't what I want? I mean, what if I don't want to live the way you live?" Andrei asked.

Miranda blew out a harsh breath. "Don't be ridiculous Andrei, everybody wants this, everyone wants to be us,"

"You are wrong, Miranda. I don't want to be like you." She looked at him, eyebrow raised. "I want to be with you." Andrei's voice was gentle and his eyes held tenderness. She realised she probably looked like a guppy, her mouth opening and closing in incredulity at those words. She shook her head, she would not let herself believe him. "I love you, Miranda, your girl's too. They're beautiful, like you. I want you to consider what I am saying, think about it, give me a chance." She heard the hope in his voice. "I would love you all of your life, I would respect you. We could be a family."

"I...I...No, that will not do." She stuttered. She let her eyes turn hard and her voice was quiet but firm. "How can you even contemplate I would return such sentiments? You are a man almost half my age, with no real idea of what you want from your life. The idea is quite absurd, really. You have overstepped all boundaries, Andrei. I will forget this and you will not mention such things again. That's all." With that, she turned away and placed her sunglasses on as the car stopped. She exited the car and entered the milling press but realised Andrei had stalled upon following her from the car. As she turned to scan the crowd for him, she saw his back as he moved across the road quickly, travelling in the opposite direction. When he reached the other side of the road, he turned back and she saw the tears glistening in his eyes, a sign of his heartbreak. He nodded once at her before turning his back and continuing towards the Place de la Concorde. She knew she had made an egregious error in her dismissal of his genuine feelings.

Ignoring the press she pulled out her cell and pressed the speed dial for Andrei's cell, only for it to ring out to voicemail. Making her way through the hotel she tried again with the same response. She grew frustrated. Why was the impossible man not answering her calls? He always answered. Trying one last time it didn't ring but went straight to voicemail. She closed her eyes from the knowledge she had ruined her one chance at absolute love. Her heart ached, and she tried to tell herself it was for the best, Andrei would be like the others, and she couldn't live through yet another disappointment.

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Miranda shook herself from her memories and spun towards her desk. She tried her hardest over the years not to linger on those moments in Paris, but her dreams each night took her back to those final moments with Andrei. Looking down at the designs on her desk from the latest James Holt season, she frowned at the sheer atrocity. She did not have the inclination to deal with such horror.

Pulling up her browser she did a quick search of Andrei Sachs. It was something she had not considered doing for at least two years. The articles flooded in causing her to gasp in amazement.

He had started small purchasing run-down properties across L.A for a song using an inheritance from his grandparents and flipping the properties quickly for a profit, but it was his work on a large abandoned Colonial Revival mansion in L.A that caught the industry's attention. Built in 1905, the six-bedroom, four-bath mansion had fallen into disrepair over the many years it had been empty but had been occasionally used as a standing film-set for quite a few B-Grade horror movies. There was a fire that had damaged the roof and much of the second floor in the 1980s. With the help of a small, loyal crew, he had restored it to its former glory for its new owners, who had purchased the mansion as part of a package with the property next door, which also needed restoration.

Miranda was stunned, the work done on the house was magnificent, with the Pocket doors and
eyebrow windows lovingly restored, the garden beautifully landscaped. The before and after photos showed the immaculate care and attention to detail she knew Andrei held and the pride he took in his work.

Andrei's fame had risen in California and his move back to New York raised a few eyebrows. In one architectural magazine, he was quoted saying it was time for him to return home, when they queried where that was he smiled and stated New York was his home, it was the place his heart wanted to be, and so Andrei Blake Sachs moved back to the Big Apple and opened an office in the Meatpacking District.

In the few months since his return word was spreading across New York about the passionate young man who lovingly restored premises to their original grandeur or modernised them to perfection. He was offered work at many high ranking architectural firms but declined all to continue building his own firm and many of his loyal team of tradesmen followed him across the country, safe in the knowledge they would be treated well and cared for in their employment.

She turned back to the window and contemplated her next steps. She wanted Andrei more than she ever wanted anything before, for the man he used to be and for the man he had become.

More than anything, she regretted the way things ended with him. She knew there was a long way to go to regain his trust, but she hoped she still possessed his heart.

She would work towards a future by his side. To be the family, he once claimed he wanted. The twins still adored him. Cassidy kept a photograph Cara took, of her sat on his shoulders on her bedside table, while Caroline kept a photograph of the three of them with Patricia on her pin board. Neither spoke to their mother about the young man who disappeared from their lives so abruptly.

She swore to herself she would fix the monumental mess she created. At 45 it was time to follow her heart, and that would ultimately lead her directly towards the handsome man who haunted her dreams.

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Nigel walked into the outer office and saw Miranda, through the glass window of her office, gazing unseeingly through her window to the street below. Leaning against Emily's desk he thumbed in the general direction of the editor. "What's that about?" He asked.

"You tell me. She went for lunch with Ana Jacobson and that contractor she was interested in using. When she came back, she was distracted. She didn't even reel off any instructions, and she hasn't demanded coffee." Emily was nearly hysterical at the editor's unusual behaviour. "God Nige, the last time I saw her like this was when Andrei left her in Paris."

"Speaking of Six, did you hear he's back in New York?" He smirked at Emily's shocked face. "He was seen in Central Park by Jocelyn, who told Paul. The whole art department knows so maybe the rumours spread. Miranda has a happy knack of finding things out."

"Oh God, I love my job, I love my job, I love my job." Emily closed her eyes and breathed her usual mantra hoping it would calm her. It didn't work. "Oh shit, she'll destroy him."

"I don't think so, she always held quite the fascination with that young man, surely you noticed that when he worked here?" He declared calmly.

"But he's gay. He was living with that chef." Emily sputtered.

He laughed freely, seriously amused by the assumption many had made regarding Six's sexuality.
"He is not gay. Jesus Em, I thought you had a better gaydar than that. He is as straight as a die." He continued to chuckle. "The rumours are saying he's turned into an extraordinarily handsome man. Jocelyn said he's ripped and sexy as hell. Bearded, tattooed and oh so delicious." He licked his lips as Emily let out a squeak. "I wish he swung my way, I'd hunt him down and woo him within an inch of his life if the rumours are true."

"Coat, bag." Miranda's voice echoed through the outer office, although she spoke with her usual quietness. When the second assistant just gaped at the woman she sighed and rolled her eyes. Nigel watched as her eyes settled on an empty chocolate wrapper as she stepped behind the desk and retrieved her own things. "Nigel, surely you have work to do?" She arched an eyebrow at him and he moved away quickly, dodging into the kitchenette. He saw his boss looking at Emily as she gestured, with a tilt of her head, to the second assistant. "Emily, I expect that to be dealt with." Miranda's tone was icy.

He caught Emily's sigh as she counted backwards from three, a move he'd seen many times over the years. "Yes, Miranda." This would be the twentieth assistant fired in three years since Andrei left. And now Emily owed him. She'd stood firm, sure they were finally on to a winner with this one and he'd bet her fifty bucks the young girl wouldn't see out the month.

"I am leaving for the day. Other than telling me this matter is resolved, I do not wish to be disturbed unless Runway is on fire. Have the art department send the book electronically. I will be in the Hamptons with the twins for the weekend. I will arrive Monday morning promptly. Ensure my coffee is ready and that it is hot. That's all." Miranda stalked towards the elevator and disappeared.

Stepping back out of the kitchenette he stepped back into the outer office as Emily connected quickly to Roy, ensuring he was waiting as required. Getting confirmation, she disconnected and looked at the now ex-second assistant. "Why did you have to get caught with that bloody chocolate wrapper, Belle?"

The young woman felt a sense of foreboding. "I was having a sugar low." She explained weakly. Emily clenched her jaw. "Yes, and the last thing Miranda requires is sticky fingerprints on everything, plus you broke the no eating at desk rule, that is what the cafeteria is for and when she requests something you are supposed to fetch it immediately." Emily sighed. "That's three strikes, Belle."

"But...but..." The young woman stuttered.

"I'm sorry Belle..." He sensed she wasn't really but wanted to soften the blow. "Your termination paperwork will be posted out to you."

"She's firing me?" Belle screeched in shock.

"Yes." Emily diverted the desk phone to her cell and stood. Smoothing out her McQueen skirt she looked at the young woman. "You have fifteen minutes to vacate before security arrive to escort you from the building." Emily pulled Nigel out of the office quickly, heading towards the closet. He knew she hated the handing over her hard earned money, but he'd called it. Now they would go to the closet to get his gloating over and done with. He would surprise her by not taking the money and keeping his gloating to a minimum, he'd tell her to buy a round of drinks instead. It was an act of kindness he wouldn't normally allow, but the remembrance of a gentle young man with an innate goodness left him feeling nostalgic.
She hates me, Nigel." Andy whispered hoarsely. He'd just been chewed out and spat out in typical Miranda fashion.

He looked up at the tall dark-haired young man and saw the pale face, his square jaw and pretty eye. He was gangly and endearingly awkward. "And that's my problem because..." He asked. Seriously, what did the young man expect? "Oh, wait, no, it's not my problem." He looked down at the proofs he was working on.

"I don't know what else I can do, because if I do something right it's unacknowledged, she doesn't even say thank you. But if I do something wrong, she is...vicious." Andy's tone was emphatic, and he exhaled a sharp breath.

"So quit." He told the young man.

He felt the young man's eyes on him. "What?" Andy queried, shocked.

Nigel looked up and rolled his eyes. "Quit."

"Quit?" Andy's tone was incredulous.

Nigel decided it was time for some home truths. "I can get another girl to take your job in five minutes...one who really wants it."

"No, I don't want to quit. That's not fair. But, I, you know, I'm just saying that...I would just like a little credit...for the fact that I'm killing myself trying." Andy stated.

Nigel snorted. "Andy, be serious. You are not trying. You are whining." He moved across the room and placed the proofs on his desk before turning back and catching Andy's eyes. "What is it that you want me to say to you, huh? Do you want me to say, "Poor you? Miranda's picking on you. Poor you. Poor Andy. Hm? Wake up, Six." He gestured at Andy before moving around his office, putting things away. "She's just doing her job. Don't you know that you are working at the place that published some of the greatest artists of the century? Halston, Lagerfeld, de la Renta. And what they did, what they created was greater than art because you live your life in it. Well, not you, obviously, but some people." He picked up the most recent edition of Runway and waved it at the young man. "You think this is just a magazine, hm? This is not just a magazine. This is a shining beacon of hope for...oh, I don't know...let's say a young boy growing up in Rhode Island with six brothers, pretending to go to soccer practice when he was really going to sewing class and reading Runway under the covers at night with a flashlight. You have no idea how many legends have walked these halls. And what's worse, you don't care," He saw that Andy was looking a little discomforted. "Because this place, where so many people would die to work, you only deign to work. And you want to know why she doesn't kiss you on the forehead and give you a gold star on your homework at the end of the day." He prodded Andy in the centre of the forehead with his pencil. "Wake up, sweetheart."

He heard Andy take a deep breath. "Okay, so I'm screwing it up." He hummed his agreement. "I don't want to, I just wish that I knew what I could do to..." Andy faltered and he could sense the lightbulb moment and the sigh as he came to the realisation. "Nigel?" He heard the smile in Andy's voice. "Nigel, Nigel..." He looked up to see the bright smile, a dimple in Andy's cheek playing peek-a-boo.

He shook his finger at Andy. "No!" Andy's laughter was like music and he couldn't resist. Gesturing for him to follow he led him into the closet. "I don't know what you expect me to do." He looked over his shoulder at the slim young man whose eyes were lit up in amazement. He couldn't help but smile as he handed Andy a range of clothes and shoes as he looked increasingly stunned,
his arms full of Dolce and Gabbana, Saint Laurent, Hermès, Balenciaga and Tom Ford. "Andy, shall we? We have to get to the beauty department and God knows how long that's going to take." He couldn't help but grin at the small groan. This would be worth the effort.

The first test would be Emily, who'd been scathing toward Andrei. If Emily reacted semi-favourably, then it would ensure Miranda's approval.

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He walked into the Barcelona Bar with Emily in search of Serena, they were looking forward to a Friday night of drinks and maybe a spot of dinner. The day had quietened after Belle had left Runway sobbing and word had got around that Miranda had left for the weekend. Every member of staff breathed a sigh of relief.

Spotting the tall Brazilian at the bar talking to a man, her hand resting on his bicep, he knew Emily had not yet noticed. If she had it would be an all-out war. Emily was notoriously jealous when she thought someone was encroaching on what she believed was her territory.

The fact the beautiful Serena had not had a boyfriend for two years, and her eyes followed Emily hungrily, was not something Emily had noticed, and he knew it was only a matter of time before they would collide spectacularly. He hoped to be there to see it.

He felt the redhead tense upon hearing Serena's joyous laughter. Looking sideward he saw the young woman biting her lip as her cheeks flushed and hands clenched at the sight in front of her.

Serena's arms had reached around the young hunks abdomen, holding him close as she looked up into his eyes and smiled happily as he spoke to her gently. He couldn't make out the young man's face but if his body was anything to go by, he could understand why Serena seemed so enraptured.

The man turned when a young woman tapped him on the shoulder. Untangling himself from Serena he snaked his arm around the woman, pulling her in for a one-armed hug. Nigel could see the man in profile as he introduced the two woman who eyed each other warily before the new arrival disappeared again with a fleeting smile at the hunk.

Serena looked up and caught his eye. Smiling widely she beckoned for them to join her at the bar. Taking hold of Emily's elbow he propelled them towards Serena and her new man. As they stepped behind her, the hunk looked up, his eyes widening in happiness.

"Hey, Nige." A familiar smile shone from the man's face, a deep dimple softening the strong face.

He couldn't help but let out a loud laugh as Emily's eyes widened at the sight before them. "Six, my God. Let me look at you." He stepped beside Serena and held his arms out and Andy twirled happily between them before pulling him into a bear hug.

"I can't believe you're still calling me that." Andy grinned as he released him.

"Well, that lovely little six-pack seems to have grown exponentially." He grinned up at the tall young man. "Have you grown even taller? My word, you're a giant."

Andy blushed. "Nah, I'm still only six-two."

He scoffed. "Only six-two." His smile widened as he shook his head.

He caught Emily's groan. "Shit, shit, shit!" He raised an eyebrow at the redhead. "What am I supposed to say if Miranda finds out about this little reunion?" She asked.
"Hey, Em, chill. I saw Miranda at lunch." Andy stated gently.

"So it's your fault." Emily accused menacingly.

"Whoa, what the fuck did I do?" Andy held his hand's palms up."

Emily ranted. "You, you...First, you leave. You don't keep in touch. You admit to seeing Miranda at lunch, which clearly rocked her world off its axis, yet again. And you have her audacity to ask what you did?" Emily was on a roll and his lips quirked in amusement. "Nothing's been right since you fucking left. She was lost without you. And then you rock up out of the blue. And to make things worse you've turned into a stud and I walked in here to find the woman I love wrapped around you. You are an ass, Andrei Sachs. A monumental ass. I could throttle you, you big ass."

"You love me?" Serena's quiet question caused Emily to jump and the two men looked at each other as they tried to stifle their laughter.

"Well...well, oh fuck it!" Emily made to flounce away but was stopped by Serena's warm hands around her waist.

"Don't you think you should have told me, Querida? Mm..." Emily's lips crashed into Serena's and he couldn't help but clap in delight as they kissed.

Catching Andy's eyes he was amazed to see them sparkling with happiness. "Oh dear God, Andy. I'm so happy you were here to help with this. The sexual tension has been through the roof." He smirked.

Andy's joyful laughter burst forth and he couldn't help but laugh along as Emily pulled away breathlessly. "I think you're forgiven, Andrei."

"Always glad to be of service. Now, let me get the drinks in." Andy's smile was bright, and he found his breath catching at the sight.

Whoever this young man found to spend his life with would be the luckiest person on Earth.

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Chapter 2

Chapter Notes

Yay, another fic idea from the lovely celesse201, who for whatever reason, holds the belief I can bring her ideas to life. This is my first major AU. Not giving too much away. Miranda is Miranda but I am making her and the twins slightly younger for the sake of the fic. Andy is not the Andy you expect (Hence the AU)

I do not own the main characters related to The Devil Wears Prada. They are owned by the original author and 20th Century Fox. Some characters will be my own.

Emily called him three times to demand a lunch meeting with Miranda, which he tried his best to dodge, but Emily remained relentless. "I'm calling bullshit, Andrei. You're chatting through your bloody bollocks. I don't give a flying fuck how busy you claim to be, she wants to discuss the plans you sent her and the quote." Emily's heels clicked on marble in the background as she rushed through the foyer of Runway, no doubt with a searing hot, triple, Venti, no-foam latte.

"Em, I have a job and a fucking deadline of noon today. I start work at the Hampton's on Monday, as discussed. If she doesn't like it, she can find another schmuck to do the fucking work." He growled. "I am not someone that will jump when she tells me to. That boy is long gone." He ran his hand through his hair in frustration. "If she's that fucking desperate I will be in my office between two and four pm, catching up with my accounts." Emily stuttered down the phone. "Now I have a fucking business to run. That's all Emily." He disconnected the call and caught his offsider's eyes.

Seb grinned at him. "You really told that lady, boss."

"Goddamn women." He growled. "Demanding wenches, the lot. Now, let's get this shit done, we are cutting it fine." He picked up his toolbox and made his way through the lobby of the Union Square apartment he was renovating. When he first entered the 500 square-foot apartment it held original details like old pine wooden beams, exposed walls, crystal doorknobs and exposed metal door frames.

He marvelled at the work completed so far. The real work started by gutting the place, stripping everything down as much as possible to build it back up, going with a less-is-more approach in line with the requirements of his client, a young investor from Wall Street. The walls in each room had been re-plastered and a primer coat applied ready for painting. The fireplace was stripped down and rebuilt it with a new interior stone to anchor the space. Ripping up old carpet he uncovered a superb, honey-coloured parquet floor.

The poorly configured kitchen, which lacked cabinets and possessed a Formica countertops and a gas stove which sat under the window had been redesigned. He built a new black granite countertop under the window to maximize the space, leaving space for the fridge and a dishwasher and cooker. The kitchen was tiny, but it had become functional and looked elegant.

Next on the list had been the bathroom. The shower, positioned over a bathtub, produced low water pressure the faucets and leaked hot water. The tiles were broken and the toilet temperamental. He and Seb installed underfloor plumbing, re-tiled the space and installed a new luxury shower, sink
and toilet, creating more space and modernising it.

The last job he needed to complete was to reattach the new doors he'd made to match the exposed pine beams, and the owners requested they recycle the crystal doorknobs, he thought them ugly but the happiness of his client remained important. They worked quickly and quietly and he found himself lost in thought.

Miranda had been corresponding by email regarding the work she wanted completing. He was unsure, but she agreed to the work he suggested, with no alterations. This had been unusual, and now she was demanding lunch. He caught Seb's eye as they finished fitting the last door. "Get outta here, bro." He told the young man.

"Sure thing, boss. Don't let those women grind ya too hard." Seb grinned cheekily as he rolled his eyes.

"I'll be in the office. I need to get on top of the books before we start that job at the Hamptons." He sighed as Seb laughed. They all understood he hated crunching numbers. "You out later?"

"Yeah, no doubt we'll hit Barcelona Bar, the other guys love all those fashionista's." Seb waved his arm. "I'll head off to check on things over in Brooklyn."

"Thanks, Seb." He liked working with Seb, they did not consider the necessity for unnecessary conversation.

Making his final touches he looked around at another job well done and smiled. He arranged, with his client, to meet at the apartment and he looked forward to seeing the reaction to the work.

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She regarded Andrei smiling as he left the building and shook hands with a young man in a Brooks Brothers suit.

Turning around he stalled at the sight of her silver Mercedes Town car idling behind his truck. With obvious effort, he moved towards his truck as she opened the door and her Prada clad foot stepped on to the sidewalk.

As she stepped out of the car, she lifted her sunglasses off her face and searched Andrei's eyes. She had not laid eyes on him in weeks and her requests for lunch met with instant refusal.

That morning, after Emily's stuttered apology to her query about lunch, she set the new Emily the task of finding out exactly where Andrei was, to no avail. Roy text her to advise her the young man's truck had been seen in Union Square. She had Roy bring her in the hope she did not miss him and had waited twenty minutes for him to appear.

Andrei stepped towards her and looked her straight in the eyes. "Miranda, what an unexpected pleasure." His tone remained light, but he seemed far from pleased. "We are ready to start work on Monday as discussed."

"You refused the requests to meet me for lunch, Andrei." She couldn't stop the ice from forming around her words and she watched as he stiffened.

"You call having Emily hounding me almost daily demanding my presence a request?" Andrei shook his head in disbelief and chuckled. "What world do you live in, Miranda?" His tone held incredulity. "I have a business to run, one I'm having to build up almost from scratch since my return from the West Coast. I have deadlines to keep, something I acknowledge you understand. I
need more staff and cannot find the time to interview suitable candidates and I am so behind on my accounting, the thought of it is giving me nightmares. And you wonder why I don't bow down to your so-called requests? This is not how this works."

She swallowed at the sheer brute force of the man in front of her. "I did not demand...I realise I do not have that right, Andrei, and if Emily made it seem as if it implied a command, I will express my sincerest apologies."

Andrei sighed and rubbed his jaw. "What do you want from me, Miranda?"

Stunned by the sadness in his voice, she whispered. "I hoped...well, I hoped that you would have time to walk me through the changes at the house. I studied your vision on paper, but I am struggling to picture it." She sighed wearily, upset that, once again, she had somehow gotten off on the wrong foot with him. She couldn't prevent herself from unleashing the dragon, and yet she thought he had seen beyond that. Perhaps time had made him forget or his sentiments had changed. She shuddered. Peering up into his eyes she observed the flicker of understanding.

"I'm sorry, Miranda. I think I let myself forget that Emily is used to your 'requests' being met. She became a little irate at my refusal and told me my excuses bullshit. I did not appreciate her implying my time was any less important than yours." Andrei's apology held sincerity, she recognised it in the relaxing of his shoulders and in his expressive eyes. "If you have the afternoon free, we can drive out to the Hamptons and I can explain the details. I would prefer to take my truck rather than go in the Town car, I'm covered in dust and..." He gestured to his cargo shorts and a sleeveless t-shirt which he had paired with a pair of dusty Chelsea work boots.

"Acceptable." She husked. "If it is suitable, I will ride with you, save Roy the trip. I am staying at the house for the weekend."

"Alone?" Andrei seemed stunned.

"No, the twins are already there, Cara drove them up to the house yesterday." She caught Roy's attention, and he released the trunk. Climbing out of the car quickly Roy grabbed Miranda's bags as she took her purse from the backseat of the Town car. She let herself catch Andrei's eyes. "This is not a problem, I assume?" She queried breathlessly.

"No, Miranda. No problem at all." She witnessed the flicker of a smile and rolled her eyes. Andrei's good humour couldn't be dampened for long. She often held amazement at the quick turnaround in his moods, but appreciated, inherently, he held no malice within him, she'd known from the first moment she had met him. He had changed though, a sadness lived inside him and he had hardened.

She watched as Andrei stepped towards Roy and took her bags in his free hand, he offered the older man a small smile. "Drive safe, Andy," Roy warned gruffly.

"I know, she's precious cargo," Andrei stated with a smirk.

"You bet," Roy muttered darkly. He'd been driving her for almost ten years, through two divorces and her pregnancy with the twins. She sensed he was unamused with her easy acceptance of Andrei driving her to the Hamptons.

"If it makes things easier, I can text you once we arrive." Andrei offered, trying to placate the older man.

"You better," Roy growled.

Miranda rolled her eyes. Roy was protective of her, often overly so. "Roy, I will expect you at the
Townhouse at 7:30 am on Monday. That's all."

"Yes, Miranda." He agreed.

Andrei moved to the back of the truck and hoisted his toolbox up into the bed of the truck. Moving back around the truck he placed her bags on the back passenger seat before opening the passenger door for her. She quirked her eyebrow. "Um, the bed of the truck's a little dirty. I was planning to hose it down this weekend."

"You have a bag back there too?" She questioned as she slid into the seat and settled. She was stunned when Andrei didn't answer her immediately, but closed the door and jogged around the car. As he slid in behind the wheel his eyes met hers. "It's my surfing stuff." He explained with a grin. "And a few changes of clothes."

She scowled at his use of the word *stuff*, convinced he used the word to infuriate her. She gazed out of the window as they moved through traffic towards the Brooklyn Bridge. Unable to stop herself she asked the one question that had been plaguing her for the last week. "So, do you visit with your son often, Andrei?"

He was confused. "My son?" He did not understand what the woman was on about. "I have no children, Miranda. What on Earth gave you that impression?"

"Do not lie, Andrei." Miranda hissed.

His head snapped to the side, and he glared for a moment before tearing his eyes back to the road. "Now, look here. I have no fucking idea what you are on about." He became furious. "I have no reason to lie to you."

"You and Christina Thompson's night in Paris." Miranda seethed. "She had a child around nine months later, and now suddenly she's back in New York."

"And you think it's mine?" He let out a bark of hard laughter. "I would not be that irresponsible, Miranda. And for your information, I may have spent the night with her, but I did not have sex with her, not in the true sense. Not that it would be any of your damn business if I had."

"You didn't?" Miranda seemed stunned.

"Not unless you count a mediocre blow job as sex." He smirked at Miranda's gasp of shock. "What's it to you, anyway? I could be married and have a passel of children and it would be none of your concern."

He watched her from the corner of his eye as she looked down at his left-hand ring finger quickly to reassure herself before schooling her features. "What stopped you?" Miranda ignored his question, but he sensed her curiosity. "In some ways, I can recognise her appeal."

"I...well..." Het let out a frustrated breath, and he felt the blush moving up his neck. "I couldn't, well, rise to the occasion. Too much wine and minimal sexual attraction. Plus I'd realised I was in love with someone else." He muttered the words, hoping she would not catch them. No such luck.

"Was?" He detected Miranda's audible gulp. "Past tense."

"Miranda, it was three years ago. I was still a boy but I am not that boy anymore" He growled.
There was no way on Earth that he would admit she was the only person he would love. There was no way he was putting his heart out there for her to trample in her 5" Prada heels.

It had taken him three years to prove to himself he knew what he wanted from his life, and although there would always be a part of him that yearned for the woman beside him, he understood he had zero chance. She had made that perfectly clear. He had taken her words in Paris to heart, and they echoed in his mind frequently.

He frowned. "You did not answer my question. What is it to you if I had fathered that woman's child?" He asked again, hoping she would provide an inkling into her thought process. He was out of practice reading the woman. "It's almost as if you are jealous, but that can't be right, you explained I was nothing to you."

"I...Andrei...we...I..." The older woman struggled to find the words to express what was in her heart.

He looked at her from the corner of his eye and spotted her internal struggle. "You know what, forget it," He grumbled. He kept his eyes on the road and he became tense.

Miranda turned slightly in her seat and was scrutinising him. After five minutes he heard the muttered. "The child didn't look like you, he looked like a little like Irving's eldest boy."

"Well, Irv's welcome to claim the boy, or not. Christina wasn't overly thrilled when I stormed out of her room that morning to warn you. In fact, she told me she would ensure I was embarrassed about not being man enough." He sighed. "It was emasculating, having her spew her resentment at me, to question my masculinity, and then everything else, well..." He trailed off. "...It's all in the past now. There would always be painful moments in my life that would change my entire world in a matter of minutes. Those moments left me stronger, smarter, kinder, and a little wary. If Christina thinks she has a claim in me she's sadly mistaken."

He heard Miranda's sigh as she settled into her seat, facing the road, he sensed her eyes on him though, and she did not make it obvious. "L.A wasn't something I expected after your education at Harvard. I would have assumed you would have stayed on the East Coast."

"My maternal grandparents lived in San Marino, on the outskirts of L.A." He sighed. "I may as well tell you, my Grandpa was 15 years younger than my Grams, she never expected to have children and then at 40 found out she was pregnant with my mom." He smiled at the memories. "My Grandpa was a carpenter by trade, and a sculptor by choice, carving from marble and granite."

"Would I know of his work?" Miranda asked.

"Maybe. John Blake's work was popular with those interested in the art form." He smiled at Miranda's small gasp.

"I have a Blake sculpture in my garden at the house, a young boy with a bird on his hand." Miranda was shocked. "The boy and the beauty of nature." She named the work breathlessly.

He nodded and smiled. "I remember that one, it was a hummingbird. I remember seeing his sketch come to life, I always thought he captured me well, I have the original photo somewhere. I must dig it out and get you a copy."

"You?" Miranda was stunned.

"Yeah, I spent every summer in California with them, and the old man often said he used those moments as inspiration. He taught me everything, he let me come to recognise elegance and beauty
in everything the world offers." He felt tears welling up in his eyes and wanted to lighten the suddenly sombre mood. "Well, maybe not everything. Fashion is still a mystery."

His lips quirked as Miranda chuckled. "Obviously."

"Grams died a few months before I moved to New York. After I left you in Paris, I received a call from him. He told me he had bowel cancer, and it had metastasised to his liver. I flew back to New York and within 24 hours I'd packed and was on my way to L.A. I stayed with him until he passed away three months later."

"I'm sorry, Andrei," Miranda whispered.

"So am I, we spoke often while I was at Harvard and then when I moved to New York. He always told me to follow my heart, he supported me when I stated I wanted to be an architect rather than the lawyer my parents expected me to be." He told her softly. "He'd planned on travelling to New York after our return from Paris."

"Tell me about starting your business," Miranda asked.

"When my Grandpa's will was read I found he'd left me everything, much to my mother's displeasure. I used the savings he had to buy and renovate my first house, gutting it. I took almost six months on my own, but I made a reasonable profit." He grinned. "I found I was competent at what I was doing, and I bought a second and third. I hired two or three good people to work alongside me. And then the Burnside mansion job came up. It was pure luck, a friend of a friend told me about it, so I drew up plans and a quote and it was accepted. I hired a few more staff." He frowned. "Things went crazy for a while, with the architectural magazines taking an interest in my work, but I didn't want to spend the rest of my life in L.A. I've loved New York since first stepping foot in the city, so I returned."

"I'm glad you did," Miranda stated. "But I would have thought Ohio would have been your home, you grew up there."

"I would rather not talk about that if it's okay with you." His tone was light but firm. He changed the subject. "Tell me about the girls, they were six the last time I saw them, and the most gorgeous little human's I'd ever seen. My grandpa would have carved their likeness into fairies and imps."

Miranda smiled happily and talked about her beloved daughters, telling of their schooling achievements, Cassidy's accomplishment with the piano and Caroline's with her art., both of which were showcased by Dalton regularly.

Time flew as Miranda spoke and they stopped briefly at Long Island for fuel and coffee. Andrei had offered to get them a sandwich, and she had assured him they would get fed once they arrived at the house. When they returned to the car, she kicked her heels off and smirked at Andrei's raised eyebrows.

As they continued on their journey she watched him, unable to tear her eyes away. Sipping her coffee she hummed at the warmth. Andrei certainly hadn't lost the knack to get her coffee order right. It was astonishing that in the three years since they had been apart he still remembered what she needed.

They drove in silence as her eyes roamed the full-sleeve tattoo on Andrei's arm that depicted New York in different scenes. It was beautifully done, and she leaned closer and running the tips of her fingers along the detailed face of Lady Liberty. She noticed when his breath hitched and his bicep flexed and snatched her fingers away.
"Can you tell me about your tattoo?" She asked.

She watched as Andrei's Adam's apple bobbed as he swallowed. "It's a reminder of the one place I am most at home." He gestured with his left arm. "New York in her beauty, Lady Liberty, The Empire State Building, Broadway. The life of the city that never sleeps. I was fourteen when I first experienced it. My Grams brought me to attend a show on Broadway." His dimple played hide and seek as he smiled at the memories. "I was a gangly teenager, tall and slim, much like I was when I joined Runway. Many of the kids at school and the surrounding adults assumed I was gay because I was interested in musical theatre and I was part of the glee club. Grandpa treated us to two tickets for Wicked and the rest of that summer he taught me how to wrestle. When I headed back to school, I joined the wrestling team."

"You wrestled?" She was stunned.

"I wasn't sturdy enough for the football team. Those huge jocks would have pounded me into the ground." Andrei's laughter was free and full and she caught herself smiling at it. "Wrestling was good, it had the weight classes, so I didn't go up against anyone that was too heavy. It's all about form, awareness, strength, and speed. I lifted weights, I ate well. It's how I met Nate, who was my roommate when I first moved to New York." He shrugged. He sensed Miranda had more questions. "Just ask me whatever it is you wish to learn, Miranda. Although I cannot promise to answer everything."

"In Paris. I tried to call you but..." She trailed off.

"I couldn't face you, not after my declaration and your dismissal. I thought it would be obvious." Andrei sighed heavily before he continued to explain. "I got the two missed calls from you and then a third call landed, I expected to look down and view your name, and I probably would have answered, I always answered your calls. Instead, my Grandpa's number popped up, he never called the company cell so I realised it was important. I was stood by the Fountain at La Place de la Concorde, thinking how ugly it was, and I heard his words. It was as if time stood still. I told him I would be there as soon as possible." Andrei's voice had turned hoarse. "He tried to argue, telling me I needed to follow my heart and stay, but I disconnected the call. The next thing I knew the cell was at the bottom of the fountain. I stared at it for a few moments before leaning over and scooping it out. But the damage was done. I returned to the hotel, packed my bags and left."

"I called you three times. The third time it went to voicemail. I acknowledged it was unlikely I would see you again." She swallowed. "I searched for you that first year, I had Emily speak with your friends, and they were not friendly towards her. She never really explained what they said, but one of them upset her greatly. She looked at him. "I told myself, your disappearance was for the best but I wished, so very much, that I had not been so cruel, Andrei."

"You told me what you believed, Miranda. I knew you were hurting after what Stephen did and I should not have crossed that boundary." Andrei's voice was gentle. "I was naïve, and you were right in what you said about the absurdity of my suggestion. You had, still have, a certain position in the world, and I would not have given you all you needed, I would have disappointed you, and that would have broken me even more."

"You could never be a disappointment, Andrei." She whispered as they moved through traffic towards Miranda's Hampton home.

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Upon entering the gated property, he followed the long driveway curved around the full-sized, all-weather tennis court, which then opened to well-maintained grounds that ensured privacy. The
drive circled past the front door to a four-car garage. It was a dramatic and inviting approach. He grinned, it was very Miranda. He's seen the plans, and she'd told him a little about the home, he knew it was large, sitting on six acres of prime real estate with its own section of private beach.

They exited his truck, and he grabbed Miranda's two bags before stepping towards the front of the house.

The house itself was accessed by a stone archway with a double mahogany door. As they stepped side by side into a double-height foyer, he took in the surroundings. The foyer was light, complete with a graceful stairway to the first floor, and holding a crystal chandelier over the stairs. Spectacular French country imported stone archways were featured throughout with mahogany doors, creating a dramatic flow from room to room.

"Wow. This is beautiful." He whispered.

"Leave the bags there." Miranda requested waving toward a chair by the fireplace. As he walked over he took in the fireplace. The room opened to the right into what looked to be a formal living room He dropped the bags on the seat and moved towards Miranda as she walked to the left.

They entered the formal dining room, and he stopped and gaped. The dining room included a fireplace and showcased custom imported wood, visible in the exposed wooden beams and the hardwood floors prevalent through what little of the house he had seen so far. A unique, glass-front, temperature controlled wine room was accessible from the dining room. It would offer a beautiful aesthetic during meals. Taking it all in, he smiled widely. It was refined, and he pictured Miranda sat at the head of the table wining and dining with ease.

He moved into the adjoining oversized kitchen and his jaw dropped again. He could see why she wanted work done. It was, for want of a better word, ugly. The 70's style kitchen's dark red Formica counters and cupboards and the panelled walls and ceiling made the area dark. He adored the LaCornue range and the fireplace but the rest of it was hideous. He could picture the eat-in dining area and the generous sitting area Miranda wanted. Idea's formed in his mind, he wanted to discuss changes he could make and grab his pencils and a sketch pad and draw up a fresh and new design. He didn't want to modernise the place, he wanted it to fit with the rest of the house, to bring the Priestly's comfort.

She gestured to a breakfast bar, he sat uncomfortably. "This room and the two bathrooms are the last rooms to be touched since I bought the property five years ago."

"This room is hideous." He chuckled at the shock in Miranda's eyes before she chuckled with him.

"I forgot how honest you are, Andrei," Miranda admitted. "I must agree. I dislike this space entirely." She sat next to him and her hand rested on his. "What would you like to eat and drink?"

"I'm fine." He told her as she moved away quickly, he noticed the loss of her instantly.

He watched as she removed her shoes and stepped towards the large fridge. Pulling items out, she moved gracefully, cutting large slices of sourdough and chopping salad quickly. He was stunned with the ease she displayed as she moved.

The sound of laughter took his attention away from the older woman as clattering feet barged through the open door leading from the pool.

"Mommy." The little redhead flew at Miranda and seized her in an exuberant embrace. "You're early. That's awesome."
"Bobbsey, please desist, you are wet and I am making lunch for my guest." Miranda smiled softly at her little girl.

Cassidy turned to face him and his breath caught at seeing the beautiful blue eyes, searching his shyly. "Hi, Cass." He husked. He watched her confusion before she recognised him, her eyes widening in surprise and then happiness.

"Andy? No way." She ran at him and as she launched herself at him, her arms coming up around his neck. As she jumped up her knee came up and connected with his balls.

Tears sprang to his eyes, and he whimpered. "Cass, I realise it's been years, but you need to remember the knees." He husked.

Cassidy scrambled back quickly as he tried to stand up. "I'm sorry." She looked down, biting her lip. "I forgot."

He moved the step towards the little girl and brushed his hand through her wet hair. "It's okay, my little one." She looked up into his face and grinned at the familiar name.

Miranda placed two plates containing turkey salad sandwiches on the bench, running a hand across his back as she moved around him. He welcomed the touch, it soothed him. He held his arms out for Cassidy. "Come here, honey." Cassidy stepped close, and he picked her up with ease. She rested her head on his shoulder. He held her close as she nuzzled happily into his neck. He sat back down carefully at the bench, Cassidy till wrapped around his waist.

"Cassidy, let go of Andrei so he can eat," Miranda stated softly.

Cassidy shook her head and held on tighter. "No, if I let go he'll disappear again." Cassidy looked into his eyes and he saw the shine of tears.

"Little one, I will be around here a bit, I'm working on the ballroom, bathrooms and refitting the kitchen." He told her gently.

"But we'll be back in the city and you'll be here," Cassidy whined. "I just got you back."

"Cass, I'll be in the city occasionally to do paperwork and stuff, and if it's okay with your mom, I'll come to see you, we can go to the park or I can take you and Caro for ice cream." He wanted to reassure the young girl.

He had been reluctant to see the twins again for this reason alone. It hadn't just hurt to walk away from Miranda. The twins had a special place in his heart, they'd taken to him and he grew to love them. They had been six-years-old and becoming independent. Their little personalities were shining, and they had tested boundaries. They both had a puckish streak he'd found delightful.

"Can we, mom?" Cassidy bounced in his arms as she looked at Miranda pleadingly.

"If you wish, yes. Now, was there a reason you rushed in here?" Miranda asked.

"I was sent to get juice and...Whoa, I should tell Caro." Cassidy inched down back onto the ground and ran from the kitchen.

Her energy made him smile. Glancing at Miranda he saw her soft smile, and his heart ached.

He noticed the affection in Miranda's eyes. "It seems you bewitched my children, Andrei. I can see how much they have missed you." She searched his eyes and saw his love, hidden in the depths.
"Now, eat while you can because I believe another tornado is about to hit." She pushed the plate towards him and turned away to eat her own sandwich.

As he took a bite of his sandwich Caroline barrelled into the room alongside Cassidy. There was stunned disbelief shining in her eyes. "You." She hissed. "You left us."

He saw the young girl's tears forming. Standing up quickly, he swallowed his mouthful and stepping towards her. "Caro, I'm sorry."

"No. I don't believe you." Caroline sobbed. "We...we meant to help you become part of our family. We had it all planned. You were supposed to become our daddy, and then you left."

"Bobsey, what gave you that idea?" Miranda asked softly.

"Andy loved you, mommy, better than Stephen ever could," Caroline stated. "We heard him tell his friend, they were arguing and then Andy punched him."

He covered his face, he had no notion they witnessed that moment and was appalled with himself. "Caro, I..." He trailed off at the sight of Miranda going pale, there was anger coming off her in waves. Shutting his eyes, he waited.

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She was furious. How dare Andrei commit an act of violence in front of her children? "Get out." She hissed.

"What?" She heard his question but ignored it, moving protectively in front of the girls.

"I said get out and do not bother coming back." She seethed. "I do not want you anywhere near my children."

She turned to see Andrei, palms out entreatingly. "Do you honestly think I'd hurt them or you? I didn't know they saw that. I left them in the park with Cara and..."

"Excuses for your behaviour do not interest me." She interrupted. "I said get out."

She observed as his shoulders slumped and he swallowed. A single tear slid from his eye before he turned. He'd not gone over two steps before Cassidy moved around her and charged towards him. "Don't go," Cassidy shouted, her heartbreak clear. "Don't leave us again."

She tried to grab her youngest daughter but Cassidy was too quick. Following them to the foyer she stalled at the sight. Cassidy was curled in Andrei's arms as he knelt on the floor in front of her. He was soothing her as he fought his own tears.

She caught the garbled words of her daughter "We heard you. He was rude about mommy."

Cassidy hiccuped. "You stuck up for us."

"I will always love and protect you all. I hate you saw that. He was my best friend, but I couldn't let him get away with disparaging you. He was cruel, and it was unnecessary." She heard his words and realised there was more to this.

Looking back, she remembered the gentle young man she knew. He had been slim-hipped, with broad shoulders and tall. Finding him sensitive yet strong, she had dismissed him entirely.

She let herself acknowledge he must have been pushed to react physically, it went against
everything she knew about him.

The man she saw now was not the same boy he had been. He had grown. Yet he was still gentle and sensitive. His tears proved it.

Her breath caught as Caroline moved past her and threw herself at Andrei, joining her sister and forming a three-way embrace.

She wished, more than anything, she could be included in that hug but understood she had, once again, hurt the man with her easy dismissal.

Andrei kissed both of her children on the forehead and extracted himself. "I'm sorry, my little ones. I need to go now." He caught her eye and nodded before spinning on his heel and moving to the entrance.

It was like Paris, again. She couldn't let him disappear. Moving quickly on bare feet she stopped the twins from following him. Both her girls were teary-eyed. "I will speak with Andrei. Go back to the pool." She saw Cassidy about to argue. "Please, let mommy deal with this."

She stepped quickly on to the gravelled driveway and ran to catch up with Andrei's long strides, ignoring the gravel as it cut into her feet.

Andrei stepped into the cab of his truck and slammed the door furiously and she saw him resting his head on the steering wheel before pulling his seatbelt across his chest and staring the engine.

Running faster she slid in front of the vehicle and placed her hands on the chrome bull bar. She looked into Andrei's eyes and let her apology show.

Andrei wound the window down. "Move." He hissed.

"No, tell me what happened that day?" She demanded.

"It's none of your business, Miranda," Andrei spoke quietly. "Now move."

"No." She decided to put her feelings out there. To find out if he still felt the same. "It was not just the twins who found the lack of your presence a loss to their life. I did too, Andrei. The moment you crossed that busy Parisian street I knew I had made a mistake." She watched him switch the engine off and open the door of the truck, stepping out nimbly. She looked down, suddenly unsure.

Closing her eyes, she took a deep breath and before she knew what was happening, he had his hands under her knees and was hoisting her in the air with ease and stepping away from the truck.

Opening her eyes, she saw his eyes were shielded, and she knew no matter what she said, she would struggle to get through to him, he was guarding his precious heart, and she couldn't blame him.

As he placed her down gently and made to turn away, she felt the sting on her feet and she could not stop the gasp of pain.

Andrei spun around and looked at her as if he was seeing her for the first time. Noticing her wince of pain he looked down at her feet and saw the scratches and drops of blood and frowned.

In two steps he was back and had her in his arms again, but he was not moving towards the house but to the track leading down to her private beach. "Andrei, where are you taking me? Will you please stop jogging?"
He ignored her and continued to jog down the path, cradling her gently so not to jostle her. She felt safe in his arms. Unable to resist her hand came up to cup his bearded face, delighting at the softness. It was longer than it had been three weeks before, but still neat. Her hands moved up to his hair and combed a few strands into place as his jaw clenched.

He came to a standstill and by his movements, she realised he was easing off his boots. Looking down she saw he still had his work socks on but he was heading towards the water. "Andrei, what on Earth...put me down."

He continued to walk, stepping into the water before placing her down on her feet, his arm wrapped securely around her back. "You need to clean your feet, the salt water will help."

"Andrei, I..." She trailed off and bit her lip as the salt stung the small cuts.

"It will sting," Andrei told her.

"Your powers of understatement are phenomenal," She hissed.

Andrei chuckled. "Yep, that's me. King of phenomenal understatements." He pulled his socks off, frowning. Removing his arm he wrung the water out of them silently and folded them before placing them into his pocket.

"The surf here in a morning would be great." He observed. "If I had a place like this, you wouldn't get me out of the water."

"The twins also enjoy the water." She told him. "If you are here, there is nothing stopping you from taking advantage of the swells."

"No," Andrei stated quietly. "I will recommend someone else completes the work as planned or I can have my team complete the work but will stay in the city."

"Unacceptable." She whispered.

"What was unacceptable was my belief I could do this, Miranda. There was a reason I dodged the invites to lunch and believed it was not a good idea to see the twins. It still hurts, even after three years away." He wouldn't look her in the eyes. "I stupidly thought I was over this, ready to date, to find the woman I am meant to be with and have children one day." She saw his looking contemplatively into the horizon.

"But you are not?" Her words were breathy, and she welcomed the thrill of anticipation.

Andrei grinned ruefully. "Not even close." He sighed. "There's something about you that reels me in. It's like a warmth settles over me, only for me to be doused with ice." He turned and caught her eye. "I know I will never have a permanent place in your life."

"Is that what you want?" She queried. She was stunned by his easy admission.

"It doesn't matter what I want, Miranda." He turned to search her eyes. "What matters is what you want. Do you still want me gone as you demanded?"

"No. I reacted without thinking. I know you would not intentionally hurt me or my Bobbsey's." She admitted. She spoke truthfully. "I never realised it would be so painful to care so much about someone else until I watched you walk away. I cannot let you go again, Andrei."

Andrei sighed at the admission and turned to offer her his hand. "I think we are done, Miranda."
His voice was low.

"You're still walking away?" She couldn't help but let her disbelief colour her tone.

"Not quite." She spotted his small smile. "I didn't think you would appreciate me manhandling you again. But I do not believe it is beneficial to have sand and other debris getting into those scratches." He licked his lips nervously. "Will you let me carry you back to the house if I promise not to jog?"

"Well..." She couldn't stop the smirk. "...We can move at a glacial pace. You know how that thrills me." She couldn't stop the large smile as he laughed loudly at her words.

She watched closely as he stepped into her personal space and bent to place his arm under her knees. Her arms came up instinctively around his neck as he straightened up. She looked up into his eyes and he grinned, his dimples were obvious and his eyes were clear. "Will you stay for dinner?" She was hesitant.

"Only if you stay off your feet and let me cook. I do a mean barbeque." Andrei stated.

"Acceptable." She husked, running her fingers through the short hair at his neck she felt him shiver. "Now do not forget your boots."

As they moved, he scooped his boots around his fingers under Miranda's legs and continued to follow the trail back to the house.

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Chapter 3

Chapter Notes

Yay, another fic idea from the lovely celesse201, who for whatever reason, holds the belief I can bring her ideas to life. This is my first major AU. Not giving too much away. Miranda is Miranda but I am making her and the twins slightly younger for the sake of the fic. Andy is not the Andy you expect (Hence the AU)

I do not own the main characters related to The Devil Wears Prada. They are owned by the original author and 20th Century Fox. Some characters will be my own.

As he climbed up the steps that led them to the back of the house, Miranda shifted and he looked down into her eyes. He noticed the uncertainty in them. "Do you need me to let you walk?" He asked quietly.

"No," Miranda's voice was low but firm.

"I wasn't sure if you wanted the twins to see this. They may get the wrong idea." He stated gently.

"Andrei, I must be honest with you," Miranda whispered. "I would like if we..." She licked her lips. "...would you be amenable to going on a date with me?"

"A date?" Even after her admission, he was missed, and that she cared for him, the words stunned him. This was the last thing he expected from the older woman. "Why would you want to date me? I have nothing to offer you. I mean, I'm not broke but I am not rich either, it is doubtful I will ever be excessively well-to-do as I work with my hands. I can wax poetic about architecture, history and art, but fashion is still an area in which I remain extraordinarily lacking. I can wear a suit and apparently look semi-reasonable in a tux but fashion-wise, I am boring, I live in clothes like this. I keep a beard so I don't have to shave twice a day. There are times I look spectacularly wild and unkempt, my hair curls ridiculously when it is long." His eyes crinkled as he smiled down at her. He sat down on the top step with Miranda sat across his lap. "Tell me how this would work, Miranda? We are two exceptionally different people."

Miranda frowned. "You are beautiful." She whispered. "I have always thought so." She settled her head on his chest against his pounding heart. "I understand most men want to be told they are handsome rather than beautiful but handsome defines the physical appearance, and although you possess excessive handsomeness I use beautiful to describe your overall self, your heart and your soul, Andrei." She looked up into his eyes and recognised the disbelief. "As for material wealth, that is not a concern. I have found the richest men can be the most selfish. I would share all I possess with you. My heart, body, thoughts. You would have all of me if you give this a try. I realise, after everything that has happened before, my words to you in Paris, you may believe you have nothing to offer me, but you would be wrong. It was a mistake to dismiss you, to throw away the chance to cherish you as I realise you would have cherished me."

"I don't know, Miranda..." He bit his lip and looked off at the horizon as the sea breeze rushed around them. Miranda shivered in her silk blouse and skirt. She pushed herself closer to him, seeking his warmth. He couldn't stop himself from wrapping his arms around her more securely as he spoke. "I'll be honest with you too. That moment in Paris, it broke something in me and my heart
has never recovered from it. I have wanted to move on for a long time, to forget you and find someone to love, but I could not find someone who captivates me half as much as you do. I recognise if I gave you the chance you want, and it failed, I'd not move on easily."

"Please, Andrei, just think about it." Miranda's plea had him looking down into unguarded blue eyes which blazed with her fierce desire.

He nodded once. "We'll see how dinner goes tonight. You can come to know me as I am now. If by the end of dinner, you still want me to take you out, we will organise it. I'll be here in the Hampton's through the week, there is no point in commuting back to the city, but I will make an exception to take you out. Alternate to that we can arrange something for the weekend, with or without the twins as you decide. I will not accept a date being organised by Emily or whichever second assistant you have hired in the last few weeks. If there is something to be organised, I want you to make the effort to do so, or you can ask me to arrange things." He swallowed nervously, certain she would not wish to meet his demands.

"Acceptable," Miranda whispered. She smiled, knowing she would do whatever he required.

They sat in comfortable silence for a few moments and he reflected on the reason for their closeness. "I am sorry the twins saw what they did that day." He sighed. "My so-called friends became difficult when I worked for you. They didn't understand my ambition, the need to do well and succeed."

"Will you tell me what happened?" Miranda asked.

"Yeah, I suppose I can." He whispered.

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She caught the pain in Andrei's voice and sat silent. Looking up into his eyes she witnessed the hurt reflected in them as he tried to put his thoughts in order. When he sighed, she gave him a reassuring squeeze. "You do not have to talk about it if you wish." She spoke reassuringly.

"No, it's fine. I don't quite know where to start." Andrei explained. He rubbed his jaw in an unconscious gesture she was coming to see soothed him. "Nate was my roommate when I came to New York. We had been inseparable through high school, having formed a friendship when I joined the wrestling team. When I left Harvard, he'd finished Culinary School and was settling into life in New York. Our friends Lily and Doug had followed him when their studies ended." He smiled a little at his memories. "We were four people who should never have been friends. Nate was a jock, but he was also living in the closet. Doug was a flamboyant, and gay member of the glee club and Lily was an artist. I bonded with all three and it was being my friend that brought us all together." He swallowed audibly. "We went our separate ways for college. Doug studying accounting and Lily studied Fine Art. We decided, over my final summer vacation, we would be together here in the city. They had all got jobs in their chosen fields, except for me. I couldn't get a break at any of the architectural firms. I was about to leave for Ohio with an idea of moving on to L.A to be with Grandpa, but then Sherri at Elias Clarke called. They interviewed me for the job as your assistant and sent me up to you. And you hired me. The opportunity excited me, I realised as soon as I met you it would be a challenge." His smile lit up his face and Miranda's breath caught.

"And?" She bit her lip at Andrei's frown, worried her interruption had upset him, hoping her impatience to learn more had not shown.

"You understand the hours your assistants put in. I lost weight, I did not always find the time to eat properly and I couldn't train the same way I had before. I made the mistake in the early days of
mentioning the things you or others said, some of them particularly harsh, and the more I tried to gain approval the more furious with me Nate became. He accused me of selling my soul to the Devil in my search for success. Doug and Lily came to agree when I couldn't always meet them for drinks and dinners. Plans often changed at the last minute to meet your requirements." She snorted at those words and she felt his silent chuckle. "They thought Runway was wrong for me, saying I was committing career suicide. Everybody kept asking how I would become an architect while working for a fashion magazine. They teased me for being at your beck and call but they took what they could from me, things I had gifted as your assistant. One night they picked my cell up as you called and threw it between themselves in an immature game of piggy in the middle. I grabbed the cell out of Nate's hand and told them there was no reason for them to be assholes. I realised they couldn't see the progress I made, the lesson's I learned, from you and those around me, as positives, they did not support me."

"Were there positives?" She asked curiously.

"Of course. I learned how to think on my feet and the importance of working to specific deadlines. It is something I carry with me even now. I saw how amazing it was to be so passionate about what you do, you live and breathe Runway. I hungered to find that passion in my life." Andrei sighed. "And then the Gala happened. It was Nate's birthday, he was 25 and Lily and Doug organised the party. Well, I couldn't go. Emily was sick and you demanded my presence. I arrived at our apartment that night to Nate's drunken fury. In the heat of the argument, he tried to kiss me and I pushed him away. I ended up spending the night at Serena's and he called me to apologise the next day stating it was just a drunken error of judgement." Andrei shifted slightly to get the blood flowing in his legs and caught her eye. "I appreciate you would prefer it if I got to the point, but it's not that straightforward. After that night I sensed my feelings for you growing and no matter how I tried I couldn't stop them. I buried them deep within me, scared to even contemplate them. I thought you were the most fascinating and beautiful woman I had ever encountered. I learned to read you, to anticipate your needs, and it made the job easier. I proved myself to you enough you trusted me with the book. Runway kept me busy enough to keep me away from home and I was glad. Things between me and Nate remained tense."

She sensed Andrei becoming uncomfortable and shifted, his small groan had her eyes widening and she recognised the hunger in his eyes. "My apologies, Andrei. I shall refrain from moving too much." She husked. It had been a long time since someone had looked at her with so much desire. She was astounded.

Andrei closed his eyes and took a deep breath. She could feel his growing arousal from her movement and she sensed he was a little flustered and embarrassed. "That's okay. I think little Andy's probably out of action thanks to your daughter's knee." Andrei's easy laughter eased the somewhat sombre mood, and she smirked. She watched as he turned serious. "Do you want to continue this conversation now, or should we move? The twins will wonder where we are."

"I should let you get up, you cannot be comfortable." She stated. "We can resume this up at the house over coffee." She slid off Andrei's knee and winced as she stood. She would struggle with her heels for the next few days, but she couldn't regret going after the man in front of her. He looked up at her with a gentleness that made her heart sing. "Come, Andrei. I must reassure my Bobbsey's that we are still..."

"Friends?" Andrei's lips quirked and his dimple played peek-a-boo, as his eyes held mischief.

"Acceptable." She smirked as he stood and wiggled his toes before swinging her back up into his arms. "Darling, I can walk."
"Not until I know your feet are safe from dirt." Andrei's tone was firm.

"Yes, Andrei." She whispered as he scooped his boots up and made his way towards the house with the woman he loved in his arms.

They heard Cassidy and Caroline as they entered the back gate. "What can they be doing? Andy's keys and cell were in his truck and they're not in the house." Cassidy was teary.

"They can't be far," Caroline stated. "Hopefully they have finally kissed and made up."

"There has been no kissing involved, Bobbsey's," Miranda said. She smiled down at the twins as they watched him amazed as he set her down on her comfortable outdoor sofa and lifted her feet onto the table in front of her.

"I'll be right back." He told the woman. He looked at Cassidy. "My little one, is there a first aid kit in the house?"

Cassidy nodded and took his hand, leading him to the kitchen. "Is mommy okay?" She asked, upset.

"Your mom ran on the gravel on bare feet, she has cuts and scratches on her feet that will sting for a few days. I took her down to the beach to let the natural salt of the ocean clean them, but I need to make sure they're cleaned properly so there's no chance of infection." He explained carefully to reassure the little girl. "We talked, we will try to be friends."

"Oh," Cassidy exclaimed. "You carried her?" He nodded. "Mommy rarely likes to be carried like that." Cassidy was curious as she rummaged for the first aid kit. "After she married Stephen, he tried to lift her over the entrance of the house, and she glared at him and told him he was ridiculous."

"Did she?" He understood Miranda's need for personal space but was pleased she seemed to enjoy his closeness. "I appreciate your mom does not particularly like being touched, my little one, but I think she knows I will be as gentle as I can with her."

Cassidy found the first aid kit and handed it to him. "Are you and mommy going to date?"

He gulped. "Maybe. I've offered to make dinner for us tonight. We will talk more, and then I need to head back to the city."

"Can't you stay?" Cassidy whispered.

"I don't think that's a good idea, honey." He told her.

"You would be welcome." Miranda's voice greeted them and he looked up to see her smirking, her arm wrapped around Caroline. "Caroline has asked if we will date." She arched an eyebrow at him.

"Cassidy asked me the same." He grinned as he stepped towards her. "Will you let me clean your feet?" Miranda nodded and winced and stepped forward, gesturing him to follow her.

Looking over her shoulder, Miranda called to the twins. "Can you please head down to the pool house and advise Cara her evening is free? Andrei will do a barbeque for dinner. She is welcome to join us if she wishes." The twins barrelled out of the kitchen as he followed her across the foyer and up the stairs. "You can stay. There are guest rooms. And while you are working, there is a
three-bedroom cottage or the pool house you and your team can make use of. The pool house is where Cara stays when she is here with me and the twins."

"That's a lovely offer and I may take you up on it while I am working here, but I still have work to do in the city. I need to get my accounts in order before Monday." He told her as she led him into the den. He took in the light decor, wide comfortable sofas, and the curved staircase.

"There are four bedrooms on this floor, all with en-suite facilities. The master suite is up there." Miranda waved to the curved stairs in the corner of the room.

"It is beautiful." He stepped towards the large sliding doors and looked out. There was a balcony which offered amazing views of the ocean. He kept his eyes on the distance. "What are we doing Miranda?" He whispered.

"I thought we had cleared that up. Dinner, if all goes well a date and then..." He saw Miranda shrug in the reflection of the window.

"If this fails, it will disappoint the twins. I don't want to hurt those beautiful little girls." He turned and watched as Miranda settled on the sofa.

"The twins will not be the only ones disappointed," Miranda admitted.

Sighing he stepped towards her and knelt in front of her, lifting her feet into his lap. His thumbs stroked her ankles as he carefully examined the damage. "Can we take this one day at a time? I don't want to rush this." He requested softly as he turned and pulled the first aid kit towards him. Miranda hummed her agreement. "Give me a sec." He placed her feet down gently and stood, moving quickly towards the nearest bedroom. Within moments he was back with a large basin of warm soapy water, a cloth and towels. He knelt back at her feet and soaped them causing Miranda to giggle as she pulled her feet away. "Ticklish, Miranda?" He grinned up at her as she pursed her lips.

"Nu-oo," Miranda stated. "What a ridiculous suggestion."

Wiping Miranda's feet dry he trailed a finger lightly up inside her instep causing her to jerk back and laugh loudly. "Oh, the fibs one hears." He grinned up at her as she tried to get herself under control.

"Please, darling. No more of that torture." Miranda swiped under her eyes to remove any smudged mascara as he rested on his heels and grinned.

"I love hearing you laugh." He stated softly. "You are so beautiful." He let his happiness blaze in his eyes as Miranda searched them. Miranda's laughter would be something he remembered for the rest of his life. Pulling out the antibacterial ointment from the first aid kit, he smeared it on a q-tip and swiped it over the small scratches. "Your feet may be sore for a few days, I don't think you need band-aids but I would recommend socks if you are walking around without shoes."

"I shall get a pair. If you like there are coffee facilities in the corner, the cream is in the fridge under the bar." Miranda pulled her feet from his lap and stood. She sighed. "I will have to find my flats."

He made his way to the corner to arrange coffee while Miranda made her way slowly up the stairs to her suite. He reflected on the day. The best and worst moments of the past three years had been those that he's spent with Miranda that day. They had opened up and bared their souls to each other. Miranda speaking of her hopes for her beautiful children and Runway, him about the loss of
friends, his career and his grandfather.

They had clicked, in a way he never imagined possible, and he was entranced by everything about her, from the way her hair fell into her face, her beautiful blue eyes, tiny ears, imperfectly crooked nose, delicate cheekbones, kissable lips, the swell of her breasts, the flare of her hips and the pale, alabaster skin he wanted to touch desperately.

He understood he would not willingly walk away from Miranda and the twins again, he swore he would be as honest as he could be with her, refusing to start a relationship built on the foundation of secrets.

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She looked in the mirror as she washed her hands at the vanity in her en-suite bathroom. She saw her eyes sparkled with more happiness than she had seen in them for over nine years. Not that her children didn't bring happiness, they did, and she adored them, but in her personal relationships, she was always found lacking once they realised she would not become a dutiful housewife and kowtow to their demands.

Her heart and soul had been broken. Cruel words, sexual incompatibility, easy anger and, she had to admit, her own coldness, had chipped away at the foundation of her two marriages with the twin's father, James, and then with Stephen. She recognised she couldn't die fulfilled without experiencing all that Andrei offered, she yearned for him in a way she had never experienced for another. She found emotional comfort with him and found warmth and security in his strong arms. When Andrei was happy his joy was infectious, she had delighted in sharing smiles and laughter with him. He dazzled her, he was smart, witty, sensitive and strong...what wasn't to love about such a beautiful soul as Andrei? She imagined a future with him and her heart beat furiously.

Moving away from the vanity, she dried her hands and moved to her closet. Rummaging through a drawer she pulled out a pair of bright blue Bresciani ankle socks. Made from soft Merino wool, she adored them. Sitting down on the edge of her bed she pulled them on and sighed. Looking down she frowned. The activities of the day, being held in Andrei's arms, had crumpled her Chanel skirt and Dior blouse. Shrugging both off she left a trail of clothes behind as she moved back to her closet in her lingerie and pulled on a pair of straight legged jeans and an oversized Michael Kors shirt. At least she would be comfortable.

Dressed casually, she moved carefully back down the stairs and found Andrei on the sofa with her Bobsey's curled up on either side of him. She heard him trying to coax them into showering and getting dressed but they were reluctant, knowing they would ultimately head back to the pool.

"Will you come in the pool with us, Andy?" Cassidy asked.

"I'm not dressed for swimming, Cass," Andrei muttered.

"If not today, then another day.?" Caroline asked.

"Maybe, Caro." Andrei was sure to make no promises.

She wondered at his reluctance, knowing he had his surf gear in his truck and how much he loved the water. Stepping towards them she perched on the armchair and saw the two steaming mugs of coffee. Picking one up she sipped it and hummed. Cassidy settled further into the circle of Andrei’s arm, her arm wrapped around his waist and Caroline stroked his cheek, wearing a small smile as she marvelled at the softness of his beard. "Bobsey's, enjoy the pool and warm afternoon before dinner." She told them softly.
Cassidy groaned. "But we wanted Andy to come with us."

"And Andrei politely declined," Miranda told her. "As is his right." She smiled at her youngest daughter's pout. "Go on now, we shall join you by the pool shortly, we have a few more things to discuss.'

"You look pretty, mommy. Happy and relaxed." Caroline stated, turning her eyes away from Andrei.

"I have my favourite people here with me," Miranda explained, her eyes softening as she observed her beloved girls with Andrei. "It is a wonderful feeling." Her voice was low and Andrei caught her eyes. His smile was blinding. Kissing both girl's heads, she watched as he whispered in their ears. Grinning, they jumped up and charged from the room. Miranda stood and sat beside him. "How on Earth did you manage that?" She asked.

"Aha, that would have been the promise of ice cream after dinner." Andrei's smirk had her chuckling. "He stood and ran his hand through his short hair. "I don't wish to overstep any boundaries with them. If I do, I hope you will tell me."

"You haven't. In fact, I believe you may be restraining yourself. Why don't you take a swim with them? You told me you have your surfing equipment in the truck, which no doubt includes swimwear." His refusal peaked her curiosity.

"When you were upstairs, I decided I would start nothing with you without being 100% honest. I am not willing to join the twins yet because of this." Andrei turned his back and lifted his t-shirt over his head. She gasped at the tattoo stretching along his tanned, well defined back and shoulders. Pulling her glasses on she stood and took two steps towards him. She took in the intricate detail of the angel's wings, marvelling at the depth of detail as they sprang from the angel's shoulders before sweeping down to close around two children. She stalled as she recognised the faces in the figures depicted in the art.

Her own eyes stared back at her. They held gentleness and a flash of fierce protectiveness as her wings settled across the figures of her children who were buried into her sides in a familiar gesture. Taking another step, she saw how the artist had captured the innocence and mischief of her daughters. She was stunned. "Why?" It was the only thing she could think of asking.

"You...I..." Andrei sighed and pulled his t-shirt back on and sat down heavily. "My Grandpa drew it for me after I described you with the twins. I was explaining how I saw you one day they surprised you at work, you wrapped them up in your arms and they settled into the safety of your arms, they snuggled into you as if burying themselves into your stomach. It was such a beautiful moment to behold. I asked him to make me a sculpture. It would be a gift for you when I finished my year out as your assistant, a thank you for taking a chance on me. It would be something unique, one of a kind, for someone who embodies those traits. I walked away before I could give it to you."

"An angel?" Miranda whispered, sitting back down.

"When I described that moment, my Grandpa told me it was obvious I loved you. Those feelings had been something I wouldn't let myself admit. His words cut deep and I knew he was right. I didn't realise Nate was eavesdropping when I said the words out loud for the first time, I was crying as I admitted it and I heard the slamming of the front door as he left. I continued with my conversation with my Grandpa, feeling a huge sense of relief at his support and laughter at the situation." He smiled at what he obviously saw as a good memory. "My Grandpa admitted that when I first worked at Runway he set about learning all he could about you. Grandpa wanted to
learn about my life, the people in it, those who would carve their way into my heart and soul and help me become the man I was meant to be. He told me well behaved women rarely make history, and that you were a trailblazer in your world. He said..." He trailed off and bit his lip.

Miranda's eyebrow raised. "He said?" She prompted.

"He said, even the devil was once an angel, cast out of heaven for pride. He disagreed with the names you had been given and pointed out that had you been a man, things would have been different. He admired you, all you had achieved." Andrei swallowed.

"Do you have the sculpture?" She asked breathlessly.

"Yeah, it's in my loft," Andrei admitted. "I live above my office in the Meatpacking district. He finished the sculpture about six weeks before he died. I thought about sending it to you, he wanted me to, but the press was at its worse with the divorce and, well, I didn't think you'd appreciate the gesture. I was the one who walked away."

"I would have treasured it." She sat back down beside him and rested her hand on his thigh. "I would have appreciated you reaching out. I need you to know that, Andrei."

"I'm seeing that Miranda," Andrei whispered. "Now, do you wish for me to continue from before?"

"Yes, I want to know everything you will share." She stated.

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He let his memories ran through his mind. Taking a deep breath, he continued to tell Miranda his story. "That day I admitted to my Grandpa I loved you was about two weeks before Paris. Nate took it upon himself to call my parents and explain what he had overheard, acting in what he claimed was 'my best interests'. They did not react well to that news." He licked his dry lips and sipped his coffee. keeping his eyes averted. "My parents called me three days later. They told me what Nate had said and explained what a fool I was. They demanded I go home. They would send me to Stanford or Case Western to study law. That way they could keep an eye on me as I worked for them in the family law firm. To use my mom's words, I would be far away from your clutches. They explained how ridiculous it was. Their biggest issue was the age difference, even when my mom knew of the age gap between my Grams and Grandpa and how solid their relationship was. After that came the fact you were married, and you were a successful woman, while I was nothing, a disappointment." He chuckled. "They were my mom's words. I was her son, and I was nothing but a disappointment in her eyes. You do not understand how much that stung." Placing his mug down he caught her eyes. "I tried to argue that I knew nothing could come from my feelings for you, that I possessed no hope for more than what I had, but I was happy in New York. It was true I was not yet following my dream, but I had plans to once my year was up. I asked for their support and they told me if I continued on the path I was on they would cut me off. When I refused to leave things turned heated." He closed his eyes. "My dad exploded and threw it in my face about you having children that would never be mine, even if you gave me a chance, and no matter how much I wished otherwise. I got angry at that, those words, they were cruel. It was a blow I wasn't expecting. I told them in no uncertain terms, having the smallest part in your daughter's life would be a privilege, because any fucker could create life and become a father, but it took someone special to be a dad."

"Why was that such a blow?" Miranda interrupted.

"I promised no secrets, right?" Miranda nodded. "It is unlikely I will ever father my own children naturally, Miranda." He blew out a breath. "When I was sixteen I was playing soccer in Phys Ed
and I took a hit to my testicles. One of them ruptured, and I had surgery. I'm not saying I am infertile, it would just be difficult. Half the chance."

"Oh, darling. I am sorry." Miranda whispered entangling their fingers.

"It's okay. I mean, I have a lot of other things to offer the world and I have a good group of friends, the family I have chosen for myself, and well..." He trailed off as Miranda slid closer and pulled him into her arms. "...It's their loss." Tears pricked in his eyes as Miranda ran her hands through his hair.

"It would be my Bobbsey's gain. That I can assure you." Miranda stated. "A fact they seem aware of."

"You know, I experienced so much delight the moment I laid eyes on your girls. They're so beautiful, they took my breath away. The light of mischief and the spark of intelligence they have in them, it is amazing. I grew to adore them, and they liked me too. They brought so much light into my world in the little moments I spent with them. I didn't realise they saw me or wanted me as more than what I was. I was just your assistant." He breathed in Miranda's signature scent and closed his eyes, soothed by the soft scratch of Miranda's nails on his scalp. He hummed, feeling an immeasurable amount of peace.

"Will you tell me the rest?" Miranda asked.

He sighed. "After the call to my parents, I got blind drunk and had yet another blazing argument with Nate. Lily and Doug were there, and they took his side. I locked myself in my room until the Monday, looking at old photos and wondering where my friends had gone. I kept asking myself had I changed so drastically? Was I the one at fault?"

"No, it was not you at fault. Yes, it is true you changed, even I spotted that, but your growth was to be expected. Those people you called friends should have taken delight in you." Miranda spoke gently.

"Thank you." He husked. "My Grandpa said something similar but much more colourfully." He smiled. "He was the one that stuck by me. When my parents cut me from their lives he stepped in and reassured me I still had someone. He promised I would never lose his support." He tried to pull away but Miranda held him closer. "That night you told me you planned to take me to Paris instead of Emily, it hurt to think of causing her pain, no matter how much she seemed to dislike me. She had lived and breathed for Paris."

"I stand by the decision. You were the best person to have by my side." Miranda stated.

"I know." He whispered. "Well, I ended up hurting Emily by explaining the change of plans while she was stuck in that hospital bed. She looked at me like I was the Devil. When I left Runway and dropped off the book, I headed to the gallery where Lily worked. There was a random showing, and she needed people there to impress her boss. Doug seemed happy I was going to Paris, he knew more about fashion than I and saw it as a new experience. As I looked around I ran into Christina, she was at her most flirty and obnoxious and was talking of Paris, she kissed me on the cheek goodbye. Lily pulled me to one side and gave me a hard time, asking if I cared I was breaking Nate's heart by skulking in in dark corners with random women and then told me to have fun in Paris. Nate was behind me and he followed me outside and ranted. He hated Runway, and you and thought fashion was stupid, he'd made that clear. He told me I had lost my integrity. In the middle of this blazing argument, you called my cell, and he turned on me. He said the person whose calls I took, was the relationship I was in." He stalled and pulling away from Miranda, frowned. "The next day I dropped the twins off with Cara. She'd been to the dentist, and I picked them up from Dalton
and was dropping them off at the park. As I walked away from Cara and the twins Nate cornered me. He said disgusting things about you and those beautiful little girls, and I couldn't stand there and listen." He caught her eyes. "I will never say out loud the revolting words he spewed at me. I pushed him and he grabbed me, hissing at me you would break me. He continued to shout, telling me that my whole perception of you was warped, that I belonged with him. I told him the only thing I felt for him was affection and he pushed our friendship to the limit. I explained I would not stand and listen to him drivel his bullshit. He threw a punch which I deflected it and then he lunged again. I acted in self-defence. I took him in a choke hold and as he struggled for breath, I let him go. He threw another punch, and I caught his wrist and twisted it, I heard it crack as I pulled him close, my other arm came up and I punched him. He fell to the ground, his nose bleeding and holding his wrist close to his chest. He was sobbing as I stepped past him and walked away. I went home, packed my stuff and went to Serena's."

"Can I ask you something?" Miranda asked. He nodded. "Was there anything between you and Serena?"

"Never, she became a good friend, along with Nigel. And she's been madly in love with Emily for years." He couldn't help the grin that formed at Miranda's look of relief. "They finally worked it out a few weeks ago when Emily got extraordinarily jealous of seeing Serena with a six-foot-two hunk of a man, who's apparently ripped and sexy as hell." He winked at her and she saw her roll her eyes.

"You have a high opinion of yourself, Andrei," Miranda stated with a smirk.

"Aha, but those words come from a reliable source." He counteracted. "The most discerning bachelor in New York said so, and who am I to disagree with Nigel Kipling?"

His words had Miranda chuckling. "He would make you his own if you were that way inclined." Miranda searched his eyes. "He will not get that chance. Not now I have you back in my clutches."

"Good. Now is there ice cream in the deep freeze? I made a promise to my little loves I intend to keep." He watched as Miranda shook her head.

"Then I will just have to go..." He trailed off as Miranda pulled her cell out.

"Cara, we need ice cream for dessert. You know what we like however Andrei..." She looked at him and smiled. "...yes, he prefers Mint Chocolate Chip or Lemon Sorbet...Acceptable...That's all." She caught his eye. "I will not let you leave me so easily, darling. Now I suggest you gather your things and take that swim. If I know my Bobbsey's they will have a plan to get you in the water whether or not you agree."

He smiled widely. "What should I tell them about my ink?"

"The truth," Miranda stated as she found herself lost in his warm gaze. "You love us."

"Yes, I do." He replied gently. "But I was serious about not rushing this." He replied firmly.

Watching Andrei with her daughters brought joy to her heart. He had changed into some board shorts and dived into the pool gracefully, much to the delight of the twins who squealed and splashed him. As he dived underwater, he came up for air behind them and his arms encircled them, catching their ticklish spots until they were laughing hard.

Cassidy the biggest thrill seeker, clambered up his back and onto his shoulders, balancing herself
before she launched herself into a dive off his shoulders, Caroline followed when she saw the joy on her sister's face. He launched them from one side of the pool to the other, using his hands as leverage.

She called out to Andrei when his cell vibrated and he pulled himself from the pool quickly, stalking gracefully towards her. She let her eyes flick down from his face to his well-defined arms and broad shoulders, to the rippling muscles in his chest and his washboard abs. His hips were still narrow. She licked her lips as her eyes lowered to thighs covered by wet material. He was not her usual type. The old Andrei, the one she first met, he'd been more of what she usually looked for, if somewhat soft. Someone like James and Stephen, solid and attractive, in a conventional way. Both her ex-husbands were fit from playing golf or squash, but neither exuded the sheer power of Andrei as he was now. Realising she was starring, her eyes fluttered upwards, and she caught his grin. "See something you like?" He whispered cheekily as he grabbed his cell.

"Mm, maybe." She smirked at his look of disbelief as he looked at the caller display.

Prodding his screen, he answered with a faux British upper crust accent. "Aha, Mr Kipling. Do you have exceedingly good cakes?" She couldn't help her snort of laughter as fond memories of cherry Bakewell's entered her mind. They had been a guilty pleasure of hers back when she still lived in England.

Andrei pulled the cell from his ear and she caught Emily shrill voice. "Please tell Emily to calm down." He grinned. "No, I am not at the office...It is locked up, that should tell you something...No, I am not at my apartment either...Having Serena continually press my buzzer will do nothing..." He laughed. "I am in the Hamptons...Well, if Roy told you that why didn't you believe him? The man's not a liar..." Andrei ran his hand through his wet hair. "Ah, shi...shoot. I forgot to text him...Stop laughing, some people don't cuss in the presence of ladies...I will do it now..." He caught Miranda's eye. "...I will walk Miranda through the changes...Yes, so far so good, cleared the air and...No, I will not be out tonight...No, Nigel, don't you dare..." Miranda's cell buzzed with an incoming message. "...I hate you, do you know that?" He disconnected the call and caught Miranda's eyes. "I would ask you not to look at whatever you have just been sent but..."

"But you know I will, anyway?" She watched as Andrei nodded.

"I will head back to the pool," Andrei whispered, embarrassed.

"No, please sit with me. As you can see the twins are keeping themselves amused." She told him. Andrei looked at the twins who were throwing a large beach ball between them and nodded.

Andrei spread out a towel and sat beside the older woman as she took her own cell in hand and saw the multimedia message. "What is this?" She pressed play and switched the volume up and heard the familiar music. Nigel had focused the camera on Serena and Emily hugging before panning across the room to a stage. Andrei stood on it wearing the clothing she recognised from their lunch meeting. She listened to him singing.

I look in the mirror and all I see
Is a young old man with only a dream
Am I just fooling myself
That she'll stop the pain
Living without her
I'd go insane

She caught Nigel's words. "I wonder if it is our illustrious leader that has brought out tonight's
soulful voice.

*Feel her breath on my face*
*Her body close to me*
*Can't look in her eyes*
*She's out of my league*
*Just a fool to believe*
*I have anything she needs*
*She's like the wind*

"If it is, it is none of our concern, Nige," Serena muttered, her head buried in Emily's hair. "Leave Andy be."

She looked at the man next to her and he had his head in his hands. "You have a beautiful singing voice. Is there no end to your talents? Your plans for the house were exemplary." She whispered.

"Ah, God. I will kill him, slowly, with a blunt object." Andrei muttered, looking up. "Too many drinks and a lot of talk about the old days caused that. Towards the end of my working relationship with Runway, between prepping for the next day and waiting for the book, I used to meet with them, and they found out about my years in Glee. It caused teasing, as you would expect. The fashion disaster gleek, working for the Queen of fashion." Miranda's smile was wide. "I didn't realise he would have captured it."

"I will have to thank Nigel, it is a side of you I didn't know. You mentioned the Glee years earlier today, but I would not have assumed you still sang." Every new thing she learned thrilled her. She looked down at her watch and back up at him. "Come, we have a little time before dinner. I'll make coffee while you explain what changes you wish to make to my house."

"I should get changed," Andrei said.

"Oh no, you are perfectly acceptable as you are." She stated, her eyes blazing with fire as her eyes once again they trailed along his bare chest.

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Chapter 4

Yay, another fic idea from the lovely celesse201, who for whatever reason, holds the belief I can bring her ideas to life. This is my first major AU. Not giving too much away. Miranda is Miranda but I am making her and the twins slightly younger for the sake of the fic. Andy is not the Andy you expect (Hence the AU)

I do not own the main characters related to The Devil Wears Prada. They are owned by the original author and 20th Century Fox. Some characters will be my own

Andy was nervous heading back to the city for the evening, having had Miranda request his presence for dinner. As he drove out from the Hamptons, through the busy Friday afternoon traffic, he thought about the previous Friday evening and Saturday morning spent with Miranda and the twins. He couldn't stop the smile that widened as he thought about the time they shared.

As he stopped for coffee near his apartment, his cell vibrated.

N.K: **We'll be at Barcelona's if you want to drop in after your date. Don't fuck up, she's been in a tolerable mood all week, and Emily even heard her humming along to Queen Aretha. You can imagine her shock :P**

The events that led him to the evening and the following morning with Miranda and the twins amazed him. He let his thoughts wander.

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Sitting in the kitchen and drinking coffee they talked over the changes for the kitchen, thrashing out new ideas. He wanted to focus on the flow of the room making use of the floor to ceiling French doors. They discussed colour schemes, wanting to brighten the room using neutral colours rather than the bold colours Miranda had initially requested.

His idea was to use the range as a focal point of the kitchen, building cupboards in natural light wood around the stove in the centre of the space. Porcelain tile would replace the wooden floor in the kitchen, pantry and utility room. He discussed splitting the rest of the area with a large informal dining table and a comfortable sitting area, scrapping the breakfast bar entirely.

When Miranda asked him to draw his idea up, he ran to his truck in bare feet, wincing as the gravel bit into them, and pulled out a sketch pad and his pencils and a swatch of colours to show her.

Miranda sat back as he outlined the shape of the room and then filled in the details. He knew he had a frown line marring his forehead as he concentrated on bringing the room to life and he sensed Miranda watching from her place beside him as he flicked through colours outlining the ones he believed would work best.

When he pushed the design and colour scheme at her she was amazed by the small details that had been missing from the initial design, he had allowed for some splashes of colour from artwork he
knew she favoured, naming a few pieces he believed she would like and in the leaded, stained glass built into the kitchen cabinetry. She caught his eye when he bit his lip nervously and looked up. He waited to face her displeasure, instead; he witnessed her delight blazing in them. She gave him a wide smile. "Acceptable."

Her easy acceptance thrilled him and his face split with a wide grin. "Awesome."

"I wish I had brought you up here rather than just providing the floor plans," Miranda smirked and her eyes twinkled in amusement. "You shall have to come to Men's Runway and see what magic you can weave there."

"There's no need as we are starting from scratch, a house is always different. They have their own unique features and personalities." His smile grew brighter. "Plus, I want to make it a beautiful space for you and the little ones." He caught her eyes again and noticed her soft smile. Miranda gestured for him to follow and led him through the foyer into what was once a magnificent single level atrium.

It was a great space, boasting an oversized imported custom old-world hearth. There were and floor-to-ceiling windows and doors that led out onto the terrace and looked over the ocean in the distance. It was clear they built it as the centrepiece of the home, and natural light poured into the entire room and if they opened the doors, that light would flood into the foyer. "Woah." He spun around taking in the arched columns and wainscoted walls. He shivered as a draft from the ocean cut through the room via an open window. He looked up at the coffered ceilings and millwork. Looking down at the floor he regarded the dull, scuffed dark wood and frowned.

Spinning on the balls of his feet he bounced and frowned again. The floor was solid and had no spring to it. "Not great for dancing." He muttered. "Basketweave would be more suitable."

Miranda stepped close. "It seems fairly suitable."

"The floor needs to spring. It will be softer on your feet if dancing." He advised.

"Show me," Miranda asked.

He looked down at his bare feet and Miranda's clad in socks and smirked. "Neither of us is wearing suitable footwear, Miranda."

Miranda rolled her eyes and stepped into his personal space. Placing one hand on his bare shoulder and entwining the other with this she looked up into his eyes. "Dance with me."

He spun her around easily, humming softly at random and pulled her closer. "You move easily." He whispered. "But consider that hardness under your feet now, imagine that while wearing killer heels that keep your calf muscles tense."

"Mm, the only hardness I feel is you, you're a walking wall of muscle," Miranda smirked. "Do what you wish, Andrei. I trust you will make this tired old room into something stunning."

"I hope I can do it justice." He murmured as he spun Miranda and eased her into a dip. Looking down into her blue eyes he recognised the laughter sparkling deep within and pulled her back into an upright position and she settled again at him.

Miranda rested her forehead against his chest breathlessly. "I am still of the belief you can do anything, Andrei. Now, I think it's time for dinner."

He cooked up their dinner, searing steak and burgers on the barbeque while Miranda prepared a
salad. While they ate the twins told him about every important moment he had missed over the years, the tales kept him amused.

When the twins snuggled into him and yawned he helped Miranda carry them up to bed.

It was late and the two-hour drive back to the city was unappealing. Miranda asked if he would like to stay and his smile was wide as he agreed. Miranda helped him take his bag to the guest room and advised she would let him settle. Pointing out that there were fresh towels and toiletries set out for his use.

He moved quickly to shower before pulling a t-shirt and some basketball shorts from his bag and dressing. Moving from the room he found Miranda settled on the sofa in pale blue silk pyjamas. Sitting in the armchair he observed her frown at the distance he’d put between them and moved to sit beside her on the couch.

When Miranda turned to face him, he mirrored her movement, and they asked each other questions and getting to know one another again.

Miranda was waiting, her impatience getting the better of her. Andrei should be here soon and...

Her head popped up as the doorbell sounded and she jumped from her seat in the study and stalked quickly to the front door. Throwing it open with a smile forming she saw the twins' father, James, stood there, a bunch of Freesias in his hands. Her small smile faltered, and she looked at the flowers in his hand with distaste.

"James?" She queried, suddenly panicked. "The twins?"

"They're fine, they are with friends. I was wondering if we can talk, Miranda?" James handed her the flowers and brushed past her into the house.

"By all means, come in, make yourself at home." Her tone was sarcastic, but James did not notice. She swung the door closed and followed, not realising the door had not shut.

"Thank you." James continued into the kitchen and opened the fridge, gripping a bottle of wine. He opened and closed cupboards until he found the wine glasses and poured two glasses. Pushing one towards her he brushed his hand through his thinning hair. "Miranda, I..." His head came up and his eyes turned cold. "Who the hell are you?" James glowered over her shoulder at the intruder.

She spun around and locked gazes with Andrei. Her smile was genuine as she took in Andrei's black Armani suit with a purple shirt. He'd trimmed his beard, and he'd swept his hair back off his forehead. He looked spectacular. "Andrei, how..."

"The door was open, I'm sorry to intrude, I thought...Well, never mind..." Andrei spun on his heels and made to walk out.

"No, don't you dare leave. You remember James?" Miranda followed.

"Miranda?" James whined following them both. "I need to speak..."

Miranda waved him away dismissively. "James, I have dinner plans with Andrei, if you had allowed me to speak rather than pushing into my home..."

Andrei spun around, his eyes lit up with something indecipherable as he gazed at the flowers in
Miranda's hand. "Miranda, James has other plans for you this evening, we can arrange dinner another time."

She ground her teeth together in frustration. "Unacceptable, you came all this way and..."

"He brought you freesias, Miranda." She looked up at his eyes and saw the small flicker of amusement. "And I know of how much you love freesias."

Her lips pursed, but she guessed he would view the amusement in her eyes as she held a finger up. "Just give me one moment, my darling and then we will begin our date." She turned to the table and placed the flowers down before glancing at James. "What do you wish to talk about?"

"Um, Cassidy and Caroline mentioned...It got me thinking..." She looked at James as he glared at Andrei once again. "Will you give us some privacy?"

She shook her head furiously. "No, Andrei stays. Whatever you have to say can be said in his presence."

"Cassidy and Caroline mentioned you were going on a date." He looked at Andrei, loathing clear in his eyes. "He didn't even bring you flowers." James sputtered.

Miranda smirked as Andrei let out a loud bellow of laughter. "Man, you seriously have no fucking idea." Andrei's tone held disbelief and wonder. "You don't know, do you? How your ex-wife detests that particular flower?"

"I always bought Miranda freesias." James stumbled over his words.

"Well, that finally explains a lot." Andrei looked at her, his eyes blazing. "I will leave you to speak privately with the twin's father, Miranda."

She stepped into Andrei's personal space and wrapped her hands around his waist looking up into his beautifully expressive eyes. "Stay." She whispered the words, looking up into his eyes and tried to reassure him. "I have waited a long time for this. Please, Andrei."

She spotted the shock in his eyes at the words and the agreement and turned to James. "Andrei is correct when he states I hate freesias, James. I have disliked them intently since the moment I walked into my office at seven months pregnant to find you in my chair and Jacqueline in the throes of passion as she rode you, the fact was the only reason there were freesias in my office was as an apology for the fact you had not come home the evening before, because you had spent the night in her bed. Honestly, you have nothing to say I want to hear, so I will advise you not to continue with whatever it is you wish to discuss, you will only embarrass yourself and me. That's all." She took the flowers and pushed them back into James's hands and waved her hands at him dismissively.

"Miranda, I..." James tried to speak but was cut off as Andrei stepped around her.

"You heard the lady," Andrei stated deceptively quiet. "I think you should leave."

She regarded the two men. Andrei's eyes were clear but James's held wariness as he took in Andrei's sheer size and obvious strength. She couldn't help but notice the difference between the two men.

James was of an average height and built reasonably well and to her surprise when they first got together, hairy. The flat stomach she remembered had developed into a little paunch from too many executive lunches and his once full head of blonde hair had receded and thinned.
On the other hand, Andrei was tall, wide shouldered and slim hipped. His hair was thick and wavy. She knew having seen him bare-chested that Andrei had well-defined muscles from his work and from his exercise regime which included Kickboxing, he had an agreeable little 'happy trail' from his navel to below the waist of his pants but the rest of his chest was hairless.

Licking her lips, she realised there was no competition, Andrei was far more aesthetically pleasing, and she found she experienced a pure desire to touch him when in his presence. She also wanted his touch, appreciating he would be tender with her, he had a beautiful heart and she knew she could trust him with her own. She had felt safe and cherished when he carried her from the beach the previous weekend.

She kept her gaze on Andrei as James stuttered and flushed bright red. "Miranda, what do you see in this man-child? He's just a boy."

The words left her unamused, and she looked up to see Andrei's jaw clenching. She turned to gaze disdainfully at her first husband. "Oh no, James. Andrei is most definitely a man, a fairly successful one at that, it will be a success that only going to grow as he continues to use his talents to build his business."

She watched as James flushed, he'd made a few poor business decisions in his career and knew Miranda was letting him understand that she had always known, even as he tried to hide them from her. James stalked from the kitchen and she winced when the front door slammed as he exited the townhouse.

Rubbing her nose, she fought off a headache threatening to build.

"You should take something for your head." Andrei's words had her head snapping up, and she saw the concern in his eyes.

She rolled her eyes and her tone was firm as she as she replied. "I'm fine." She watched as Andrei shrugged out of his jacket and placed it on the back of one of the high chairs at her breakfast bar. "What are you doing, Andrei?" Her tone was perplexed as she watched him pour the wine away and put the kettle on. Moving from the room he made his way outside, and she heard the slam of his truck door. Before she knew it, he had returned and shook a bottle of Advil at her.

"Please, Miranda. Get on top of your headache before it gets any worse." Andrei's tone was coaxing as he placed the medication on the bench.

"What about dinner?" She asked sitting at the breakfast bar and watching him pour a glass of water for her.

"I'll cook for us." She noticed his small smile as he pushed the glass of Pellegrino towards her. "It will be better to stay home than put up with a noisy restaurant." She watched as he turned away and bent to search the fridge. He pulled out chicken breasts, eggs, thickened cream, broccoli, garlic and onion before moving to the pantry and exiting with his arms full of flour, salt, and olive oil and chicken stock. "You okay with pasta?" She couldn't stop the smile that formed as he moved next to her again and opening the bottle of Advil took two tablets and pressed them into her palm. "Let me take care of you, Miranda."

"Acceptable." She swallowed the tablets with a sip of water and her eyes roamed over the man as he moved around her kitchen gracefully in search of what he needed.

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Within an hour they sat opposite each other digging into plates of chicken and broccoli Alfredo and Miranda hummed at the explosion of flavours swirling on her tongue as she took her first bite.

Swallowing his first bite, Andy grinned as the older woman continued to eat delicate bites. Savouring every mouthful. Dabbing his mouth with a napkin he stood and poured them more water. "This was always one of my Grandpa's favourites."

"I can see why. The twins are not overly fond of broccoli but I'm sure this dish would convert them." Miranda smiled across at him. "I appreciate your culinary efforts but where did you learn to cook? Was it the chef?"

He couldn't help the small chuckle. "No, Nate hated me encroaching on, what he believed, was his territory. My grams taught me, believing I should be self-sufficient. I enjoy cooking, it's relaxing, especially handling the dough, I find comfort in the kneading of it."

"Is there no end to your talents?" Miranda smirked at him and he grinned.

They continued to eat in comfortable silence until they had filled themselves and he stood up, rinsing their plates ready to place them in the dishwasher.

"Thank you for tonight. You were right, staying at home was better. It has been pleasant having you here." Miranda frowned. "About James..."

"He wants you back." Andy couldn't stop the words. "I saw it in his eyes."

"Ridiculous; Miranda whispered as if to herself. She seemed to shake herself from her thoughts. "He didn't have much to say when Stephen came on the scene."

"Was Stephen a threat to his relationship with you or the twins?" He asked quietly as he finished stacking the dishwasher.

"What do you mean, Andrei?" Miranda's tone turned icy.

"Um, never mind." He tugged at the collar of his shirt before rubbing his jaw. "No, I actually have something to say, and once I have said it, I will leave you to rest." He turned and caught her eye. "It is obvious James heard the twins discussing our date tonight. The fact is, he came here with a bunch of fucking freesias, in the hopes you would discuss giving him another chance. You separated a long time ago, but there was a reason he believed he should come here tonight, something he did not need to do with Stephen. And the only thing I can think of is the twins like me. They were happy on Saturday before I left the Hamptons and heard we'd agreed to have a date, so excited that they mentioned it to Nigel, who text me and told me not to fuck this up." He ran his fingers through his hair. "Which I am most likely doing."

He watched as Miranda pushed away from the breakfast bar and stepped towards him. "Do you think you are so important to my Bobbsey's and I?" Miranda's tone remained cool, which after the events the previous weekend and earlier in the night, stung him.

"Yes." There was no hesitation and his voice did not waver. "I understand you have regrets, about the time wasted after Paris, Miranda and I realised quickly last week what my absence did to the twins." His eyes softened. "You did not let me leave last Friday, you came after me. You told me the little one's having me in their life would be a positive. You were warm, gentle and accepting. I opened myself up to you and you did the same. You let me see you, not just Runway Miranda."

He gazed at the woman stood in front of him and observed the fear lighting her eyes. "Andrei, I... "
He placed a finger over her lips, cutting off the words. "You need to realise something, I would understand if you gave James another chance, he is the father of your beautiful babies, and he no doubt seems like a safe choice." He leaned closer, his breath ghosting along Miranda's lips. "But you would regret it, eventually." He brushed his lips against Miranda's gently, not giving her a chance to react, before pulling back and stepping around her. Taking his jacket, he shrugged it on. "Think about what I have said and let me know what you decide. I will not force my presence on you or the twins, Miranda. I love you all, but I will not willingly put myself in a situation that will hurt me should you decide it is not what you really want. I did that once before." He walked towards the door. "Goodnight, Miranda, I will continue to keep Emily updated on the progress at the house. You know where I am should you need me or want to talk."

Moving from the kitchen and down through the foyer quickly, he ran down the steps into the street, the door fell closed with a quiet click as he threw himself into his truck and rested his head against the steering wheel.

Swallowing the lump forming in his throat, he put the key in the ignition and fired the engine. As he pulled away, he noticed Miranda stepping out of the house and gazing in his direction as he headed towards Madison Avenue for his Meatpacking District apartment.

Concentrating on the road, he refused to let his emotions get the better of him. He would take the weekend to sort himself out and on Sunday would head back up to the Hamptons and once again work through his pain.

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She stalked into her study, kicking off her heels. She was furious at the turn of events that evening after a lovely dinner. Her inability to answer Andrei annoyed her, instead she turned, once again, into Miranda Priestly, ice cold bitch, when he mentioned the possibility of James being threatened by his presence in their lives.

Sitting at her desk she launched her Mac and viewed her emails, rushing through those that were easily dealt with another time and answering the ones that needed an immediate response.

She let herself think over Andrei's words. Upon reflection, she saw the truth behind them. However much she did not allow James to voice his desire, there was a reason he was there, and that reason had something to do with her going on a date with Andrei and the twins delight at the possibility he would become a fixture in their lives.

A vibration caught her attention. Looking at her cell, she spotted the message from Nigel. Glancing at the clock, she realised it had been over an hour since Andrei left the house.

N.K: We are at the Barcelona bar, it surprised us to see Andy walk in, he looks miserable as sin. What did you do?

Miranda's eyes stung with tears. She had fucked up, again, that's what she had done. Her cell vibrated again.

N.K: Well, are you going to come and fix this? He won't wait forever, there's a bevvy of beauties already competing for his attention, not that he seems overly interested in anything but his beer.

Looking down, she nodded. It was time for her to go big, or go home, she couldn't keep pushing the beautiful man away. James, Stephen and the beautiful women who wanted him could fuck themselves. Andrei was hers and she would make sure the world knew. Picking up her cell she replied to Nigel's text.
M.P: Maybe I should come armed with a bug swatter. Or mace, perhaps? I'm on my way.

She frowned when she realised she had given Roy the evening off, it would be rude to disturb him. Reluctantly she dialled for a cab and smirked when she gave her address and name and was informed someone would be right with her. She slid her feet back into her five-inch pumps and moved towards her closet. Grabbing a leather moto jacket, she smiled. It would add a relaxed effect to the red Abito Donna Versace sheath she was wearing.

Hearing the cab pull up at the front of the house she grabbed her clutch and dropped her wallet and cell into it. Glancing into the mirror above the table she saw her eyes were bright. Her headache had all but gone.

Arming the alarm, she exited the house and slid into the back of the cab gracefully. As they traversed the busy evening traffic, she let her mind roam to their conversation the previous weekend.

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"Where do you see yourself ten years from now?" They had discussed everything from art to music and books and she believed she was only scratching the surface of the man beside her.

She watched as Andrei's eyes lit up. "I want to be doing what I'm doing now but I want to expand. I want two teams of workers. One that remodels the new and one that restores the old." Andrei smiled brightly. "You know first-hand from fashion that there are things that are just timeless. Houses are the same, take Gothic doors with linenfold and rosettes carved into them, they provide style and character to a place."

"Do you have a preference?" She asked, amazed by the passion he displayed.

A blush rose along his neck from beneath his t-shirt. "I don't mind really, I love working with my hands. I love the different textures I encounter. I love when my hands move across smooth marble or granite and wood. Although I must admit, there is just something magical about restoring something to its former grandeur."

"You make it sound almost romantic." She teased with a broad smile.

He smirked. "Think about how good certain materials feel against your skin. Satin, silk, charmeuse, cotton and even wool." He leaned forward slightly, bringing his hand up to brush his thumb along her jaw. "There are different woods that have different feels depending on their innate texture. Some will be softer and rougher, and others will be smoother and glassy. Then there is the lustre, each wood has its own unique sheen like skin does."

She could sense the blush rising up her cheeks and his smile widened. She found herself captivated by the dimple in his cheek that played peek-a-boo. Andrei removed his hand and placed them on his lap.

"I wonder what other things you would take delight in touching." The words popped out of her mouth before she could filter them and slapped a hand over her mouth, disbelief etched in her eyes.

Andrei's low chuckle filtered through her consciousness. The words embarrassed her. To regain control, she brushed her hand through her hair before looking up at him, she observed the blaze of affection in his eyes. "I can safely say there are many things I have yet to touch and taste, that will no doubt bring me immense delight." He smirked at her. "Now, will you tell me why you chose this house?"
She launched into a tale of how after drawing up divorce papers for James she contemplated leaving Runway and moving away from the city. With her Bobbsey's in tow, she spent the next year feeling like she had viewed every house in the area until she drove past the estate and saw it was up for sale. Within three months the house was hers. It was her escape from the hustle and bustle of the city and the place, when she was ready to step down as EIC, she would settle.

Standing at the bar, Andy drummed his fingers impatiently against the dark wood, waiting to be served. From the corner of his eyes, he saw someone gesturing for the bar person who moved, ignoring the fact he had been waiting far longer than other patrons. Huffing he glared when the bar person looked towards him and shrugged as he poured a scotch and grabbed a beer, handing it to someone just out of his view.

Once again, he groaned as someone else was served. Finishing his beer, he shredded the label and left the mess on the bar. Deciding he was waiting in vain he spun on his heel, ready to leave. He stalled as he met the blue eyes of the woman he had walked away from that evening.

Miranda held out a beer hesitantly, her scotch held securely in her other hand. "You left before I could respond, Andrei."

Taking the beer, he caught her eye. "What would you have said?"

"Nothing." Miranda stepped closer into his personal space. "But I would have done this..." Cupping his jaw she pulled him down and caught his lips in a kiss. He closed his eyes as her signature perfume surrounded him and he put his hand on Miranda's hip pulling her closer, their lips danced sensuously.

A cheer went up from across the room and breaking the kiss Miranda looked over her shoulder. She spotted Nigel surrounded by young men and women. She recognised Serena standing behind Emily, her arms wrapped loosely around the young Brit. Looking back at him she grinned and nodded in their direction. "Friends of yours?"

"Never seen them before in my life." He couldn't stop his smile as Miranda chuckled. "I am sorry, Andrei. I should have told you I do not wish to give James another chance, all I want is to make this thing between us, work. Will you give me an opportunity to prove it?"

He leaned down and brushed a kiss against her cheek, taking the chance to whisper in her ear. "As many as you need, but I need you to realise once you are mine, I will tell James to fuck off should I need to. I will not interfere in his relationship with the twins but I will not allow him to interfere with my relationship with any of you."

"Acceptable." Miranda husked. "Now I believe we should join the others."

"If you insist." Miranda raised her eyebrows at Andrei's words. "Half of my staff are there too, a few of the guys have remained in the Hamptons, planning to head up to Montauk to surf. Many of my staff are curious about the woman who is paying their wages for the next few months. You may get bombarded with questions, especially off Amy and Michelle."

Miranda clasped his hand and entwined their fingers. She saw a few women looking at them in disbelief and smirked. As she pulled him across the room, dodging other patrons, Miranda asked. "Why would they have more questions than others?"

"Michelle is my second cousin from my mother's side. Another black sheep. She was disowned for
being in love with the wrong person. A woman who also was African American. She's a carpenter by trade but can do anything, she sought me out when I got the Burnside mansion contract. Amy, her wife, was a session singer in L.A and between jobs, she worked as a music therapist."

"So, you have a family?" Miranda asked.

"If you count the crazy cousin who believes I'm a disaster with women, yes." His smile faltered. "Working for you again worried her, and it took time for her to be okay with Nigel, Serena and Emily. She means well though."

"Then I shall have to work at reassuring her, won't I?" Miranda's eyes scanned the people around Nigel, coming to land on a woman who looked remarkably like her Andrei, she was tall with long dark hair and a wide dimpled smile. She was holding hands with a stunning, petite dark-skinned woman. He noticed where she was looking and squeezed her hand as she gave the women a nod of acknowledgement and a small genuine smile.

Nigel stepped forward, greeting Miranda with the usual air kisses and a few whispered words that had her letting out a tinkling laugh. "I plan to have a good night, Nigel. I left La Priestly at home." Miranda smirked as Emily gaped and Serena chuckled. "Now, how about some shots?"

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She understood she'd had far too much to drink when she rolled off the sofa and onto the floor tangled in a fleece throw. Looking down she realised she was in her underwear and frowned. Sitting up, she pulled the throw off before wrapping it more securely around herself.

Groaning, she looked around and took in the unfamiliar surroundings. She was in a large open plan room with a brick feature wall split by large windows. She could see the sun rising in the distance and knew it was still early.

Gazing around she saw the photos and stood. Stepping towards them, she could not stop her grin as she recognised Andrei in them. The most prominent was a photograph of him with his arms wrapped around Nigel, and she realised someone had taken it in Paris before he left. He looked so young and carefree.

She scanned the other photos of him with his 'family'. The people she had met the night before and others she would come to know. She held up an old photograph and gaped at the sight of the young man stood with an older couple. She recognised the man as the sculptor, John Blake, Andrei’s grandfather.

Memories of the night before filtered through her mind as she continued to look around.

The group had moved to the end of the bar and did different shots, downing them hard and fast, dropping like flies, until it was only herself, Andrei, Nigel, Seb, Michelle and Amy left of the large group making up Andrei’s nearest and dearest.

Running her tongue over her teeth she could taste the remnants of tequila and aniseed, no doubt from Sambuca.

Little moments passed sluggishly through her mind. She remembered being pressed close to Andrei, his pleasant Calvin Klein cologne surrounding her as they moved against one another. She kissed him, pulling him closer while his tongue tentatively traced across her bottom lip before meeting hers. As they continued to kiss her hands had cupped his ass and...

Miranda groaned.
She had broken the kiss and her teeth nipped at his jaw teasingly before she had pulled him from the club and hailed a cab. They had continued to kiss and offer light touches until they reached his apartment where she had stripped down to her lingerie before promptly passing out.

A flicker of movement caught her eye, and she saw Andrei leaning against a door frame in his boxers. His arms crossed over his chest. Her embarrassment flared, and she looked down.

"It's still early. Come to bed, Miranda." Andrei whispered the words, and she glanced up, searching his eyes. "I wasn't in a fit state to carry you somewhere more comfortable earlier."

"Oh, God." She whispered the words as she remembered her orders, whispered hotly in his ear. She made the demand for him to take her and make her his own. She looked up into his eyes. "How much of an arse did I make of myself?"

Andrei offered her a wide smile. "Not one bit. You did, however, call Emily a pussy when she claimed she'd had far too much to drink, then you pushed another towards her, told her to man up and then dragged me onto the dance floor." His smile widened. "By the time we'd finished cutting a rug she had dragged Serena off home."

"Mm, I cannot recall but it sounds familiar. Of course, I may now have to fire her." She stifled a yawn and her eyes fell shut as he chuckled.

In the next moment, she was in Andrei's arms and the fleece blanket fell to the floor as he bounded from the living room. Using one hand he pulled the comforter on one side of the bed free and laid her down gently before covering her.

She nestled under the covers as he moved to the opposite side and slipped into position next to her, careful not to jostle her or encroach into her space. "Try to sleep, Miranda. You can think of firing Em while I fix us some breakfast. Dream of something inventive."

"Cheeky." She fought the swirling tiredness but let herself sink further down into the warmth and comfort of Andrei's bed. Turning onto her side towards him, she placed her hand on his chest and scooted closer. "May I...um...well... " She faltered, unsure how to ask for what she wanted.

She looked up into Andrei's eyes and saw the flash of understanding. He stretched his arm out and as she laid her head against his heart, he wrapped his arm around her back, holding her secure against him. "Sleep now, beautiful."

She felt the brush of his lips on her head as her eyes fell closed and she settled in, listening to the deep thrum of his heart.

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Andy woke up feeling like he was being anchored to the mattress by the dead weight of Miranda Priestly's leg which rested over his hip. He was on his side and she had wrapped herself around him, her hand resting on his stomach, her fingers moving slightly under the band of his boxers.

Sighing, he realised he could not move without disturbing the woman surrounding him. Closing his eyes, he tried to settle back to sleep but the warm fingers on him were unsettling and he realised there was another issue to contend with. He exhaled deeply. It was typical that his morning glory would appear to greet the day in full tribute when waking next to the woman that had haunted his dreams for so long.

A tug at the line of hair leading from his stomach caused him to gulp. "You are over thinking, my darling. Quieten that brilliant brain of yours." Miranda's voice was husky from sleep and the
shouting over the music from the night before.

"Could you...I mean..." He pulled himself free and launched himself from the bed, crossing his hands over the front of himself to hide his erection. "Um, bathroom."

He stalked off, knowing he was blushing furiously and cursing. He closed the bathroom door before Miranda could react. He released his bladder in the hope it would go down, when that didn't work he went about his normal morning routine, brushing his teeth and tried to think of something gross enough to kill his hard-on but his mind kept returning to the woman in his bed. It was time to up the ante. He went through the periodic table, trying to name them all as he stepped into the shower and set it to cold. Five minutes later he stepped from the shower still semi-erect. The knowledge the inconvenience would go away as he moved around soothed him.

Tying a towel around his waist he realised in his rush he hadn't grabbed clothes. Poking his head around the door, he closed his eyes at the sight of Miranda stood in a pair of his boxers and a t-shirt he had not seen for a while, it had not fitted since he bulked up. It seemed strange to him that something so innocent as knowing she wore his clothes, was so arousing.

As he made to turn Miranda caught his eye. "Andrei, is something the matter?"

"Um, I forgot clothes." He looked away from the woman, trying to control his raging hormones. "And...I...I..."

"You must realise you are not the first man I have woken up beside with evidence of nocturnal penile tumescence," Miranda smirked.

"Wow, you make it sound so classy compared to morning glory or the full salute." He couldn't stop his shy grin as Miranda rolled her eyes at him at the slang terms. "Um, could you pass me a pair of boxers, I'll get my clothes on and..." He stepped around the door and watched as Miranda rooted in his drawer. "...make breakfast." She pulled out a pair of plain black Armani boxer trunks.

"My darling, will these do?" Miranda shot the elastic of the boxers off her fingers and they floated in the air towards him. He snatched at them, but in doing so the towel fell loose leaving him naked in front of the older woman. She eyed him hungrily, her eyes darkening as they took in his strong thighs and toned abs. "Mm, stunning." He caught the whispered words. "Now, we have all the time in the world to make use of these impressive morning nuisances, but I need coffee and to brush my teeth."

He scrambled into the tight trunks and moved from the doorway towards her. "There are spare toothbrushes in the drawer of the vanity. If you need anything else, just shout."

"Does that include scrubbing my back?" Miranda grinned, mischief highlighting her eyes.

"Bath or shower?" His response had her stalling.

"What on Earth do you mean?" Miranda seemed perplexed by the question.

"Well, if you need your back scrubbed, I should know if I need board shorts or if I'm okay in jeans." He grinned happily as he saw Miranda's frown but it disappeared as she turned and walked towards him.

She stopped in front of him and one hand trailed over his pecs as the other tugged again at the hair at his navel. He winced as she leaned closer. "Andrei, I prefer to shower, but when I let you share either moment, I want you unclothed. No more barriers."
The unconscious groan that escaped from the back of his throat had Miranda smirking as she gave a final tug and stepped away, her hips swaying sensuously as she moved.
Chapter 5

Chapter Notes

Yay, another fic idea from the lovely celesse201, who for whatever reason, holds the belief I can bring her ideas to life. This is my first major AU. Not giving too much away. Miranda is Miranda but I am making her and the twins slightly younger for the sake of the fic. Andy is not the Andy you expect (Hence the AU)

I do not own the main characters related to The Devil Wears Prada. They are owned by the original author and 20th Century Fox. Some characters will be my own.

Miranda stalked through the door of the house just before 7 pm. It had been almost six weeks since Andrei started work on the house and in his updates to Emily that afternoon he had advised that they’d finally finished the kitchen. They’d not planned a date this weekend as she’d been busy and Andrei wanted to get as much done as he was able. But she thought she would surprise him here and perhaps talk him into sharing a bottle of wine and a pizza with her on the terrace.

Their dates each Friday or Saturday night since that first dinner and night at the bar had gone well, and they were becoming even more comfortable with each other. They were taking things one step at a time, and although they shared kisses, they had yet to take the next step. They often found, after their date nights, they did not wish to say goodbye and ended up sleeping beside one another in their underwear.

She was comfortable at Andrei's apartment on the weekends the twins were with James, and when they were home, he seemed comfortable in the townhouse after their dinners out, or evenings spent bowling or at the movies. She had captured multiple moments on her cell phone camera of Andrei with her girls and her Bobbsey's had even snapped photos of them together. She scrolled through her cell at least once a day to recapture the moments.

They had not put a label on the thing growing between them and the thought of putting pressure on the man to commit to something he was not ready for terrified her. The possibility he could walk away again panicked her, but she recognised she wanted more. She wanted more time spent together, learning about one another, more time with the twins and the feeling of completeness that being with Andrei and her girls brought to her life. It was the little moments they shared that meant the most. The smiles they shared when they woke up wrapped around each other. The quiet moments on those early mornings as they sipped coffee and split the newspaper. Holding hands as they traversed the busy sidewalks after dinner or as they walked through the park with the twins.

There was a new lightness in her life that could only be from Andrei's presence. She'd caught the twins discussing things a few days before, and they decided Andrei would be a perfect daddy for them. The words had cut her deeply, and she prayed fervently that their wish for their family could come true.

Placing her purse and the few bags of groceries down, she listened to the music coming from the atrium and the joyful laughter of her Bobbsey's, who, as far as she was aware, should now be in Montauk with their father. Stepping quietly through the foyer she peered into the room and noticed the new flooring, delighting in the shine of the newly polished oak. She spotted Andrei, with one of her girls on each hip, twirling them around in circles as he sang to the Motown music playing in the
background. He put Cassidy and Caroline down as the music changed and The Four Tops I Can't Help Myself started.

She watched as he bowed to Cassidy first and then Caroline and held his hands out to them; he spun the twins around under his outstretched arms as he sang and their laughter filled the room.

_Sugar pie, honey bunch_
_You know that I love you_
_I can't help myself_
_I love you and nobody else_

_In and out my life_
_You come and you go_
_Leaving just your picture behind_
_And I kissed it a thousand times_

Andrei hummed along as he twirled their babies around, causing the twins to laugh harder than she'd seen for quite a while. Cassidy and Caroline seemed overjoyed as he spun them a final time before scooping them back against his chest and spinning quickly in a circle on the balls of his bare feet. As he turned and noticed her his smile was wide as he caught her eyes.

_Sugar pie, honey bunch_
_I'm weaker than a man should be_
_I can't help myself_
_I'm a fool in love, you see_

Cassidy looked at where Andrei was looking and when she spotted her kicked her feet in a gesture for him to let her down. Andrei popped her back on her feet and she charged towards her. She caught the little arms around her waist, still watching as Andrei moved around the room with Caroline, whispering the lyrics in her ear as her eldest giggled and snuggled into him.

"Bobbsey, I thought your father was coming?" She stated gently.

"He's running late, again. Andy told Cara we could stay with him so she could head back to the city. She has a date with Roy." Her eyes widened in surprise causing Cassidy's smile to dim. "That's okay, isn't it?"

"Wow, he said nothing when he dropped me home for the car." She grinned.

Cassidy's smile widened again. "Cara said she needed time to primp. Andy told her she didn't because she's beautiful."

She caught Andrei's eyes. "Such a sweet talker." She listened to him sing the lyrics, amazed by his obvious delight in her daughter as he crooned the words to them all, keeping his eyes on hers as he moved gracefully.

'_cause sugar pie, honey bunch_
_You know that I'm weak for you_
_I can't help myself_
_I love you and nobody else_

_Sugar pie, honey bunch_
_Do anything you ask me to_
I can't help myself
I want you and nobody else

Sugar pie, honey bunch
You know that I love you
I can't help myself
I love you and nobody else

Caroline hugged Andrei tightly before he set her on her feet again and gestured for the older woman. Removing her Prada pumps, she glided across the floor and into Andrei's personal space. They danced easily as he hummed along to The Commodores, Three Times a Lady. They were comfortable in each other's arms, happily gazing into the eyes of the other as Caroline moved stealthily and picked up Andrei's cell, capturing the moment on video and camera.

They didn't detect the front door opening, but a small cough broke their attention as the song ended. "That was our wedding song." James's voice hit her ears, and she flinched slightly as Andrei stiffened.

"Was it, really? I'm surprised you remember." Her lips pursed unconsciously at the thought and looked towards the open door. James swallowed nervously. "You were intoxicated by that point and spilt bourbon on my shoes." She stepped out of the circle of Andrei's arms offering him a warm smile as she gave his hand a reassuring squeeze. "You dance exceptionally, my darling, and I appreciate making a new memory with what was once one of my favourite songs." She spotted the warmth in his eyes as he bestowed a wide dimpled smile on her.

Turning back towards her ex-husband, she stared him down as she stepped past him back into the foyer, gesturing for him to follow. "Is it too much to ask that you be on time for your daughters?" She hissed at him as they moved away from the doorway.

James flinched at the ice in her eyes. "Miranda, I...I..." He stuttered.

"No, no. I do not wish to listen to your excuses. If it wasn't for Andrei, Cara would have been stuck here, forcing her to change her plans. It is her weekend off, and it is not acceptable to keep her or our daughters waiting." She spoke coldly.

"And, where were you?" James blustered.

"I was at work since I believed you would be here for the twins at 4:30 pm sharp, if not I would have finished at lunch and spent the afternoon by the pool with them or perhaps enjoying an early dinner in our new kitchen. You know I am trying to make more time for the girls." She smirked as James looked flabbergasted. It was an argument they had had multiple times since Stephen left.

Hearing a rustle, she spun around to catch Caroline and Cassidy peering at them. Closing her eyes, she took a deep breath. She hated her precious girls seeing her at loggerheads with their father but it was something that happened frequently as he shirked his responsibilities to them. "Are your bags upstairs, Bobbsey's?" She asked. Opening her eyes, she caught Cassidy nodding and hurried towards the stairs as James moved back to the atrium.

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Andy was proud of the work he'd achieved so far, having left most of his workers to complete the work in the kitchen and bathrooms. It had taken him and Michelle almost four weeks to prepare the walls and woodwork, removing the existing wainscoted panels carefully, re plastering where needed, sanding the window frames, doors and other wooden features and pulling up the solid
wood floors and replacing it with hardwood sprung flooring.

They had finished the floor that afternoon, and he sent his cousin away to have the weekend with her wife. His staff had jumped into their cars and hit the road too, most heading back to the city, just as Cara arrived with the twins. He settled in ready for an afternoon of work, about to throw dustsheets over the floor to protect the work he'd done and paint the walls. Mixing paints, he created the perfect soft eggshell blue.

He detected Cara's cell as they entered the house and peered through the door and witnessed the flicker of annoyance on Cara's face as she paced the foyer and the person on the other end of the cell spoke over her, keeping her from expressing her wishes. The twins stood looking fearfully at their nanny, knowing she was not happy. Cara finally sighed and agreed to wait when she noticed him. Seeing the tears in her eyes, he had asked if there was anything he could do.

After Cara explained what was happening, that James would be a few hours late, not having left the City yet, he was furious. He could feel concern rolling off the twins in waves and seeing the young woman, who took fantastic care of the three Priestly's, on the verge of tears left him even more annoyed with the man.

He decided James was an even bigger prick than he initially thought and told Cara so in a whisper as he gave her a comforting hug. She explained that she needed to call Roy to cancel their plans. He suggested she leave the twins with him and after some coaxing and flattery, she agreed, throwing him a small smile as she spoke her goodbyes to the girls.

He spent the first hour with the twins in the kitchen, showing them the work, his team had already completed and the little touches to make the place theirs. They expressed their pleasure as he prepared them a snack and a drink. He offered to sit with them by the pool or take them down to the beach but they shook their heads.

After their grilled cheese sandwiches, they jumped down from their chairs at the large table and rushed into the atrium, wanting to see what work he'd completed. He warned them to be careful as there were open paint canisters near the walls and they slowed down.

They noticed the quiet music on his iPod and speakers and twirled around in the centre of the room causing him to smile widely. Moving to the paint he fit the lids loosely. He hadn't been able to stop his laughter at their antics and captured photos on his cell before putting it down and joining them in the silly moment. The moment that Miranda had walked in on, and which had caused her to offer the small smile that few people received, the smile that made his heart soar.

Looking up with Caroline in his arms he saw Miranda's soft smile and set the little girl on her feet. Holding his hand palm up for Miranda it amazed him when she stepped into his personal space and moved gracefully against him with one warm hand in his and the other pressed against the centre of his back. He lost himself in her eyes, which reflected her happiness but as the song ended, he looked up into the unhappy face of Miranda's first husband, who was seemingly unimpressed on the sight before him.

He stiffened at the intrusion but Miranda's warm hand squeezing his reassured him and her words had laughter bubbling in his throat. He stopped himself from swooping in and kissing her, instead, giving her one of his wide smiles.

He waited as she drifted gracefully on bare feet in the direction she had come from and overheard Cassidy's whisper that their father was useless. He tried to hide his shock they referred to him as their father and not their dad or daddy but Caroline noticed as his eyes widened. "He didn't really want us, mommy argues with him so he will be there."
His heart tore at the admission. The knowledge that the man did not appreciate what he had troubled him. "Jackass." He hissed through his teeth as James stepped back into the room.

Hearing the words James crossed his arms over his chest and glared at him, his hard-soled shoes scuffing at the wood as he kicked his feet. Getting no rise, he turned and spotted the cans of paint. Kicking one can over, it soaked the floor with the pale blue satin-finish paint.

His jaw clenched as he tried to bite his tongue and his fist clenched involuntarily. He looked down at Caroline and then Cassidy and knew he needed to remain calm. "You should put your shoes on my beautiful little loves." He spoke lightly. "Shout if you need help with your laces, okay?" The twins nodded and ran from the room, clambering up the stairs after their Mom.

James smirked at him, his eyes showing his dislike. "Now who's the jackass?" He muttered. "I seriously do not understand what she sees in you. You have nothing to offer a woman such as Miranda and I know my children will eventually see it too. You are not the God they think you are. You are nothing. Miranda will come to see you are using her."

His temper flared as the words cut deep, fuelling his insecurity. In two large strides, he was in front of the man. Picking him up by his shirt front, the older man's feet barely touched the floor as he pushed his way through the foyer and launched James out of the front door.

James landed on his ass and slid on the gravel, hissing when it cut into him. He followed, moving to the back of his truck he spotted what he wanted. Pulling a can of paint stripper out, he grabbed a screwdriver and jimmed the lid. Glancing at James, he growled and threw the contents of the can at James's Red Maserati GranTurismo, watching the paint stripper splatter against the hood and roof. The paint stripper worked quickly bubbling and eating away at the paintwork leaving a trail of metal in its wake.

James cried out as if in pain and Miranda clattered out of the door. "Andrei, what on Earth?" She glanced between the two men.

"That covers the cost of my crew's wages for the additional work we now have to do and the cost of the replacement floor." He pointed the screwdriver in his hand at the man sat on his butt on the gravel. "Do not think of crossing me again, James, you will not win." He turned to Miranda. "One hundred thousand dollar's worth of materials ruined, Miranda, add to that three people's wages for six weeks, he's lucky this is all I did. It is only the love and respect for you and your two little girls stopping me from doing worse after the insult he offered me. He was a petty, disrespectful dick and now he's paying for it, with his most prized possession, the extension of his shrivelled manhood." He glared at James before throwing the screwdriver onto the truck bed and spinning on his heel, walking away. He headed towards the beach, furious with himself for losing control.

"I'll sue," James called after him.

"Try it. I've nothing left to fucking lose." He hollered.

James expressed his incredulity over Andrei's actions, repeating adamantly he had done nothing to provoke the man and frankly she had heard enough from him as he kept harping on about his car.

Dragging him back into the atrium she stood beside the silent twins and viewed the damage. She could understand Andrei's anger. Paint covered the floor where can fell and rolled across the length of the room leaving a trail. As she surveyed the room, wondering if there was anything salvageable she caught Caroline's muttered words to Cassidy. "Andy did nothing when it happened, Cassi, he
was angry, but stayed calm.”

She spun on her heel, glaring at her first husband, giving him one of her iciest appraisals. "What prompted Andrei to drag you outside and damage your car?” She asked. Her voice deceptively quietly.

"Nothing, I swear, Miranda." James made the mistake of looking away and Miranda recognised he was lying to her.

"Liar. You will tell me, NOW." She demanded. She needed to know what James had said to him.

James looked up and his eyes blazed. "I told him the truth. I do not understand what you see in him. I've done my homework, he has nothing to offer you. He's barely keeping his head above water, he has his student debts and what he owes his suppliers and if he paid them in full, he wouldn't have a red cent to his name. He will fail in this dream of his, and if you stay with him you and the children will suffer for it. He is a nobody, Miranda, and it is obvious he is with you for all he can get. He's using you,"

James’s admission was her final straw. Gesturing for the twins she looked down into their eyes and recognised their tears from his words. "Go on upstairs, Bobbsey's and get comfortable. You will stay with me this weekend. I think there is time for a swim before dinner." She observed them as they clasped fingers, and charged from the room, whooping in happiness as they threw themselves up the stairs.

Turning back to James she frowned. "Get out." She told him. "You are no longer welcome in any of my homes. You have taken liberties and interfered in my life for the last time."

"But Miranda..." James trailed off as he spotted the fury in her eyes.

"No. You have said enough. I brushed off Andrei's concerns that night you showed up before our first date. I told him his thoughts on why you felt the need to interfere were ridiculous. But, perhaps he was right. You have acted like a jealous fool and the only thing your behaviour has achieved is to annoy me even further." She stepped from the atrium knowing he would follow her to get a final word in. She threw open the front door. "When you come for our daughters, and only if they choose to spend time with you, you will wait on the doorstep. I will not allow you to take them tonight, you are over three hours late and it is late, they need their dinner and to be settled."

"But Miranda, I lo..." James sputtered to a halt as she held up her hand.

"I urge you not to continue with that sentence. The sentiment would be especially unwelcome. I will advise my lawyers of what has occurred today. If you even think of suing Andrei, I will slap a lawsuit on you for the damages to my home. If you are, for whatever reason, correct with what you claim, I will not have Andrei out of pocket because you acted in pure vindictiveness towards him, destroying weeks of hard work." As he stepped past her out onto the front porch, she spoke. "Do you know what I love the most about Andrei, James?"

"I don't think I want to know," James muttered.

A small smirk blossomed. "He is an exceptional human. I knew it the moment he walked into my office for the interview, and by the time he left Runway, he had already captured my heart. I refused to act on it back then, scared of people's reaction to dating a younger man, however, he is gorgeous and I find myself unable to resist now he is back in my life."

"You are making a huge mistake," James whispered.
"How can love in any form be a mistake, James? Andrei is aware his business is unlikely to make him rich, however, he sees himself as rich in other ways. He surrounds himself with people loyal to him as he is to them, people who see his innate kindness and will not take advantage. I love him, James, for many reasons, and all to do with the person he is, not the material wealth he has. I am blessed to have him in mine and our daughter's lives." James turned to face her and she used the opportunity to slam the door in his face. The last view she had of the pathetic man was his shocked countenance. Moving slowly, she grabbed the grocery bags from where she left them and moved to the kitchen to put the items away.

An hour passed, and she was becoming worried. She had used the time to get changed into a pair of jeans and an old t-shirt and tried to get rid of the excess paint. She cleaned up the mess using old sheets she had in the garage but the paint had done its damage.

Andrei had not returned to the house and as much as she told herself he needed time to calm down she also knew he would need her reassurances. She refused to allow today's incident to push him away. She would not let James's interference ruin what they were building, in fact, she thought it was time to take their relationship to the next level. She desired him in ways she had never experienced for another.

Moving back to the kitchen after cleaning paint from her hands, she was stunned, once again, by the beautiful finish and craftsmanship of the room. She loved the bright red comfortable sofa and twin armchairs in front of the pot-bellied stove that had been installed in the hearth and the low coffee table made from reclaimed white oak. The dining table and cabinets and floor matched the coffee table. Andrei had designed interior stained-glass cabinet doors, and she loved the reds, oranges, yellows, greens and blues that made up different images portrayed within the colourful glass panels.

Shaking her head, she couldn't quite believe the events that occurred that evening. Pulling an apron around her, she settled in to make homemade pizza dough, taking her time to relax. She studied the twins as they enjoyed the pool, seemingly happy to not have to spend the weekend with their father. She placed her dough in a lightly oiled bowl and cover with cling wrap.

Looking out towards the pool she realised Andrei sat with his feet in the water as Cassidy sat curled into his side. She saw he had changed out of his work gear and was wearing a pair of denim shorts and a casual shirt, he looked relaxed. Removing the apron, she patted her hair into place and grabbed the twins a soda each, Andrei his favourite beer and herself a glass of wine and stepped out through the patio doors.

Moving quietly on bare feet, she overheard Andrei's whispered explanation. "Yes, he said mean things, but that was no excuse for me to throw him out of your house and launch paint stripper at his car."

"We overheard what he said when he finally told mom, we think he deserved it," Cassidy muttered.

"Next time I'll blast him with my water pistols." Caroline splashed water at her sister and smiled and Andrei's laughter was a welcome relief.

"No, my little loves. He is, no matter what, your father, and you need to respect that." Andrei stated. "I don't have a good relationship with my parents, and I wish I could say otherwise," Andrei told them.

"Why?" Caroline asked.
"They believed I should find a girl my age to date, go into law and work at the family firm and earn loads of money, but that wouldn't make me happy." She could sense the sadness in his voice.

"And what makes you happy?" She bit her lip as the errant question escaped.

Seeing the drinks in her hand he stood and took the wine and beer before sitting down again at the edge of the pool. Sipping the beer, he hummed as she eased herself down beside him and took her glass of wine. He looked down at her. "Being here, with the three of you brings me so much happiness. My work too." Andrei smiled. "I need little from life, Miranda because what I have, I have worked hard for, and it is enough, no matter what anyone else says."

"Where did you go, earlier?" She settled in closer and rested her head on Andrei's shoulder as Cassidy launched herself back into the pool, splashing her sibling.

"To the beach, I stripped down to my boxers and took a swim. Then I watched the sunset for a while before returning to the cottage and showering. I should have come straight back, but I wasn't thinking. I'm sorry Miranda." Andrei was hesitant.

"No, no apologies. I realise you are ashamed of your actions tonight, but he pushed you. James was wrong, in what he said, my darling and you were right that first night at the house when he turned up. He was trying to push for more." She licked her lips. "He is now fully aware that any advances he makes would be unwelcome."

"That's good to know." She could detect the smile in Andrei's voice.

"Mom, we're hungry." Caroline screeched.

"Caroline, there is no need to screech like a banshee. If you come out of the pool, I will prepare pizza." She smiled as she followed her daughters as they kick towards the steps and hurry out of the pool. "Go shower, when you are done, the pizza will be ready."

"Your mom asked me to come to get you." His words had Cassidy jumping. He pushed himself off the door and entered the room. Taking the towel from Cassidy, he knelt behind Caroline and threw it over her head. He squeezed the excess water from the red hair before working it over her head, using his large hands to help dry it. Pulling the towel off he saw it in a tangled fluffy mess and grabbed her hairbrush. Gently untangling the curls, he brushed the red hair, taming it into sleekness as Caroline hummed in happiness. Finishing with the eldest redhead he placed a kiss on her head.

"It's Cass's turn, now. Go on down to your mom." He grinned as Caroline pouted. "Go on, little love. We'll be ten minutes, max. Tell your Mom not to eat all that pizza, I'm hungry."

"Mm, I'm sure I will let none of you goes hungry for long." Miranda's voice accosted them and he looked up and smiled at her as Cassidy replaced Caroline at the vanity, handing him her towel. He repeated the gesture with Cassidy, drying and brushing her wild hair into sleekness. "You realise your efforts will be in vain? They'll wake up tomorrow with their hair in a tangled mess."

He saw Miranda's smirk as he caught her eye through the mirror. "Well, I'll just have to do the
same tomorrow morning then."

"Yes." Cassidy jumped up, causing him to fall back on his butt, and fist-bumped her sister.

Miranda shook her head. "You are making a rod for your own back. They will come to expect this."

He stood and pulled the twins into his arms and they settled again against him. Stepping towards Miranda he smiled as he leaned forward, pressing a chaste kiss on her lips. "Anything for the three of you."

"Anything?" Miranda queried softly.

"Yes, anything." He murmured as his stomach grumbled.

He noticed the blaze of satisfaction highlighting the older woman's eyes. "Good to know. Come, I shall feed my three favourite people and then we can settle either in the den with a movie or I could light the fire pit and we could have s'mores and…"

"Both sounds perfect." His tone was low and his smile widened as Miranda's breath hitched and he caught the darkening of her gaze. He brushed past the older woman, leading the twins to the kitchen and smiled at the sight.

Miranda had placed napkins, plates at the pizzas on the coffee table, ready to make use of the seating area he had created for the family. Looking back, he caught Miranda's eyes on his ass and smirked. It was not the first time he had caught her blatant perusal, but with her blue eyes darker and the beautiful blush tinting her cheeks, he understood that she was also finding it hard to remain unaffected by his presence. The number of times over the weeks Miranda had caught him staring was into the double digits. Miranda blushed further at being caught.

Sitting the twins down on the wide sofa, he busied himself getting them slices of pizza and napkins and ensuring they were comfortable. Miranda had placed their drinks on coasters and perched herself on one armchair. Before taking the other chair, he placed a slice of pizza on a plate and handed it to her. He pushed the glass of wine within easy reach. "Thank you, my darling."

He felt the blush rising up his neck and grinned shyly. "You're welcome."

He sat, and they dug in. He'd eaten two slices before Miranda and the twins finished their first and quickly grabbed the third slice, grinning good-naturedly at Miranda as she rolled her eyes. Taking his time with the third slice he relaxed into the moment, the only noises being the sound of their quiet eating and drinking.

He could see the twins had questions, and he caught Caroline's eyes. "What's the matter, my little one?"

Caroline caught Cassidy's eyes, and he watched as Caroline nodded once. "You will not go away again, will you?" She asked, piercing him with her blue eyes.

"No, I'm here for as long as any of you want me." He answered her truthfully.

"Good, that means you'll stay forever." Cassidy grinned.

"We don't want to see Mommy unhappy, and you leaving would make her sad," Caroline stated as she leaned in for another slice of pizza.
"I'd be unhappy too, little one." He admitted. He looked at Miranda and saw her face was flushed as she looked anywhere but at him. She had her empty wine glass clutched in her hands. "More wine, Miranda?"

"Please," Miranda's voice was hoarse, and he understood her daughter's admission embarrassed her.

Standing up he moved around the table and knelt in front of the older woman. He took the wine glass from her and lifted her chin to meet her eyes. "I'm not going anywhere, sweetheart."

"Acceptable." Miranda's smile blossomed, and it took his breath away.

"And in your smile, I see something more beautiful than the stars." He whispered softly, loud enough only for her to pick up. He stood up gracefully and moved to the fridge. Grabbing a beer for himself he uncorked Miranda's wine and poured her a glass. "What now?" He asked curiously.

"S'mores." Cassidy looked pleadingly at Miranda and he bit his lip. He knew she wouldn't be able to resist when Caroline turned her pleading eyes on her too.

"Andrei?" She queried, looking up at him as he placed her wine down.

"I'll go start the fire." He smiled down at her.

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She left Andrei and the twins settling by the fire pit with an and gathered the ingredients to make s'mores and the few additional extras Andrei requested. She carried the Graham crackers, Hershey bars and marshmallows, chocolate chips, tortilla wraps and aluminium foil to the fire pit and placed the items on a small table. She watched Andrei pull the tortillas towards him and open the bag of chocolate chips. He sprinkled them along the middle of three tortillas before adding marshmallows. He raised his eyes to her, and she nodded her agreement, curious about the snack. He quickly prepared a fourth and wrapped them burrito-style, covered them in aluminium foil and set them on the grate covering the flames.

"They'll need a few minutes to become deliciously gooey," Andrei told them as he sat back with his beer, finishing it quickly. He pulled an Esdy closer and pulled another beer from the depths before sitting back with his eyes on the twins as they played their Nintendo Switch. Sitting opposite, she watched the flames dance in Andrei's eyes, mesmerised as the amber became more pronounced. She watched as he leaned forward and using tongues pulled his s'mores burritos off the grate. He popped them down on the table and unwrapped one carefully. "Come on, little loves. Careful they'll be hot."

Cassidy jumped up and grabbed the burrito, biting into it with gusto. "Ow, ow, hot, hot." Cassidy jumped up and down waving her hand over her mouth as she chewed.

"I told you to be careful, Cass," Andrei told her. He opened another burrito and handed it to Caroline. "Careful, now Caro," Caroline blew on hers before taking a careful bite and giving him a chocolate smile. His own smile widened at the pleasure on the twins face as they sat back down next to each other.

Unable to resist that smile, she stood and stalked towards him. Stepping between his parted knees she cupped his face between her palms and gazed into his eyes. It was an intimate moment, sharing what was in their hearts. She let herself be seen, knowing she was safe to do so with Andrei. "May I sit with you?" She husked.
Andrei smiled and capturing her hand from where it rested against his face, he pulled her down onto his lap, wrapping his arms around her and resting his head on her shoulder as she settled comfortably across his knees. "You can sit with me anytime. Now, will you have a s'mores burrito?"

"Mmn, that sounds wonderful." She whispered. Leaning around her, Andrei grabbed the last two burritos and handed one to Miranda. She could feel his eyes on her as she took a delicate bite of the sweet dessert and hummed. She settled into his arms as she made her way through half of the sweet treat and placed it down. Cassidy snatched it up and shared it with Caroline as they continued to play their Switch. When they'd had enough of their game, they looked towards the adults and smiled.

"Do you want to play Frog?" Andrei asked.

"How do you play that?" It confused Cassidy.

"We go around in a circle describing a frog. To start, the first player calls 'One frog!' The person sitting next to them says, 'Two eyes!' The third player calls, 'Four legs!' The fourth person says, 'In the puddle!' And the fifth and final player yells, 'Ker-plop!' If someone makes a mistake, we call out, 'Frog!' Players who make a mistake sit out leaving just one winner." Andrei smiled as the twins nodded their agreement.

Cassidy and Caroline dropped from the game quickly but remained attentive, keeping track of how many frogs they got 'into the puddle'. She was sure she'd win and looking up into Andrei's eyes saw his grin. She faltered. "… Two..." She was sure he'd had just called two eyes. "…four legs…"

"Frog!" Cassidy and Caroline shouted laughing at the antics as she pursed her lips.

"YES!" Andrei smiled happily as she huffed. She made to pull away, but he pulled her close again. "I'll make it up to you later," Andrei whispered, placing a soft kiss on her cheek. Her breath caught, and she caught the promise in his eyes.

"Will you tell us a story, Andy?" Caroline asked.

"Sure thing. I know just the thing." Andrei's smile was wide. He could see the twins were excited to be spending time with them, and she felt more relaxed than she had in a long time.

"I'll tell you the tale of The Ghost of The Bloody Finger," Andrei explained. He spoke quietly causing the twins to lean in to catch his words. "In a small town near here, there was an old abandoned house. No one ever went near it because everyone said something haunted it." He licked his lips before continuing. "One day, a bunch of local people were sitting in a coffee shop, chatting about bravery. One man was bragging loudly. 'I'm not afraid of anything!' he boasted. 'Oh yeah?' asked his buddy. "I'll bet you aren't brave enough to spend a night alone in that old abandoned house!" The twins gasped. Andrei continued the story as Miranda snickered. "The boaster didn't want to admit that he was afraid, so he agreed to sleep in the house that night. At dusk, he arrived at the house alone. He checked every room and found nothing unusual. He chose an upstairs bedroom, spread out his sleeping bag on the floor, and tried to sleep. He had just dozed off when he caught a faint noise from downstairs. He strained to hear what it was. It sounded like a moan."

Caroline covered her mouth as Cassidy frowned.

"I am the ghost of the bloody finger! I am in the front hall!" Andrei moaned the words, keeping
his voice shaky and making his voice sound spooky. "Well, the man told himself that he was just imagining things. It must be the wind, he thought. But then he heard the voice becoming louder 'I am the ghost of the bloody finger! I am at the bottom of the stairs!' 'My imagination is running wild!' thought the man. 'I am just going to go to sleep, and soon it will be morning.' But then he heard, even louder, 'I am the ghost of the bloody finger! I am at the top of the stairs!' The man dove inside his sleeping bag, but he could still hear the ghost coming closer."

Cassidy leaned into Caroline and they snuggled together fearfully.

"I am the ghost of the bloody finger! I am in the upstairs hall!" The man hid his head under his pillow, but he could hear the ghost coming even closer. 'I am the ghost of the bloody finger! I am at the bedroom door!' The man was shaking with terror as the door creaked open. 'I am the ghost of the bloody finger! I am in the bedroom!' The ghost paused in the doorway. 'I am the ghost of the bloody finger!' Andrei paused, and she saw the twins expected to hear a gruesome tale. She caught his small smirk. "Do you have a band-aid?" Andrei delivered the last line in a broad Irish accent that had her leaning into his shoulder giggling.

Cassidy let out a burst of laughter as Caroline squeaked in surprise. They both rushed to the chair and clambered on top of them laughing and happy. Andrei wrapped his arms around the three of them and held them close to his chest.

It was a beautiful night. Looking up at the sky she took in the vast, cobalt sky covered in twinkling stars, the crackling fire gave off a warm glow. It was a perfect moment, one she would carry with her forever. She looked into Andrei's eyes and saw her own happiness reflected in his gaze. "I love you, Andrei."

She watched as his eyes closed and his Adam's apple moved as he fought his whirling emotions. Andrei's eyes blazed open, and she saw the sparkle of tears. "I love you too, Miranda, all three of you."

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Yay, another fic idea from the lovely celesse201, who for whatever reason, holds the belief I can bring her ideas to life. This is my first major AU. Not giving too much away. Miranda is Miranda but I am making her and the twins slightly younger for the sake of the fic. Andy is not the Andy you expect (Hence the AU)

I do not own the main characters related to The Devil Wears Prada. They are owned by the original author and 20th Century Fox. Some characters will be my own

**WARNING:** NSFW. You know Andy's a dude in this one and frisky times ensue. Don't like, please don't read.

As Andrei stepped back on the terrace after settling her Bobbsey's, Miranda uncapped another beer and stood. "Are you trying to get me drunk, Ms Priestly?" The twinkle in his eyes told her of his amusement.

She scoffed. "No," She claimed. "Maybe just a little." She admitted.

She watched as he sat on the chair she's risen from and held her hand. "Sit with me, Miranda." Andrei murmured. "Tell me about your week."

She sat gingerly on his lap, delighted as his arm wrapped around her waist pulling her closer. She welcomed it when he pressed deliciously against her ass and swigged at his beer before catching his eye and smirking. Andrei took the bottle from her with his free hand and sipped the cold drink. Settling in with a little wriggle she heard his breath catch but ignored it. "It was intolerably long."

She admitted. "I often found my thoughts drifting to the moments we have been sharing and hoping for more."

Andrei pressed a kiss to her cheek. "There will be more." His voice held the promise, and she hummed happily.

"Will you be my date for the benefit?" She hid her face from his searching eyes.

"Miranda, I am honoured. I will escort you anywhere," Andrei whispered. "Page Six has been curious and I can't say I am overly surprised. I saw the last article asking who the handsome dragon tamer was."

She could hear the smile in Andrei's lightly teasing voice and looked up into his expressive eyes. "Do you think you have tamed the dragon?"

"God, I hope not." The words, whispered hotly in her ear, sent a wave of desire rocketing through her.

She couldn't stop her thighs from clenching. "Andrei, I..." Miranda spun around, straddling his hips and caught his lips in a soft kiss, her hands cupped his bearded jaw before trailing down to his chest. She pressed herself closer, deepening their kiss as her hands made quick work of the buttons
of his slim-fitted checked shirt before running over his well-defined chest.

Andrei caught her hands between his and pulled back. "We should stop."

"Why?" She husked breathlessly.

"Because once we go there, there's no going back." Andrei moaned as she nipped his ear.

She pressed against the burgeoning erection between them. "I don't want to go back." She caught his eye and saw the fear expressed in his. "I want to go forward with this, I want it all, my darling...with you." She glanced away embarrassed. "I realise it is quick, we've only been dating six weeks and have not really spent vast amounts of time together while you have been working here, but I need you in my life, Andrei. I consider I have wasted so much time and I do not wish to waste another moment because the only thing that makes sense is loving you." She glanced at him and saw the amazement in his eyes.

"Miranda, I love you. I always have and I always will..." Andrei trailed off, wetting his suddenly dry lips.

"But?" She queried softly, cupping his jaw to make him look at her.

"But, nothing." She knew he was holding back. Searching his eyes, she saw his insecurity. "But, a million little things." He sighed. "What if James is right? What can I offer you, seriously?"

"Your heart, Andrei. Don't you realise what a gift that is? Of how much I already cherish it, and you?" She swallowed nervously, unused to displaying so much of her heart. "I believe the entire world has been conspiring to help me find you again, to put right the grievous wrong I did to us both in Paris." She wanted to reassure him and make him see the truth of her words. "I was wrong to dismiss your heart so entirely, my darling. You are the only one, other than my precious girls, to make me think I was worth anything, or that my presence in the world meant something. You are the most beautiful gift, and I would not toss that away again."

Andrei turned his face away, and she knew he was fighting his emotions. She let him process her words and when he turned towards her, she noted the tears in his eyes. His Adam's apple bobbed as he swallowed. "You sure have a way with words, Miranda." He grinned down at her before turning serious. "You know, the only thing I ever wanted was to make you happy and for you to feel so loved you'd never possibly doubt it."

"Has that changed?" She asked nervously. She had tried to keep things light, to keep Andrei from feeling pressurised.

"No." The whispered admission allowed her to hold on to the flicker of hope she had been searching for. "I want you, Miranda. I want a future with you and those awesome little girls, who I love as if my own. One day I hope to call you my wife. I'll hold you close each night and wake up thankful you're there beside me each morning. I want to watch those little ones grow up, to graduate, marry and eventually have their own babies." Running his hand through her hair, he whispered. "I'm in this for the long haul if you are, Miranda. We can take things as quick or as slow as you want."

She brushed her lips against Andrei's ear causing his breath to hitch. "You grasp how it thrills me to move at a glacial pace."

"I'm sure, given time, I can change your mind about that." Andrei gave her a dazzling smile, and his eyes, in the glow of the open fire, shone with a devilish light.
"I'm sure you can, you can do anything, right?" She slid off his knee and held her hand out, pleased when he caught it and eased himself up from the chair. "Now, I believe it is later, and you have that making up to do."

Standing tall, Andrei pulled her flush against him. "Nothing would give me greater pleasure."

"We shall see about that." She stood on tiptoes and brushed her hand over his shoulders and she leaned closer. "Take me to bed, my darling."

Andrei was nervous in the face of Miranda's desire. He had everything he had dreamed about, all he had ever wanted, splayed sensuously, half-naked under him and yet he couldn't stop himself from holding back.

"Andrei, please." Miranda's plea tore from her throat as she tugged at the stiff button of his denim shorts.

They had both stripped from the waist up on entering Miranda's bedroom before she pulled him down on top of her, grinding herself against him as they kissed passionately.

Letting out a soft exclamation of happiness Miranda loosened the button of his pants and was pulling his zip down.

He couldn't stop the sigh of relief as he found himself less constrained. "Miranda, I..." He took a deep breath. "I want this. God knows I do, so much, but I..."

"But what, my darling?" Miranda's fingernails teased over the bulge in his tight YSL boxers and he grew achingly harder at her light touch.

Groaning he whispered. "I have no condoms. I don't carry them as I don't...sleep around." He hissed as Miranda's movements stalled. "...Oh God, I thought I would have more time, to prepare and ensure we are safe and I was going to buy some..."

His words failed as Miranda pushed him gently to the side and rolling onto her side opened her bedside drawer. She squinted at the box of Trojan Supra Non-Latex condoms and groaned. "Fuck. Out of date."

The unexpected and unusual cussing, coming from Miranda, had him chuckling. He turned on his side and saw Miranda's pursed lips. She was clearly displeased.

"There are other things we can do." He whispered the words nervously, expecting to be rebuffed.

Miranda closed her eyes and exhaled, swallowing her disappointment. She turned to face him. "Andrei, that sounds like an acceptable compromise. And when you are ready to purchase protection, you need to be aware I am sensitive to latex."

He nodded once and opened his arms. She moved into them easily. He brushed his nose against hers in a sweet Eskimo kiss. "Miranda, I must admit that I haven't wanted us to rush this. I wanted us to take our time and experience all the milestones with no discomfort. We have hit first base." He placed a small kiss against her lips, smiling as the memory of their first kiss in that bar entered his mind. "And we've achieved second base once or twice." He remembered the first time he had touched Miranda's perfect breasts. He had woken up pressed against her back, his morning glory digging into her ass and his hand cupping her breast, half asleep his thumb ran unconsciously over her nipple and she had moaned, pushing herself further into his embrace. He bit his lip as his body
reacted to the memory. "Maybe tonight we can work towards third base?" He whispered into her ear.

Miranda nodded and moaned as her lips encased his, her tongue demanding entrance, which he willingly provided.

Their kiss seemed endless. The passion he experienced, as Miranda's tongue danced against his own, was unlike anything he'd encountered before. As air became necessary to them both their movements became lighter and somewhat sweet as they caught their breath.

Breaking away, Miranda ran her fingers through his hair. He trailed his lips to her neck and bit down gently, causing her to moan and angle her head to give him further access. He caught her small sigh as he teased the spot with his tongue.

He welcomed the heat pressing against him as he ground into her and let his warm breath explore, causing goosebumps up her arms. His lips continued making their way up and down her neck while his hands caressed her ass.

Miranda pulled away, and it confused him. "I would rather not have you balk," Miranda muttered, smirking up at him.

Andy looked into her deep blue eyes and grinned at the unusual baseball term. "That's not something you need to worry about." He responded gently, pulling her close and tracing his lips across her collarbone teasingly before turning onto his back, with Miranda on top of him. He leaned up and wrapping his arms around her back, took one of her nipples in his mouth and she arched into his touch.

Miranda embraced him as he continued to tease and she pressed herself into his body, slowly grinding against his groin. A low groan escaped from his throat. Releasing his focus on her breasts, he pulled her lips to his. With his arms still wrapped around her back, the two moved as one as they pressed against each other. He was ridiculously aroused.

A series of small moans, that ignited his desire, matched his efforts. He moved his hands down to Miranda's waist. He unbuttoned and unzipped her jeans and Miranda wriggled as he spun them, hovering over her. "Are you sure?" He whispered.

Miranda lifted her ass in response and pulled her jeans free. "God, yes." She husked.

Matching her movements, he pulled his shorts off as a wail came from below. Miranda groaned in frustration as he jumped up and grabbed at his shorts, muttering about being picked off. As he pulled them up his legs Cassidy barrelled into the room, tears streaming down her face. "Da...Andy, Mom, The monsters."

"Baby, there are no monsters," He stated softly as he turned his face to the sobbing child.

"Yes, there are. Caro heard them too. They're in my closet." Cassidy sobbed in the face of his disbelief.

"Come on, I'll scare them off." He held his hand out to Cassidy and she clutched it tightly.

Looking towards Miranda he noticed she'd pulled the comforter around herself and was smirking up at him. "Da...?" She mouthed, her eyebrow raised. He shrugged, unable to find an answer, as he let the little girl lead him from the room.

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Miranda moved quietly down the stairs and overheard the twin's giggles. Peering into the room she understood the cause for hilarity. The twins huddled on Cassidy's bed as Andrei stalked bare-chested from the closet with an empty shoe box in hand, he peaked under the bed and growled as he flattened himself against the floor.

"Come on, you, out you get! Away you go. You're not welcome here!" He pretended to tug at something under the bed before pulling the box closer and wrestling with his imaginary foe, thumping and bumping against the solid floor. He slid across the room as he fought with the lid. When he stood his arms held the box against his chest. He somehow made the box move, as if there was something in it, causing the twins to squeal and puffed out a deep breath as he adjusted the heavy box in his arms. "Wriggly little monster. Time for you to head off somewhere else."

Andrei stepped past her, winking as he made his way down the stairs.

She detected the front door opening and then slamming shut as he shouted. "...And don't you dare come back or your butt will meet the end of my monster swatter." She caught his quick steps as he rushed back up to them. When he walked into the room, he placed the empty shoe box down and dusted off his hands. He looked at the twins and smiled. "It's gone." The twin's happiness was clear as Cassidy cheered and Caroline clapped. "Now, my little ones, it's definitely time for sleep."

"Are you sure it's really gone?" Caroline whispered.

She stepped closer to her daughters, ready to soothe their fears, but Andrei was quicker. Moving between her two precious daughters they snuggled into his warmth as he whispered. "It's most definitely gone, but it's okay to be scared sometimes. You have to be scared to be brave."

"You're the best monster hunter ever," Cassidy muttered as she yawned sleepily. "Andy?" She whispered. "When will you become our daddy?"

Perching on the side of the bed her daughters would obviously share, Miranda caught his eyes. She witnessed him shake his head slightly. "What does being a daddy mean, Cass?"

"A daddy protects his wife and children and loves them more than the world." Cassidy smiled up at him sleepily. "Like you do with us. And I know you wouldn't tell me you are too busy to take me to the school daddy-daughter dance."

"And you, Caro?" Andrei asked.

"You'd help with homework and come to my art exhibitions and Cassidy's piano recitals." Caroline looked up at him, her hand brushing against his bearded cheek. "You'd help mommy teach us to remember right from wrong and chase monsters away and keep us safe until we are all grown up."

"I love you, my little ones and I'm honoured you want me in your life in such a meaningful way." Andrei smiled softly down at her daughters before placing a kiss on both their foreheads.

"Can we call you daddy?" Cassidy asked.

She watched Andrei lick his lips nervously. "I am blessed you want me as a second parent, but you have a dad, and although I realise he is sometimes a little distant, he would be upset if he thought I was trying to take his place because you call me Dad or Daddy."

"Andrei, my daughters settled on this idea many years ago. Do not dismiss their decision. I have raised them to think for themselves, and their wishes matter." She couldn't help but interrupt. The dismissal of their request stung a little. "They call James dad and introduce him as their father. They have never called him daddy."
Andrei closed his eyes before they blazed open. "Can we compromise?" He asked. "I can still be Andy or..." He trailed off as he tried to come up with a suggestion at seeing their twin pouts. "...or you can come up with something unique to you."

"We'll think about it." Caroline yawned and turned on her side away from him.

She stood and brushed a kiss on Caroline's head before stepping around the side and doing the same to Cassidy. "Sleep now, Bobbsey's, and have the sweetest of dreams." Spinning on her heels, she moved quickly but quietly from the room leaving Andrei behind.

She listened to his soft words to her children. "I promise you my little ones, I am committed to making us a family. And whatever you want to call me, I'll be okay with." Her smile blossomed. It would be amazing to have Andrei as a father figure to her beautiful babies.

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Andy returned to the bedroom fifteen minutes after Miranda left him and the twins. He carried two bottles of water which he placed down on the bedside table. Looking over at the older woman, he saw her closed eyelids twitch and realised she was awake. He let out a dramatic sigh and saw her lips twitch. Pulling his shorts back down his legs he sat on the edge of the bed before swinging his legs around and turning onto his side away from the older woman. He caught her small huff of displeasure and smirked.

Lying in silence he waited, breathing in the scent of the woman next to him and finding comfort in the heat radiating by his side. He understood Miranda's lack of patience would only take her so far. The mattress shifted slightly as she turned to face him and his smile widened. "Playing possum, Miranda?" He asked quietly.

"You are infuriating. I expected you to come in and cuddle against me." Miranda ran her hand over his stomach and pressed closer while her fingers trailed under the waistband of his boxers. It only took him a minute to realise she wore only her panties and his breath caught. "So what name have the children decided upon?"

"I don't know. Cass said they'd tell me tomorrow." He husked. His eyes fell closed as Miranda's warm hand crept lower. He groaned as she tugged at the thatch of hair near his pubic bone. Unable to resist he turned to face the silver-haired beauty and pulled her in for a kiss, manoeuvring her until she was on her back with him fluttering above her. "God, you drive me wild. Now, where were we before we were interrupted?"

He moved down from her lips, trailing kisses down the column of her throat, from her collarbone and to her breasts, kissing her and drawing his hands along the edge of her waist and hips. As he moved further down, from her breast to her navel, his hands fastened onto her panties and pulled them down with him. Miranda's breathing was rough and when he reached her thighs, he looked up. "You are so beautiful, Miranda."

Miranda pulled him back up, using the moment to kick her panties away and pressed demanding lips to his, kissing him with a fervour that had his body tingling and arousal sky-rocketing. A sense of fulfilment enveloped him and he lifted his mouth slightly, tracing Miranda's lips with his tongue before claiming her lips in a passionate kiss. Miranda moaned and pressed herself against him. Breaking the kiss, she took a staggered breath. "Underwear off." She demanded.

He looked down at her, grinning mischievously. "I don't know what you're talking about," He kissed his way back down her neck, holding himself up with one arm as the other massaged her breasts while moving gracefully against her, rubbing her clit through his boxers. "Mm, Andrei..."
Miranda moaned as he moved back down to her breasts and gave them his undivided attention. He let his hand trail down, cupping her intimately before caressing her mound teasingly.

Miranda inhaled sharply. "More." She cried breathlessly as her hands ran through his hair urging him to move further down her body.

Unwilling to give up control, he slowly rubbed his fingers between her folds, connecting with her clit as his tongue teased her nipples. He looked up to see Miranda's eyes had fallen shut. Sweet moans of pleasure escaped from her mouth and he knew he'd never heard nor seen anything as beautiful. He moved his head lower still, swirling his tongue in her belly button and trailing his mouth over Miranda's pelvic bone before breathing warm air between her legs and inhaling the sweet scent of her desire.

Spreading her open with his fingers he caught her gasp as his tongue licked from perineum to clit. He continued to use his fingers, swirling them around her opening and gathering her moisture, while placing light licks over her clit. When Miranda spread her legs a little further apart, he entered her with a single finger, thrusting gently against her inner wall. As she matched his light thrusts he added another finger, searching for her sweet spot.

Miranda's back arched. "Right there!" She cried. His tongue continued to stroke as his fingers moved and Miranda let out a loud moan. "I...I'm going to..." Miranda's words faltered as he licked and thrust until her body stiffened and her wall clenched around his fingers. He continued to stroke until she fell limp.

Pulling him up Miranda ensnared his lips in a kiss, tasting herself on him and moaning. Her hands stroked downwards to his ass, pulling him closer. He noted the obvious wetness against him. It made him ache, and he responded by growing harder.

Miranda trailed her lips to his ear and nipped at his earlobe as her hands reach for the waistband of his boxers. "My turn." She husked. With more strength than he knew she possessed she flipped them so their positions were reversed with Miranda resting deliciously on top of him.

Andrei's startled bark of laughter overjoyed Miranda and she returned his grin with one of her own. Kissing her way down his body, she dragged her breasts along with her, and pulled down his boxers, slipping them off his feet and tossing them over the side of the bed.

Moving to his side she devoted her attention to Andrei's body. Slow, patient and teasing, her fingers traced his body, delighting in every contour, curve and crevice. She stroked his shoulders, arms, chest, stomach and thighs. When she reached his crotch, she trailed her fingertips under his balls, lightly grazing his scrotum. She felt his legs tense as she kept up with the teasing, her finger tracing the length of his penis, from balls to tip. Andrei held breath.

Moving between his legs, her eyes focused on his rock-hard cock and she listened to the ragged breaths escaping from his mouth. She licked her lips at the sight of Andrei's arousal, unable to believe she had such an impact on him, but she had to admit she was a little wary. It wasn't grotesquely huge by any means, but it was bigger than any she'd experienced before, probably around six and a half inches and thick. Moving up, she let her nipples caress him lightly before moving, so her lips were a mere centimetre away from his head.

Taking a gentle hold, she planted several kisses on the tip, before swirling her tongue over it and humming. Moving her hand down his shaft she watched intently as his eyes fell closed. She couldn't stop her feral smile as she stroked and realised the low rumbling growls coming from the
beautiful man was thanks to her. She licked her way up his shaft, covering every inch of Andrei's hardness. Her hand following her mouth. Her other hand pushed her hair forelock out of her face before caressing his balls gently with the same hand.

Andrei's hands stroked through her hair as she kissed and licked, he thrust his hips, seemingly content with her ministrations. Changing things up, she licked his balls. She delighted in his loud groan and spent time nuzzling and suckling them before returning to the shaft, moving her tongue up and down. Her lips nibbled the tip before of her tongue poked into the slit at the end of his cock. Andrei's hips moved frantically as he twitched.

She took as much of his length into her mouth as she was able, offering a light yet deliberate up-and-down suction, lingering at the ridgeline around the head of his cock. Andrei groaned as her hand continued to caress his balls while her mouth moved up and down, flicking the tip with her tongue as she passed it. She could feel it twitching as she worked her magic, wanting to give him an experience he would never forget. There would be no chance of anyone alleging Miranda Priestly gave a mediocre blowjob.

Quickening her pace, her hand fell away from his balls. She licked the pre-cum from the tip of his head, and it left her wanting more. She sensed he was close as Andrei's grip on her hair tightened imperceptibly while he moved against her. She slowed down her movements going up before plunging back down on him. She squeezed his balls again gently, and he hissed.

She caught his whispered words. "Oh God, I'm gonna cum." She moved her mouth up his cock quickly one last time before his breathing stalled and his hot cum spurted into her mouth. "Miraaaandaaa." The low growl of her name from Andrei left her happier than she'd been in a long time, and as she swallowed the last of his sweet cum she hummed and released his cock as it softened and lay on his belly. She kissed her way back up his body and leaned her head against his chest, listening to his thundering heartbeat. Andrei wrapped his arms around her, holding her tight against him as they took their time to get themselves together.

"Mm," Andrei hummed, kissing the crown of her head as she settled against his chest. "I love you." She last thing she remembered was his sigh of contentment as her eyes fell closed and she slept peacefully in his arms.

**xxxxx**

Andy was disappointed to find the bed next to him empty when he woke up and going off the coolness of the sheets Miranda had been absent from his side for some time. Looking across at the digital display of the clock on Miranda's bedside table it stunned him to realise it was close to 9 am. He never slept this late.

Sliding from under the warmth of Miranda's comforter, he went in search for his pants. Unable to locate any of his clothes from the evening before he panicked until he saw a neat pile of men's clothing on the chair in front of Miranda's vanity. Stalking naked to the pile he saw the note attached to the shirt. He scanned the note quickly.

*My darling,*

*We are downstairs waiting for you.*

*Please use the facilities, you will find all you need in the bathroom.*
Licking his lips, he blushed. He still tasted Miranda, and it fired his desire. Closing his eyes, he groaned. He needed a cold shower. Catching the shuffling coming from the top of the stairs he listened to Cassidy and Caroline's muttering. Grabbing the clothes quickly he slammed into the bathroom and snapped the lock into place. The last thing he wanted was them to find him sauntering around in his birthday suit.

Turning the shower on, he frowned. He hated the thought of washing Miranda's scent from his skin, scared it would be the only time he would get to touch and taste her. Having sampled her once he knew he wanted her again. He wanted her to be his, always.

"Andrei?" A light tap on the bathroom door caught his attention. "I have some of your things." He pulled a towel free and wrapped it around his slim hips before unlocking the door and pulling it open slightly peered around at her. Miranda had dressed casually in black skinny jeans, a red blouse and ballet flats, with one hand on her hip and a pair of blue boxers dangling from her finger, her eyes held amusement as she smirked up at him. "I have been up for hours. I went to the store, pharmacy and Starbucks and each time I have returned you slumbered on, dead to the world." She stepped forward causing him to step backwards. Miranda offered him a heated look, licking her lips. "I have had to shoo the twins away many times. They are impatient to see you as was I."

He grinned sheepishly. "You should have woken me."

Miranda waved the idea away. "No, my darling, you looked extraordinarily peaceful, and I did not wish to disturb you." She continued to move in his direction. "However, since we are now both awake..." Her eyes blazed across his chest up to his lips and as she moved into his personal space. "...Will you kiss me good morning?" Grinning, he pulled her close and bent to catch her lips in a soft kiss. "Mm." She murmured. "You still taste like me."

"Sorry." He flushed at the words and he sprang to attention. Pulling back slightly he spoke. "I, um, should shower and..." Miranda frowned. "... Did you shower yet?" She shook her head. "Well, you could go first, I'm happy to wait."

"Join me." Miranda husked.

"I don't know if that's a good idea, sweetheart. I'm struggling to keep my hands off you now." He looked down at her and knew she could sense the truth behind his words.

"Were you not paying attention when I mentioned how I spent my morning?" Miranda teased.

Andy tried to focus on what she had told him. "Um, Starbucks, store and...Oh!" He exclaimed as comprehension dawned.

Miranda smirked and pulled a box of SKYN Elites from her back pocket. "It may seem a little presumptuous, but I..." She trailed off. "...I want you," Miranda whispered.

"God, Miranda. You make it impossible for me to remain chivalrous." He stated softly, taking the box from her hands. "If water gets in, it may slip off and I'll be going in bare."

Miranda groaned. "I cannot say it is something I am familiar with, but it seemed like a good plan." Miranda closed her eyes. "Could we try anyway, we could go gently?"

"At a glacial pace?" He smirked before turning serious. "However unlikely, if this fails there could be an unplanned pregnancy. I do not want our first time to be one you come to regret, sweetheart."
"I would never regret you." The words Miranda spoke were forceful, showing their truth.

"I still have to say no, but there are other ways I can make our first shower memorable." He tossed the box on the vanity and pulled her close. Unbuttoning her blouse, he took in the satin deep burgundy La Perla bra and his breath caught. "God, you are stunning." He husked.

Miranda pulled his towel away and tossed it to the side before unbuttoning her jeans and kicking off her shoes. She let her jeans fall around her ankles. Stepping out of them it amazed him how quickly she removed her matching underwear.

Stood in front of her naked, he groaned as her hand cupped him gently. He felt himself growing harder and whimpered at the aching need. He wanted to take her, to fill her and to cum inside her. He wanted it all, but only ever with her. Picking her up easily, it delighted him when her legs wrapped around his hips, his cock resting between them, and walked them into the shower and underneath the warm spray.

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Miranda was euphoric, although she had not got her way with Andrei in the shower the multiple orgasms he had coaxed out of her with his lips, fingers and tongue had done the trick. She couldn't remember ever having felt as satisfied, both emotionally and sexually. She continued to dry her hair while Andrei slipped from the room and made his way to the kitchen.

As she redressed, she could hear his deep rumble of laughter reverberating through the house along with the faint thrum of bass from the music playing. Andrei filled her house with noise and happiness and she was thankful. He'd opened his heart and given her another chance. It was something she realised he had not stepped into lightly, having been hurt by her in the past, and his capacity to forgive left her speechless. Andrei was brave and his heart was pure. She told herself she would not dismiss him again.

Moving quietly down the stairs she listened to Lady Gaga's A Million Reasons.

"I've got a hundred million reasons to walk away, but baby I just need one good one to stay."

The lyrics hit her hard. She had provided Andrei with enough reasons to leave the first time, what if it happened again? If push came to shove could she persuade him to stay?

Shaking her insecurity away, she stepped into the kitchen to find her Bobbsey's had staked their claim on the man. He had one twin on either side of him as he spoke lightly to them about the work he had to finish before the house was ready. Standing in the doorway, watching them she discovered his new plan of action. He'd complete the walls before fixing the floor of the atrium and then he would finish the wainscoting and hand moulding. The room would be ready in time for her benefit even if he had to work through the nights.

"But Dandy, won't that make you tired?" Cassidy asked. "If you're tired, you'll get growly with everyone."

She couldn't help the smirk at his new nickname. Andrei looked tickled the words.

"No, my beautiful little one. I promise I won't get growly." She observed as he bent and kissed Cassidy's head.

"You better not drive if you are tired," Caroline told him, the bossiness in her voice had him chuckling softly. "We can come here to see you instead of you coming all the way to the city."
"And what if I have things to do in the city, little one?" Andrei asked.

Caroline pursed her lips. "Then have someone else drive you around. We can lend you our driver, Roy. You remember him?"

"Roy drives you and your mom, Caro." His smile was wide. "But I promise not to drive when tired. I can get my cousin Michelle to bring me into Manhattan, she'll love being able to spend more time with her wife."

"And you'll come to see us, Dandy?" Cassidy asked.

"Of course, we can take a walk and get that ice-cream." Andrei agreed readily making her heart soar.

Stepping into the room she made her presence known. "If you have done making plans for visits, I believe Andrei may be hungry." moving gracefully to the stove she fired the gas before grabbing a frying pan and adding a splash of oil. She took bacon from the fridge and added it to the sizzling pan. "Eggs?" She queried. Seeing the shake of his head she watched him stand and put bread in the toaster.

"Do you want help?" Andrei whispered from behind her. She shook her head and continued to watch the bacon.

"Mom, can we go in the pool?" Caroline asked.

"Yes, Bobbsey's. But ensure you put sunscreen on." She told them. Hearing their joint groans her head popped up, and she arched an eyebrow at them.

"Okay, mom." Cassidy hated that look and was always quick to ensure they remained in her good graces. She tugged Caroline from the room and she could hear them clattering up the stairs.

With her lips twitching, she fought her rising laughter, knowing it may ring a little hysterical. Taking a stuttering breath, she refocussed on the task at hand, but Andrei's proximity was making it difficult. When he stepped into her personal space, pressing deliciously against her and leaning around her to switch off the gas, she frowned. "Andrei, you need to eat." She stated as his arms wrapped around her waist. "Oh, God." She husked. Spinning in the circle of his arms she looked up into his beautifully expressive eyes and her own stung with tears at the affection held in them.

Andrei tilted her face up, searching her eyes. "Hey, what is it, sweetheart?"

"You were making plans with the twins, but I worry being with me will be too hard and we'll lose you again, but by then we will have grown even more attached to you." She knew she had to be honest. He had been so open with her from that first day on the beach and afterwards. "I think of what James did, ruining all your hard work, and wonder about the reaction of others when this becomes public knowledge. Your life will not be the same. The press will hound you, they will say what James did, that you are after all you can get and...and...you will tire of it and you will leave."

Andrei pulled her into his chest. Her head rested against his heart and she gripped his shirt as his warm hand ran soothing circles up her back. "I will not lie and tell you that all this will be easy. I'm a fairly simple person, Miranda, and I've never coveted a better position in life. We are unequal in so many ways, I'm a no better than a professional tradesman and you...well, you are at the pinnacle of your career in publishing. Your life will not be the same. The press will hound you, they will say what James did, that you are after all you can get and...and...you will tire of it and you will leave."

"It means nothing." She husked. "That stuff has not made me any happier."
She could hear the smile in his voice. "I know." He stated. "But look at what I have. I live in an apartment above my office, a small converted warehouse I purchased for a song because it was almost derelict and I spent three months when I came to New York refitting it and trying to make it a home and build a business for myself. I would have done well for myself in L.A. I worked out of the house my grandpa left me and my fame in the industry was rising, but I was not content and there aren't many in my industry that can do what I do." Andrei stopped speaking, and she looked up into his eyes.

"I once remember saying something similar to you." She whispered.

"I took what you taught me in my time at Runway, to heart. I wanted to excel in whatever career I chose, to prove to myself and to those who doubted I was talented enough, that I wouldn't be the disappointment they expected me to be." Andrei stated. "My own family told me I would fail at this, that my dreams meant nothing. But what you taught me that to dream is to feed hope." he caught her eye. "I meant it when I told you I love you. I want this...you...more than I ever wanted anything." He brushed a gentle kiss on her lips as the twins clattered back into the kitchen shouting eww as they shot out onto the terrace and launched themselves into the pool. "Now, I should eat. I thought later we could head out somewhere."

"Acceptable." She pulled away hesitantly and caught his eyes. "While you eat, I would like to know more about your time in California."

"I'll tell you whatever you want to know." He gave her a reassuring smile before moving to the coffee machine and arranging a drink for them both.

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Chapter 7

Chapter Notes

Yay, another fic idea from the lovely celesse201, who for whatever reason, holds the belief I can bring her ideas to life. This is my first major AU. Not giving too much away. Miranda is Miranda but I am making her and the twins slightly younger for the sake of the fic. Andy is not the Andy you expect (Hence the AU) I do not own the main characters related to The Devil Wears Prada. They are owned by the original author and 20th Century Fox. Some characters will be my own

**WARNING: NSFW.** You know Andy's a dude in this one and frisky times ensue. Don't like, please don't read.

Andy disappeared after his breakfast only to return fifteen minutes later wearing board shorts and a muscle shirt with sneakers and carrying a picnic basket, blanket and his guitar. Even though he loved the idea of Miranda dressing him, he wished to be comfortable for what he had planned.

He grinned at Miranda and she couldn't help but return the smile. "I'm going to teach the three of you to surf." He told her. "And then, if they want, I am going to teach my three favourite women how to strum."

"Surf?" Miranda looked up fearful. "I'm not so sure."

"Do you trust me?" Andy asked.

"Of course, it's just..." Miranda trailed off. "...well, I'm scared of the waves." She admitted.

"I will keep all of you safe. We'll be riding the waves in tandem if necessary." Andy promised. "I thought we could head out to Ditch Plains or Main Beach."

"Okay." Miranda was reassured by his words.

They headed out, the twins almost bouncing in their excitement as he spoke about mastering the ability to catch a wave and riding it across the water. He described it as a life-changing experience.

Their arrival the beach had them all settling on towels and sipping water and soda. Andy told them about learning to surf in the summers of his teenage years and picking it back up when he returned to L.A.

"I hadn't surfed for years, and there I was in L.A having left my New York life behind and asking myself, 'What now?' I was considering applying to various business, looking to start my career. But what put me off was the fact I wouldn't have had the chance to get my hands dirty on a site and the only variation to my days would be the tie I wore, it sounded like absolute hell." He grinned at the twins as they giggled. "My Grandpa was telling me, he was happy to help me strike out on my own, to build my own business. One day, I headed off to the beach, watched some young guys surfing and felt a pang of longing to be in the water with them. That was the day I met Seb, who had a spare longboard and invited me to join them. I left the beach that day ready to tackle the world head on, with a bunch of new people that I was interested in becoming better acquainted
with. Seb's now my head foreman, he's a fully qualified carpenter and joiner, he does my job when I can't be on-site."

Main Beach had very little surf but it was ideal for what he wanted. He knew the twins had a boogie board each, having purchased them when he worked for Miranda and the small boards allowed the twins to ride the white-water up the beach. These waves would push them into shore if they needed and had a leash for the wrist so they didn't lose it. But it was his 9-inch longboard that held the most fascination for them.

They spent hours on the water as he displayed his infinite patience for their questions and even their small temper tantrums. He took Caroline out first sitting her down on the front of the board, and just paddling around in calm water, he then did the same with Cassidy and Miranda.

Both girls wanted to try paddling for themselves but despite his advice, they positioned themselves too far back on the board so they didn't nose dive but they were unable to catch a wave. The result was an almost tantrum and telling Andy surfing was stupid.

Luckily the surf was small enough that it broke close to where he could stand, and spend the time pushing them towards the waves. Holding onto the tail of the board as the waves came, he guided them into the wave, not letting go until he'd set them on a line and they're on their way and rode the waves knelt upright on his board.

The little girl's joyful squeals were music to both his and Miranda's ears and many people came up and spoke to the editor about how good he was with his children. Not once did she correct their assumption.

Miranda wondered how it had come to this. She was squirming around on Andrei's lap as they sat on the sofa on the terrace, the ache between her legs growing stronger as she ground harder against his hard denim covered cock.

They had enjoyed a wonderful afternoon on the beach before Caroline and Cassidy had run into friends and asked her if they could attend a sleepover.

Once Miranda had provided agreement the twins had happily grabbed their things and gone off with friends and their parents. They had returned to the house where they had showered and Andrei prepared a light dinner for them and opened a bottle of red and let it breathe while their dinner cooked.

Their conversation flowed as they ate and drank wine, as it always did, but Miranda could tell Andrei was a bit nervous about something. He finally admitted he couldn't understand why she found him attractive. He believed, from past experiences, his sensitivity was a turn off for most women. Once she knew what it was bothering him, she spent time reassuring him, explaining she wasn't playing games with him and that she loved his gentle side as it counteracted her own hardness. To prove a point, she had straddled his lap and with teasing kissing, showed her desire. The need for more drove her closer as his lips trailed along her jawline and down her neck. Slowly inching her hand down his taut, washboard abs, she caught his low moan.

Andrei's hands were sat beneath her t-shirt, resting warmly on her hips. They made their way up and around to cup her breasts.

She felt her nipples stiffen at the light touch and groaned. "Please." She whimpered. The front
clasp of her bra was flicked open without hesitation and his hands squeezed. His slightly calloused hands felt amazing on her sensitive skin. "More." She pleaded.

He broke away slightly and the t-shirt she wore was lifted carefully over her head. She felt the soft cotton against the skin of her back where he held it in his hands between them. She wondered idly if he liked her breasts.

She glanced up and saw the pleasure in his eyes as his eyes focussed on her bare chest. Lowering his head, he grinned and captured a nipple between his full lips, teasing his tongue over it, lapping and sucking slowly as he hummed.

The vibration of his low hum tickled her skin and shivers coursed through her as she reacted to his pleasure.

He nipped the tip and the sharp edge of his teeth sent another jolt of desire soaring through her, which settled deep within. He switched his focus to her other breast, paying just as attention to it as he had the first.

She was no longer self-conscious with Andrei. He made her feel loved and desired. She let him push her onto her back and settle between her legs, somehow his shirt had become unfastened and she couldn't stop her hands from mapping the tanned, well-defined muscles of his shoulders and chest. Her hand settled on his sternum and she felt his heart racing furiously beneath her palm.

She could feel his hard cock pressed against her, and her legs spread wider as he moved, his hips rocking and letting her feel him against her most intimate parts.

She wanted more, all that he could give her. The continued pressure and friction were making her wetter, no doubt destroying the silk panties she wore. She wanted to come undone with him inside her. She wanted to beg him to let her come.

She arched into him, moving her hips so he touched her right where she need it. "I need you, Andrei." She moaned breathlessly. "Please, darling I need to come," She begged pulling at his back in her frantic need.

Andrei stopped, pulling back and fiddling with his jeans. Miranda whimpered at the loss. "Miranda, look at me." He demanded. "I'm going to make you feel damn good." He promised. "Just be patient."

His hands moved, and she saw the foil wrap between his fingers. He placed the condom down beside them before moving to the button of her pants. Miranda nodded quickly when he stalled and glanced at her, searching for her consent. His hands trembled as he slid the button free and pulled her zipper down.

Butterflies erupted in Miranda's stomach as his hands and lips blazed over her skin. It felt like she had been waiting an eternity for his touch.

Andrei's lips found hers again as he slid his hand between the folds of her pants and into her panties, his fingers parting her outer lips and trailing lightly over her clit. Her hips bucked at the light touch. He chuckled low in his throat as she kissed him harder.

Miranda was so ready for this, for him. Lowering her hand between them, she rubbed her hand over his cock and causing him to groan. She unloosened the button and tugged at the zip, amazed when he sprang free. She was stunned to realise he wasn't wearing underwear.

Andrei rubbed slowly against her and sucked on the side of her throat lightly, ensuring he didn't
mark her.

After opening his jeans, Miranda's hand was in his pants. As her palm gripped him, she saw him swallow hard as his eyes closed and he moaned in her ear. The combination of all these things caused her to tumble into her climax. Her body arched toward him, her hand pumping his cock faster as her body shattered.

Andrei's fingers don't stop when her orgasm ended and it felt like she was losing her mind. It was all too much. Trying to pull away, he wouldn't let her and when a second orgasm tore through her and she was shuddering against him, it was his name that rolled from her mouth. She wondered if it would always be like this.

As Andrei's lips pressed into Miranda's, she could feel his desperation. She parted her lips slowly and let his tongue enter her mouth to dance around her own.

Her hands moved down his body to the small of his back, gently drawing him closer to her. Her hands left the small of his back and continued down to his pert ass. Grasping the firm orbs and pulling them up and into her groin.

Andrei's hips buck and her entire body jumped a little but she pressed herself firmly into his solid form.

At last, their lips broke apart. Looking up into Andrei's eyes she saw a deep longing there. She hugged herself to him and whispered. "Do you wish to take this up to my bed?"

"I need you, here and now." Andrei groaned as she took his balls in her palm and squeezed gently.

xxxxxxx

After their dinner, they had sat down on the terrace to watch the sunset in this distance. Miranda had clearly sensed his frustration. After coaxing an explication from him she'd been sweet, offering reassurances about their future.

She now understood, from their conversation, he wasn't one to put fast moves on a woman just to get her into bed. He wanted to know the women he slept with, to like them, and hopefully, should he be lucky enough, to love them. He'd admitted that since meeting her, he had been unsuccessful in finding someone he cared for enough. Until her, he had held off being intimate with another woman.

This wasn't something he did on purpose, he didn't string women along. He actually liked getting to know someone and feeling some sort of a connection with them before becoming physically involved. It was, in a way, old fashioned, but Miranda seemed to adore it. He could see she loved the idea it was love that he was seeking, and more so, that it was love that he found with her.

Finally, Miranda had gotten up, telling him she needed a drink and he watched as she stepped into the kitchen with their glasses. Settling back, with his eyes closed, he enjoyed the breeze from the ocean. It was so relaxing being here with Miranda, away from the rest of the world.

Andy didn't hear her come back onto the terrace. He had no idea how long she stood there watching him, unaware of her presence until she literally jumped onto his lap, straddling him and stroking her hands along his jaw.

He opened his eye and, looked down into her beautiful face and smiled happily.

She smiled too. "Are you going to kiss me or what, Andrei?" She asked.
He swallowed hard, "If you insist." He whispered cheekily. Andy moved to kiss her and their lips touched teasingly. He stopped and pulled back, watching as Miranda pursed her lips, her displeasure clear. Before she could say anything, he smiled mischievously and raised his hands to cup her full, firm breasts.

At that moment he felt a connection to the woman that seemed unbreakable. It was far more powerful than anything he'd felt with anyone before. He didn't want to just have sex with her, he wanted more. He wanted to create a memory that they'd be able to share forever. He wanted this woman as his wife.

He ran his hand over her still clothed body, lightly touching and caressing her, initially bypassing her most intimate areas. From the way Miranda's body undulated beneath him, he understood that she had no objections to his touch. His hands stopped at the hem of her shirt and pulling it free, he held it in his hands against the skin of her back before tossing it away.

He was stunned by her beauty under the pale full moon. He snared a perfect breast in his mouth, lavishing it with attention before switching to the other. Losing a sense of all time, he continued to lavish the woman he loved with gentle touches that had her calling his name and gripping his hard dick in her small, warm hand.

He needed her so much when she squeezed his balls he nearly came then and there. Moving down her body, he slid off of her and sat slightly below her waist and pulled her shorts and panties down her shapely legs in one fluid movement. She showed her desire to be completely naked by lifting her ass up, to assist in the removal of her clothes.

Once the woman was naked, he paused briefly to take in the image of her perfect body as she lay on the couch, bathed in the moonlight.

Slipping out of his shorts, he threw his shirt to the side and let her look at him. He saw the pleasure in her eyes as she raised her hands and continued to stroke down his body.

Miranda's body was relaxed after her two orgasms, but also expectant. He breasts were rising and falling as her breathing quickened, her legs slightly apart. He pushed her arms over her head. "Keep them right there." He told her gently.

Miranda could do nothing but nod her agreement as her eyes darkened. There was a hunger in her eyes he'd never seen before.

Kneeling at her feet, he reached for her knees, and slowly spread her legs further. He kept eye contact with her as I moved closer and lowered his mouth to her engorged clit. Miranda began to softly moan as his tongue explored every soft fold and he savoured the sweet essence flowing from within her body, lapping tenderly as he didn't want her to have another orgasm just yet.

Sensing how close she was, he slid up her body, her legs gently hugging his torso, he rose up slightly to gaze down upon her once again. Miranda's eyes were closed, her head, arched, her breathing shallow. He ground down lightly, careful not to slide inside the woman unprotected.

Miranda's moans stalled and she sighed in satisfaction. Her eyes opened and she gazed into his.

Reaching back, Andy grabbed his cock and rubbed it against her clitoris causing her entire body to quiver. He controlled the movement as Miranda's breath caught in her throat. Her breathing accelerated and he could tell by the way she was tensing up that an orgasm was imminent.

He could feel his own orgasm building. Releasing his cock, he grabbed the condom and tore it
from the foil efficiently he rolled it down his length and repositioned himself so he was positioned at the entrance to her pussy. He cradled her head in his hand as his other guided him closer and pushed himself into her body.

Miranda's legs locked around his back and as he began to pump inside of her his orgasm crashed over him quickly as the walls of her pussy contracted around him.

As their orgasms ripped through them simultaneously Andy's lips met Miranda's, his tongue teasing hers gently as he continued to move inside her until all he could do was groan as he continued to come.

When they recovered, Andy flipped them easily so Miranda was hovering over him and breaking the kiss grinned smugly up at her.

He watched Miranda shake her head and the movement had him gasping, twitching inside her. She looked down, her eyes dark and filled with a mix of love and lust. He knew she needed more and if he was honest, so did he. He needed her like he needed air. "I think we should take this to your bed now." He whispered.

Pulling himself from Miranda, he caught her small whine at the loss. Turning away from her, he removed the condom and tied the end. He grabbed the clothes lay scattered around.

Turning back around to gaze at Miranda he caught her appraising gaze and dropped the clothes when she crooked her finger at him. Oh yes, he wanted this woman and he would take all she was willing to give.

Their lovemaking had been voracious and Miranda was stunned by the force of her need for the man. She was insatiable when it came to him.

She had always known she desired Andrei, but the aching need to be his in all ways had her acting with a wantonness that would usually leave her blushing. Instead, she acted on her feelings, even waking him in the night as her need for him overwhelmed her. She let her desire for him have free reign as she teased him until he was rock hard and ready for her and finally sat astride him, moving sensuously down his length until he exploded. She followed him over the edge immediately.

She had never wanted someone as much as she did her Andrei and he was hers in all ways, she made sure of it.

Unable to sleep any longer, she took pleasure in watching Andrei as he did so. He looked so peaceful in the dim light of the new dawn that was rising, casting a warm glow upon them from the open windows. He was beautiful. She loved how relaxed he was in sleep. She placed her hand on his bare chest, over his magnificent heart, and closed her eyes as it beat steadily beneath her palm.

She wanted to talk from her heart but knew she would struggle to do so while he was awake. It was hard, even after all they had been through, to show Andrei her vulnerable side. She knew he would not use it against her as the others had, but still...

Unable to resist, she spoke quietly. "That day I saw you walking towards Ana and I, at Le Bernardin, the rest of the world seemed to vanish. I often wonder what I did to deserve the moments we share...to deserve you, after everything that lay between us. I need to know what I can do to be better for you." Miranda's caught Andrei's hum of contentment and realised her hand had moved from his chest and was stroking his bearded jaw. "I'll love you more than I'll ever find the
words to say, Andrei."

"Mm, gonna love you forever. Wanna marry you." Andrei told her, still asleep. She was delighted by the words outlining a future she also hoped for.

She had realised, after nights spent together in the city, Andrei often spoke in his sleep, speaking of his deepest wishes. At first, she had answered his queries and, offered up her own knowledge, but he seemed to have no recollections when he woke up. Now, she simply listened and tucked the titbits of information away. She would give him his heart's desire.

She turned away and sat up. Taking a notepad and fine tipped pen from her bedside table she slid her glasses on her nose and started to write down the things she still needed to have Emily arrange for her benefit and a range of other things needed for Runway to run smoothly the following week.

The catering for her benefit was finally organised and Glorious Foods would be providing a range of hors d'oeuvre's, including her favourite tortes filled with warm rhubarb compote, which would be prepared fresh on the night.

She had yet to find the entertainment for the evening. They had hired a live band that could play a range of music from modern hits to classic Motown but the vocalist had pulled out the week prior as she had sustained damage to her vocal cords and could no longer perform. She had, however, provided Miranda with a list of alternatives the band would be happy to work with. Now, all that was required was to begin auditions and hope she could find someone suitable at such short notice.

Feeling Andrei stir beside her, she smiled softly and continued to write her thoughts down. His warm body sought hers out under the comforter and he snuggled in close humming as his hand landed on her thigh.

Her desire rose and she squirmed as his fingers trailed over her skin to land between her thighs seeking her warmth. He hummed again and began to stroke her, his fingers moving painfully slowly through the desire freely flowing from her partially parted thighs.

She bit back a moan as Andrei's other hand pushed the notepad and pen from her lap before pulling her down beside him and throwing his leg over hers as his fingers moved with more determination between her thighs.

"You are so wet, my beautiful one," Andrei whispered hoarsely in her ear. "So very responsive to me." His tongue flicked out over her ear and she shivered. "I want you."

Miranda could feel Andrei growing harder and knew before he would be inside her, he would insist on using a condom. She wished he didn't feel the need to, she'd never been much of a fan of them, firstly due to her sensitivity to latex, and then because she often found she ached more afterwards, she felt dry and raw, even when she knew she wasn't. The after effects were not pleasurable.

"Stop." The words escaped before she knew they were forming.

Andrei halted his movements and took his fingers away. "What is it, my love?" He asked softly.

"I don't...the condoms are..." Miranda could feel herself blushing. How on Earth was she meant to explain it felt like his condom covered penis was wrapped in plastic wrap? Or that the thirty seconds or so they had to stop what they were doing to put the condom on had the moment losing some of its urgency, its intensity, making the moment seem less intimate? It was ridiculous really.

As if reading her very thoughts, Miranda was stunned when Andrei turned her onto her front and straddled the backs of her knees. He slid his hands up the back of her thighs before moving to her
ass and lightly massaging.

Miranda loved the gentle touch, and although she was dripping wet, she was happy for him to continue massaging her for as long as he wished.

She was surprised when Andrei's teeth nipped at her earlobe and his voice filtered through her mind. "Your ass is simply begging to be fucked, Miranda" He whispered as he continued moving up to her back, unloosening each tense knot as she hissed at the pleasure-pain his firm touch created. "I can smell how much you want me. Your clit is dying for my touch too, isn't it?"

Miranda whimpered her agreement and he moved down, trailing his lips against her spine until he reached her ass. Andrei kissed her ass cheeks and she bucked as he stuck his tongue out and ran it slowly down from the top of her crack while his hands massaged her ass cheeks.

It felt so naughty, never before had she allowed anyone to focus their attention on her backside, she tensed in anticipation. When Andrei finally made his way to her most intimate entrance, it tightened around the tip of his tongue as he teased it, almost begging it to enter her. She felt the flick of his tongue and bucked.

Andrei continued to massage her ass cheeks apart, his tongue gently breaching the tight hole as he spread her further with his hands.

She could feel her orgasm about to hit and as if sensing it, Andrei slipped his other hand between the mattress and her body, pressing against her clit firmly. She cried out her orgasm crashed through her body.

xxxxxxxxxx

Andy lifted Miranda's ass so she was on all fours while she continued to moan as she rode out the waves from her previous orgasm. He moved towards her pussy, slipping under her so he could taste her.

Miranda tensed up over him as his tongue separated her pussy lips. They opened up under the gentle use of his tongue and he felt her clit standing proud. Flicking it with his tongue quickly, she ground into his mouth as waves of intense pleasure flowed through her.

Andy pulled Miranda down into sitting position over his head as his mouth continued to tease her clit. He looked up to see Miranda's eyes on his face as he ate her out, her lip held between her teeth doing little to hold back her whimpers.

His tongue worked to bring her over the edge for the second time and as her orgasm hit, he swallowed the exquisite nectar filling his mouth.

Pulling Miranda down beside him again, he moved over the woman and kissed her passionately, moaning as the head of his cock slipped between her wet folds. It felt amazing. He wanted her so much. To give her what she needed. Looking down into Miranda's eyes he saw the acceptance there but he wanted verbal consent.

"Miranda, are you saying you want me to forgo protection?"

Miranda wrapped her legs around him tightly, pulling him closer, her eyes falling closed. "Inside, now."

Andrei lowered his lips to Miranda's and while his tongue explored her mouth, he moved his cock against her entrance. He slipped the head inside effortlessly, moving deeper and deeper with every
small thrust. He couldn't help the small whimper at being fully sheathed inside the woman.

Looking down, he could see Miranda's pleasure in the intimacy, how she adored being filled by him as he slowly started pumping as deep as he could before withdrawing until only the tip of his head was still inside her.

He increased the pace as he bent his head to suckle at her breasts. He was overjoyed when one of Miranda's hands entangled in his hair while the other moved down between them to play with her clit.

Unable to resist, he lifted Miranda's legs over his shoulders so she could feel every inch of him.

Miranda's orgasm was quick and intense. She came all over his cock, squeezing it as her walls contracted around his length. He could sense how sensitive she was but was unable to stop. He stalled as his fingers played with her ass, and she whimpered as she spasmed around him. A single digit teased her hole and she pushed down onto it, taking it inside her as his cock throbbed inside her pussy.

Crying out, Miranda stated to move, her eyes reflecting her amazement at the feeling of having both holes filled and pushing herself, and him towards yet another orgasm.

Andy could feel himself getting close and his cock was growing firmer with each shallow stroke. He groaned as he moved, fucking Miranda harder and faster.

"Oh God, I'm coming!" Miranda wailed.

Calling out to each other as they climaxed, his throbbing cock unloaded his semen deep inside Miranda as she orgasmed. They collapsed with his cock still buried inside her as they lay, holding each other close, breathing deeply.

After a few minutes, Andy looked down and grinned at the woman in his arms. "Good morning, beautiful."

Miranda smiled widely and leaning up, kissed him thoroughly. "Good morning, my darling. And what a glorious morning it is." She whispered against his lips.

Miranda and Andrei showered and had just eaten breakfast when her cell rang, she frowned and answered quickly, stepping out onto the terrace to deal with the call. She watched as Andrei loaded the dishwasher and made his way to the Atrium. Finally ending the call from Nigel, she followed him to the atrium.

Looking around, she was surprised to see that Andrei was ready to work. He had pulled the lids of the paint he had mixed, covered the floor beside the wall and music was playing softly from his little speakers. He was whistling as he used a long-handled roller to paint the walls in the soft eggshell blue.

The colour was calming but would lift the light oak of the wainscoted walls and floors. It would offer a soft and fresh feel to the room, lightening it further and making it look much larger.

Picking up another roller, she stood a small distance away from Andrei and started to roll paint smoothly onto the walls. More than anything, she wanted to ease the pressure of having to redo the floor, as well as completing the little finishing touches, he was well known for.
She understood the next few weeks would be difficult for them both. Andrei and his team were due to start work at Men's Runway the following week, and this could potentially set them back, as well as leave them out of pocket.

She cursed James. It had been a long time since they had divorced, and she had married Stephen. But it was Andrei he saw as the biggest threat. Miranda glanced at the man whistling and humming along to The Beach Boys as it played in the background. She could, upon reflection, see why James was disturbed by their relationship.

For the first time, she wanted to give her all to someone knowing it would be worth it. Andrei was the kind of person who would always meet her halfway, no doubt going out of his way to make her smile and offering her a helping hand, even when she struggled to ask for help. She trusted him enough to let him see she was not infallible.

She loved having him in her life. As much as she loved her little girl's and her work, her life had been lacking something vital. It has been missing him. Miranda felt she had been truly blessed by his presence and she didn't want anything to change.

After James, she believed she couldn't depend on anyone but the days and nights without Andrei were long and vastly intolerable. She didn't want to sleep alone in her large bed anymore. As much as she always enjoyed having the bed to herself before, there was something infinitely soothing about Andrei's presence by her side, his snuffling little breaths easing her into a deep, restful slumber. She'd was even happy sharing Andrei's bed but found although her dream had always been to have a king-sized bed, there was often far too much space between them.

Thanks to Andrei, she was making more time for her family. She had always wanted to travel more, but Runway had kept her immensely busy, or so she claimed. She realised she had thrown herself even further into her work to escape the unhappiness of her marriages. But with Andrei and his adoration of her precious Bobbsey's, she had found someone who would stand proudly at her side supporting her and her children through each milestone. She could imagine how fun it would be now to travel, with the people she loved at her side.

Letting her thoughts roam, Miranda imagined holding Andrei's hands as they walked along the Champs-Élysées or perhaps down Bourbon Street in New Orleans. Having Andrei walk hand-in-hand beside her side in public, and being wrapped up in the safety of his embrace at home, she felt invincible.

She knew she was stubborn, and it would test their relationship at times, but in the weeks following that first date, she had learned to give a little, to remain quiet when necessary and to bite her tongue to stop herself from letting her inner dragon breathe fire. She wasn't scared of being judged by Andrei, but she did not wish to hurt the man with her Snow Queen or Dragon persona. She did not wish for him to be on the receiving end of her at her most devilish, or facing the brunt of her displeasure unnecessarily.

Glancing again at the captivating young man, she saw the smudge of blue on his cheek and grinned. She hadn't realised how sexy it could be to watch him work. She knew she found watching him sleep captivating, she adored seeing his mind tick as he processed information and the more time they spent together, the more she wanted to learn about him.

Andrei caught her eyes and offered her a blinding smile. "You know I didn't expect your help. You're the best!"

Miranda's heart burst open as the words lit up her world. Without even knowing it, Andrei had touched and inspired her. She understood when she saw his smiling, kind-hearted, generous, tender
soul again that her life would never be the same. When she heard that he had gone through such an array of loss, she was awed by him, his strength.

She had loved a few different people over the years, but Andrei was so much more. She had met that one person who she had a deep affinity with. They were often in-sync. She knew she had finally found her soul mate and she swore to herself she would never let him go.

xxx

Andy was stunned by Miranda's insistence to help him paint the atrium. Hours had passed and the painting was almost done. Once this was done all that was left was to replace the flooring and reinstall the wainscoting.

As they continued to paint, with him adding the detailed touches to the tricky bits around the light fittings and woodwork framing the doors and windows, he considered all that had brought him to that moment.

He couldn't get Nate's words out of his head from that fateful day in the park.

"You are nothing to her, Andy Sachs. You could be the most handsome man, be the most successful remodelling architect or have the fattest billfold or the world, but you will still mean absolutely nothing to her. You are meaningless to that bitch and her spawn, you are invisible, just another way for her to get them what they want. They feel nothing for you, they will never love you. If you think otherwise you are deluded."

Andy understood he was not the only person in the world to have lost people he once considered significant. But for him, it had caused him his greatest sadness and pain. Throughout his time at Runway he had tried to hold on to his relationships with Nate, Doug, Lily and his parents, even knowing they were not always particularly healthy. He had hoped things could go back to how they once were.

"Miranda is a cold, manipulative cunt. Anyone in their right mind would run screaming in the opposite direction, but no, not Andy Sachs, you poor deluded fool. I pity you. You think Miranda is completely trustworthy, that she is human, has a heart and actually cares. You are wrong. You think her children are perfect, wrong again. They are spoiled, entitled, worthless little shits and they will never amount to anything..."

That had been the moment he pushed Nate. He couldn't stand there and let him spew his filth. He needed the words to stop before he said something even more unforgivable.

After losing friends, he could have easily allowed the pain of his past to make him bitter and angry. He could have held on to the grief at his losses, unwilling to let go of his pain. Instead, he chose to thrive. He had let go of the past and the people in it upon leaving Paris for New York and then L.A but he had never been able to let go of Miranda. The lack of support from friends and family had been difficult but not impossible to overcome. And now, his better days were finally arriving.

He had worked towards his goals with determination, met many people that had helped him grow into the man he was. He appreciated the changes he had gone through knowing he would handle everything life threw at him. He trusted himself to do right by himself and those he loved. He finally felt he was close to his destiny. He was not the same person now that he had been three years ago but he believed who he was now had naturally drawn him into this situation, bringing Miranda and the twins back into his life. He was closer now to the future he had dreamed of all those years before.
Catching Miranda's eyes, he was amazed when she dropped her paint roller and stepped into his personal space. As she brushed her hand across his cheek, he was awarded one of her genuine smiles. She stood on her tiptoes and caught his lips with her own.

"What did I do to deserve you?" Andy husked, breaking the kiss.

"You're just lucky, I guess." Miranda's smile widened and her eyes twinkled with mischief briefly before turning serious. "You are as you have always been, Andrei. You are kind, gentle, loving and generous and lucky for me, you return the love I feel for you."

Andy smiled, a wide, dimpled smile, and he spun Miranda around as the music changed. He put his hands onto Miranda's hips and gently guided them to sync with his own as he swayed gracefully. He was confident dancing, bending slightly to nuzzle Miranda's neck with his lips and nose. He knew Miranda would feel the soft beard on his jaw.

He put his hand on the back of Miranda's neck, running his fingers through the short hair at the nape of her neck and tilted his head to touch his lips to hers, kissing her softly, almost lazily.

They kissed each other for a long time, slowly, he had one arm wrapped around Miranda's waist, holding her close, his other hand in her hair. His hand stroked down to her ass and he loved the sensuous feeling of his hands on her.

He continued to kiss Miranda softly, his hand moving between them to rest intimately between her thighs. He caught her small sigh as her body arched into him and she kissed him with more intensity.

Miranda's breathing turned shallow as he pressed his fingers lightly against her. His fingertips massaged her gently. Andrei felt himself grow harder, his cock throbbing through his pants as he let out a shaky breath and moaned.

Unable to wait, his hand moved under the waistband of Miranda's pants and pushing her panties aside, slid two fingers into her. He felt the urgent need to have her unravel again.

He moved quickly but as Miranda made to unzip his pants, he stalled her attempts. He picked her up easily and as she wrapped her legs around him, he moved from the room, striding up the stairs towards the bed they'd shared.

Sitting on the edge of the bed, Miranda straddled his thighs, pressing herself against his hardness. Removing his fingers, he urged her to pull her pants off and when she did so, he placed his hands on her thighs. He knew words were unnecessary, she lowered herself onto him letting him fill her completely as his grip on her thighs tightened.

Miranda pressed her body closer to his and started to rock slowly, guiding his cock in and out of her. He was so turned on that he could barely think straight. She wrapped her arms around his neck to steady herself.

He attached his lips to the juncture between her neck and shoulder. He knew he was seconds away from his orgasm. Unable to stop. It, he buried his face into her neck, crying out as he climaxed. He felt Miranda tense around him as he continued to come hard.

They stopped, breathing hard, relishing the feeling bodies entwined. Tilting Miranda's head down, he kissed her hard. Miranda broke for air and hummed. She pulled herself off him and collected her panties and jeans from the floor as he zipped himself back up. Pulling her close again, he stood and offered her a gentle hug. Bending he whispered just three words in her ear. "I love you."
Chapter 8

Chapter Notes

Yay, another fic idea from the lovely celesse201, who for whatever reason, holds the belief I can bring her ideas to life. This is my first major AU. Not giving too much away. Miranda is Miranda but I am making her and the twins slightly younger for the sake of the fic. Andy is not the Andy you expect (Hence the AU)

I do not own the main characters related to The Devil Wears Prada. They are owned by the original author and 20th Century Fox. Some characters will be my own.

Miranda caught sight of him as she made to step into the elevator on her way back up to Runway. Ten minutes beforehand he'd been advised by a flustered Emily that she was in a meeting with the department heads, where heads would no doubt roll.

He watched as Miranda's eyes trailed over him. In a pair of Levi's and a muscle shirt that showed his tattoo, Andy was aware he looked like the embodiment of a true tradesman. The only thing he was missing was his tool belt.

Andy knew there was much more to him than being a simple tradesperson, no matter how much he claimed otherwise. Miranda had admitted to him she had done her homework, more so after James's words.

He'd admitted, quite embarrassed by it, that he wasn't as destitute as Miranda's first husband claimed, having invested in property in both L.A and New York. Andy owned the whole building that he worked and lived from in the Meatpacking District. Not only that but the small Soho loft his cousin lived in with her wife. He also had quite a large property in a rather exclusive community on the outskirts of L.A, which had been left to him by his grandfather.

When they had spoken of this the night before, he'd tried to brush over fact claiming it wasn't important. But after being pushed, advised the older woman that although his parent's tried to dispute his grandpa's last will and testament, they had been unsuccessful. And he felt guilty.

Andy inherited everything, including quite an extensive art collection and some unsold sculptures of his grandpa's, which to the right collector, could bring in a tidy sum.

James had been missing quite a bit of information about Andy's true worth, not having bothered to check public property records outside of New York. The Soho Loft no longer counted as it had been transferred into his cousin's name after purchase and he'd told the curious woman that they had an agreement that it would be purchased from him in monthly instalments, much like a mortgage. A lot of his professional work was done under his full name. Andrei Blake-Sachs. Many people confused his full surname as a middle name and surname and he was often grateful his mother had insisted her children would have a hyphenated name, to ensure her father's legacy lived on.

He was the same person, with the same financial and legal obligations he had always had, it was just that if someone wasn't fully knowledgeable then the information may not be easily accessible.
Andy still wanted to know how James had managed to access his business and student loan details, but what he said in that was the truth. If he paid his suppliers plus his student debts, his checking account balance would be bleak. He had separated his savings by setting up multiple savings accounts, he had investments and made use of term deposits. He had money in offshore accounts that the IRS had full knowledge of. He paid his taxes and had no outstanding warrants or fines.

Unable to resist, he offered Miranda a bright smile as she stepped into the elevator, disconnecting her cell with a furious stab.

"I miss the days when I could flip the thing shut," Miranda admitted as the doors closed. He caught her eye and his smile widened before chuckling, unable to contain his mirth.

He heard Miranda's breath catching and looked down to see amusement and affection lighting up her eyes. His hands itched to touch her. She looked beautiful in black, wide-legged Ralph Lauren Pants and a Red Fendi Embroidered Blouse.

In the few short days since their time in the Hamptons, Andy had missed Miranda's presence. It seemed like she felt the same when she turned to face him and took the three small steps in his direction to push herself into his arms. With Miranda tucked safely in his arms, he felt calmer than he had since they said goodbye that Sunday evening. Looking down into her eyes, he saw them blazing with satisfaction.

Miranda ran her fingers along the side of his jaw, his beard was long after a few days and she had clearly noticed. "It needs a trim," Andy stated softly.

"Perhaps. Although it is not at all offensive, unlike some." Miranda stated lightly. She had already admitted to him how much it surprised her to find that, for the first time ever, she had no issue with facial hair. "I would like to know how you keep it so soft."

Andy's eyes crinkled as he grinned. "I use beard oil or beard balm. Tom Ford's Oud Wood and Acqua di Parma's Collezione are amongst my favourites." He rubbed his jaw and catching her fingers in his, he brought them to his lips brushing a gentle kiss upon her knuckles. "You have to take care of your grooming and a lot of men are too lazy to do the right thing. That's probably why so many women have issues with beards. It is something I have discussed at length with Nigel, which he indicated may be included in a future edition of Men's Runway."

Miranda snorted and rolled her eyes. Knowing the elevator would land soon, she pulled herself free from his embrace and schooled her features.

Andy realised the reason for her sudden distance and stepped back to lean against the wall of the elevator.

"Dinner tonight?" Miranda queried, cutting her eyes at him.

"I've already made reservations for the four of us at The Plaza for Afternoon Tea. Emily confirmed you were free. I shall pick you all up at 3 pm." Andy stated. Believing he may have overstepped, he worried his lower lip between his teeth.

"Acceptable." Miranda breathed. "The twins will be thrilled."

The elevator dinged and the doors opened and he watched as Miranda pursed her lips upon seeing Irv Ravitz stepping into her space. Irv looked between the two of them and gaped. After all, no one ever shared an elevator with Miranda Priestly, especially not some lowly tradesman. Taking it as an OK for himself, he stepped briskly into the elevator, placing himself beside the editor and facing
"I was just coming to see you, Miranda," Irv stated.

Miranda stiffened slightly before stepping to one side to give herself more space, away from the CEO. Andy wished he could see her face and gage her reaction. "Good morning, Irving. I was just having a delightful conversation with Andy here, about the necessity to keep up a good grooming schedule." Miranda had obviously decided to have some fun with the man.

The doors of the elevator were finally closing when Irv decided to respond. "I wouldn't know, I have never fancied looking like a Neanderthal," Irv stated scathingly. "As an executive, I believe that a man should be cleanly shaven. I suppose it's all well and good if you are a footballer, rock star..." He trailed off and his head turned and he looked up at Andy, his distaste clear. "...or a tradesperson."

"I do find myself admiring a well-tended beard, like Andy's. Maybe it's due to the fashion of the times, but it is infinitely more acceptable than those horrid man buns some have been sporting in recent years. It shows a true emphasis on masculinity." Miranda took a small step back into his personal space and he could feel the heat radiating off her. As the doors opened on the floor for Runway, Irv stepped forward to hold the doors open for her. Instead of moving forward, Miranda turned on her heels to face him, her hand raising to stroke his beard. "A small trim perhaps, Andy, no more than that, please."

"We'll see, Miranda," Andy smirked down at her and the air between them crackled.

Standing on her tiptoes, Miranda brushed a light kiss against his cheek. She heard Irv gasp and smirked. "I'll see you soon." She whispered teasingly before spinning on her heel and sauntering out of the elevator.

He caught Irv's eyes and saw the surprise still highlighted in them. "Wha...how..." Irv sputtered.

"Come along, Irving." Miranda's tone was brusque as it carried from the corridor.

"Andrei Blake-Sachs." Andy held his hand out and grinned at the flustered man.

Irv ignored the hand and continued to gape as the elevator doors slowly shut. Before the doors cut off his view entirely, he watched Irv turn to follow the editor, the CEO's eyes on her ass as she moved gracefully down the corridor, her hips swaying sensuously with each step.

Growling to himself, as a wave of foreboding rolled over him, Andy pulled his cell from his pocket and sent a quick text to the woman.

_A.S: Can you meet me when you are done? The bathroom on level 16._

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Miranda was curious about what Irv wanted with her. The horrid little man had attempted to rid himself of her multiple times in the intervening years since Paris, but she had the board's full backing to remain in her position as profits continued to rise, even with digital media becoming more popular.

Spinning around quickly, as she entered her office, she caught Irv's eyes on her backside and shuddered.

She'd known for a long time, since her divorce from James really, that Irv had unrealistic ideas
about them becoming a couple, not that she ever egged him on. Just before she'd married Stephen, Irv asked her to reconsider and marry him instead. He claimed he would divorce his wife in an instant and treat her precious girls as his own. She flatly refused, advising him that he was clearly delusional and any further advances would leave her with no option but to have him investigated for sexual harassment. Irv had, since then, tried his utmost to have her removed from her magazine, without success.

Sitting behind her desk, she looked down at her cell and frowned. She tapped out a quick response.

**M.P:**  *Give me time to get rid of this awful, little man. Do not wait for me though. I'll text you once I am free x*

Looking up, she watched Irv as Andrei's introduction finally clicked into place and he recollected the name. He smirked at the older woman and she could sense he felt victorious.

"So your little lapdog has returned?" Irv gloated. "As a simple tradesperson of all things. I suppose he had to take any job after he ran from your side and you blacklisted him."

"What a ridiculous notion. I am powerful, clearly. But I certainly cannot affect change in the architectural industry." Miranda smirked.

"Architectural..." Irv sputtered. "I thought...publishing..."

Miranda held her hand up, deciding to do something she rarely did, except with her Bobbsey's and now her Andrei. She spoke clearly as if talking to an unruly toddler, with ice lacing her tone while she glared at the man balefully.

"Andrei is a highly sought-after architect. His fame is rising and will be great. This was always his dream. His work with Runway was a stop gap to pay the bills, a mere blip on the path towards his chosen career, which so far has included the renovation of the Burnside Mansion in Los Angeles, my own home in the Hamptons as well as various other projects including a vast array of work for Ana Jacobson. His current workload includes the renovation of a warehouse in Brooklyn into luxury apartments and due to an excellent and extraordinarily competitive tenure bid, which was signed off by the board, including yourself, the renovations for Men's Runway."

Irv stood, shuffling from foot to foot. She saw malice in his eyes. "I'm sure Christina Thompson will be interested in his return. She's sure to want Child Support for her boy..."

"You know that boy is not his." Miranda hissed. Irv stepped back quickly in the face of her fury. "That is something a simple DNA test will prove, which I am sure Andrei would insist upon."

Irv licked his lips nervously. "Yes, well..."

"Do not start a war with him, Irving. Under that affable countenance, he is fierce. He fights dirty as my first husband can attest to." Miranda looked at Irv and asked a seemingly innocent question. "Now, how is your boy, Noel?"


"You should remember, I see more than you could possibly realise, Irving and I am positive your wife, Diane, would relish the knowledge that her little blue-eyed boy has a doppelganger running around New York City." Miranda drove her point home. "And I am sure when you have your next rendezvous with Christina, you will advise her against making any move against Andrei." Miranda caught his eyes. "It is not only Andrei's displeasure she would have to face, and I do, after all, have
power in this industry. I would hate to feel compelled to stall such a bright career." Miranda looked
down at the proofs on her desk. "Now, was there something else do you require of me today?"

She spotted the flash of annoyance in Irv's eyes. "Never mind." He muttered, spinning on his heel
and rushing from her office.

Miranda sighed and sent Andrei a text telling him she would meet him shortly.

Standing up, she called out to her assistant's as she stalked through the outer office. "Push back the
run-through to 1 pm. Tell Nigel I shall be vastly disappointed if they are not ready to dazzle me. I
shall expect to leave at 2 pm sharp." She frowned as she saw the new Emily pick up the phone.
"Don't bother calling Roy, his presence is not required."

She heard Emily muttering as she swept past the red-head. "I love my job, I love my job, I love my
job."

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Andy had settled against the vanity, his thumb moving over the screen of his cell phone quickly as
he checked his Social Media. He liked at a post from his cousin, Michelle, who had taken a selfie
of herself with her wife, having surprised her at work after they had organised the new flooring for
the Atrium of Miranda's Hamptons home.

He thought of the painstaking work both he and Michelle had done to save as much of the flooring
as they could, working well into the night for the past two days to try to fix the mess. Andy felt
blessed that Miranda had seen fit to clean up as much of the excess paint as she could, it was a
move that had saved them quite a bit of time.

On Monday morning he had gotten on to his hands and knees and used a clean paintbrush to apply
a thick coat of paint stripper to the painted surface. Working in small stages, he made sure the paint
stripper got into the cracks and crevices of the wood.

Once he had finished, and let the chemical work its magic, Michelle had finished up in the
bathrooms and promptly began to help scrape off the paint, with plenty of muttering under her
breath about the unnecessary extra work, using a putty knife and toothpick. Luckily it was a
straightforward, if somewhat fiddly, process. Due to the paint being oil based, it had turned soft
and pliable under the chemicals.

Some of the paint just wouldn't be shifted though, even after being wiped down with a soft, damp
cloth and having a second coat of stripper applied. He needed at least ten new boards, which was
why he had returned to the city. He believed, with some perseverance, he could be finished at the
Hamptons by the weekend and settled back into life in the City.

As the door swung open, he glanced up and his smile wavered as he took in Miranda's stiff
countenance. He could feel the frustration rolling off her in waves. He followed her movements as
she flicked the lock into place and pushed herself against him. "Are you okay, Miranda?" He asked
softly.

Miranda said nothing. Suddenly, she reached for his belt buckle, unfastened it and quickly pulled it
free. In continued silence, her hands made quick work of the buttons on his jeans, before snaking
their way into his boxers and cupping his balls gently.

His eyes fell shut as he felt himself growing hard under her touch, her soft, warm hand coaxing his
manhood to life. He groaned as he felt her hand stroking his semi-hard cock. "Is something wrong,
Miranda continued on in silence, but she slowly shook her head in answer. She gripped the shaft of his penis in a firmer grip but her stroke was tender and loving. It felt so good but also so wrong.

Andy felt apprehensive. Miranda was a quiet force of nature, but when they were together she had never been this silent. It concerned him. "Miranda, I can't do this. Please stop." He pleaded.

When Miranda tugged at the elastic waist of his boxer shorts, his erect penis sprang free of its confines and Miranda fell to her knees and expertly took him into her mouth. Her lips were soft as she and sucked his cock with expertise, something he had never experienced before that weekend.

"Miranda, I..." Miranda pulled his boxers down a further and with her free hand, stroked his balls tenderly. The dual sensation of having his cock sucked and balls caressed was mind-blowing. He could feel the dull ache in his groin and knew that he was going to blow his load. Pulling back, trying to get away from Miranda's hot mouth, proved impossible as Miranda grabbed his ass and pulled him toward her while she ferociously sucked. His release was unbelievable, like nothing he had experienced in his life.

It seemed Miranda was set in taking every drop of him she possibly could as wave after wave of his cum was released into her mouth. She gradually pulled her head away, almost releasing him, but locked her lips around the swollen head and gave one last hard suck, which sent a shock wave through him and causing him to cry out, before letting him go. Miranda bolted upright, backing away from him, a hand covering her mouth as tears sprang into her eyes.

He saw her heartbreak and clumsily grasped at his boxers and jeans to try and get them up, tucking his cock away. He took a tentative step towards the woman. "It's okay," Andy reassured.

Miranda spun on her heel and made to walk away. "I'm sorry, Andrei" She whispered, her voice breaking.

Andy dropped his head and closed his eyes. He felt the floodgates open from what had sounded like a final goodbye and his anger got the better of him. "So that's it? A quick blowjob and an apology?" He saw Miranda stall and her shoulders shaking. Moving quickly, he took the three steps to the door and spun her around in his arms before hoisting her up and taking the three steps away from the door to sit her on the edge of the vanity. "Damn it, Miranda, I deserve better than this." He leaned closer and lifted Miranda's head to catch her eyes.

"I...you...Did you seriously think I asked you to meet me for a quick suck or fuck? Is that all you think I want from you?" Andy was frankly stunned and confused.

"Well, why the hell not? James and Stephen..." Miranda started to speak but stalled as he interrupted with a yell.

"I am not James or Stephen!" Andy yelled. He couldn't believe she was comparing him with those jackasses. She clearly didn't get it. What he felt for her, what he wanted from her was different. He watched as Miranda recoiled away from him and stepped back out of her personal space. His shoulders dropped and his hand rubbed at his jaw. "I'm sorry for yelling, Miranda." He spoke quietly. "I asked you to meet me because I had a weird feeling about Irv." He admitted. "I wanted to make sure you were okay. I don't trust him."
Miranda's shoulders shook as she took in his words. He could see the devastation was written across her face, the belief she had fucked things up entirely. "Please listen," Miranda whispered. "I owe you an explanation. I understand I took advantage of you after you said stop..." She hiccupped a sob and her hand came over her mouth again until she regained control. "It has been a really confusing time. First, you came back, and I found out that you still cared for me. Then you decided to give us a chance and all the time I... I'm...I think I'm just waiting for the other shoe to drop."

"Explain, Miranda," Andy asked, folding his arms across his chest.

"Our relationship often feels too good to be true and I guess I just assumed that you were here for your own benefit, rather than mine." Miranda shook her head sadly.

Somehow, the sadness and her tears made her look even more beautiful and he found himself wanting to offer her comfort. He took a step forward and brushed her forelock out of her face. She leaned into his touch.

"You have no idea what it is like to be dumped for someone younger and better-looking, Andrei," Miranda stated. "You have no idea how that kind of rejection feels." She trailed off brokenly

This was now the time to say something, to put the editor's fears to rest. "But I do know what that kind of rejection feels like. I may not have been dumped, but I was dismissed entirely." He reminded her softly. "But I am here, despite that, willing to give this...us...the very best shot. And just so you know, Jacqueline is in no way better looking than you, she looks like a skunk. James traded down, he has always traded down because no-one could ever come close to you, and they cannot match your beauty nor your intelligence."

Miranda looked up at him with teary, red-red-rimmed eyes and smiled sadly. "Thank you, darling."

Andy leaned against the vanity next to the editor, leaving a small space between them. "Miranda, what was it that made you do this today?"

"Irv mentioned Christina. I guess I simply wanted to be able to prove I could make you happy. That I could satisfy you and be everything you could ever want or need."

"You are. You always have been, Miranda." He told her.

"I am sorry. I hope you can believe that." Miranda husked. "I hope you can forgive me."

"If we're being completely honest, I have to say it was the single most intensely mind-blowing experiences I've ever had," Andy admitted. "But my interest is not just in my own pleasure, a fact you should have deduced from the weekend." He watched, from the corner of his eye, as Miranda blushed furiously.

"To be honest with you, last weekend was the most I've ever...you know..." Miranda swallowed nervously. "...orgasmed..." She admitted breathlessly. Andy felt a little smug over that admission. Miranda leaned in closer and kissed his cheek. Her signature Givenchy perfume surrounded him was getting to be too much. Unable to resist, he turned and leaned in to kiss her gently on the lips. Miranda pulled away briefly, looking him in the eyes, before kissing him back passionately, her tongue seeking out his. Breaking for air, Miranda worried her lip before making a request. "Come home with me now." She whispered.

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She didn't return to Runway, instead, she sent Emily a text demanding to have the rest of her day cancelled and to have the book sent electronically. Letting Andrei keep a hold of her hand, he led
her down the stairwell to the underground loading bay, where he had left his truck. Handing her a pair of Ray-Ban Aviators, Andrei shrugged apologetically as she put them on.

She kept one hand on his thigh as they travelled towards the Upper East Side together in companionable silence, she tapped a range of messages into her cell one-handed, providing the two Emily's with a list of items to be brought to the house along with her purse and jacket. They made good time to the townhouse, where Miranda finally spoke to direct him to the garage at the back of the house, he pulled in easily next to the silver Porsche 911.

She caught Andrei gaping at the 4-seat Sports Car and smirked. "I much prefer the SUV."

"Oh yeah?" Andrei was almost drooling.

"My Mercedes-Benz GLS 63 is a rather nice drive. Cara has it today, she has taken the twins to Brooklyn zoo." Miranda grinned as his jaw dropped even further. She handed him the Ray-Ban's and he tossed them on his dash.

Stepping from the truck, she waited for Andrei to gather his wits and led him past the laundry and into the kitchen. She pulled him up the stairs and led him into her bedroom. She let him push her against the door, locking it behind her. Taking his right hand, she placed it on her breast, willing him to squeeze it firmly.

Andrei shook his head and removed his hand. It clearly wasn't what he wanted to do. He cupped her cheek and bent to initiate a kiss, his other hand resting on her hips as he continued to slowly build the connection between them with each gentle caress of his lips. His hand trailed down from her hip, reaching down between her legs and caressing his fingers along the radiating heat coming from the apex of her thighs under her designer trousers.

He continued to kiss and touch before she took his hand from where it rested teasingly against her and pulled him, by the hand, towards her bed.

When they reached the edge, Andrei slowly untucked her red blouse from her trousers and unbuttoned it. She heard his breath catch as his eyes trailed over the red lace balconette bra she wore.

"God, Miranda. You are the sexiest woman in the world." Andrei whispered, reaching down and unloosening the button at her waist.

Miranda looked up and caught the sincerity in Andrei's eyes. He clearly meant what he said. She could feel her desire for him soaking through her panties.

With Andrei's help, she pulled his t-shirt over his head and once again unbuttoned the top button of his Levi's. She ran her fingers over the bulge of his erection and felt it strain against her touch.

Andrei's hands moved to unclasp her bra, releasing her breasts as he tossed it to one side. Slowly pulling her trousers down to her ankles, he knelt at her feet, his head resting against her stomach. She kicked the trousers away and stepped out of her pumps.

She was surprised when Andrei kissed her stomach, his beard gently scratching her skin. He bent his head and nuzzled the crotch of her panties, inhaling deeply. Miranda felt a blush rising across her chest, neck and cheeks. She had never felt so desired.

Rising to his feet, Andrei pulled her close and rested his chin on her head as she settled against him, her face buried in his neck.
He picked her up easily and kissed her deeply as he laid her down on the bed. They kissed leisurely for a time before Andrei moved down to take one of her nipples into his mouth. He licked it gently causing Miranda to arch her back and as she did so, he reached down and slid two fingers inside her panties, encountering the profuse wetness that had settled there.

"I want you to make love to me, Andrei." She whimpered.

"How do you want it?" Andrei asked, scraping his teeth against her nipple.

"Long and slow!" Miranda breathed. "Now." She demanded.

"Not yet, there's something I want to do first." Andrei stopped what he was doing and smirked up at her. He kissed his way down her stomach and started kissing her through her panties.

Miranda moaned and thrust her hips upward languidly. Almost begging him to take her into his mouth.

He took her at her gesture, still able to read her almost perfectly, and slipped a finger inside the edge of her panties and pulled them down her legs, revealing her swollen and soaking wet folds.

With a long, slow lick from the bottom all the way up, Andrei started to tease her before he suckled her swollen clit.

"Oh, my God! Ungh!" She moaned. The responses her body had to her touch were like nothing she'd ever experienced, setting her on fire. The muscles in her abdomen and legs quivered as he pushed her towards an intense orgasm.

As her juices flooded his face, Andrei hummed and savoured every last drop. He continued licking and sucking, as she experienced orgasm after orgasm.

Finally, unable to take any more, she pulled him up to her mouth, kissing him deeply as she pulled his boxers off. As he settled between her thighs, his hard cock resting against her, she moved her legs up over his shoulders and he entered her slowly, burying his cock as deep as she could take it. He slowly pulled it out until he held just the tip inside, then gradually he slipped it deep back inside. He eased himself in and out slowly, biting his lip as he concentrated on remaining slow and steady, on giving her the pleasure she craved.

Eventually, he picked up pace and thrust with more and more force. Her entire body moved with each push. When he went too fast, she held his hips to slow him down, enjoying the slow build towards her orgasm.

After waves of intense pleasure crashed through her for the umpteenth time, she reversed their positions to have Andrei lie on his back. She straddled him and rocked herself to yet another climax.

They had been making love for what felt like an age, and although she knew Andrei possessed stamina, she understood he must be close to his own orgasm.

It felt so good to be with a man who loved to give her such pleasure, who provided the encouragement for her to be free to act upon her deepest desire. She enjoyed this new change, and she wanted to please the man inside her.

They slipped into a spooning position on their sides, Andrei's hard cock pressed against her ass. He moved her hair and kissed the back of her ear as his hand ran over her hips, towards her belly and up to her breasts. He pinched her nipple lightly as the other hand reached between them and he
took his cock in his hand to place it between her legs.

Miranda lifted her legs slightly to let him press against her aching pussy. He started to slide it back and forth before pressing it a little bit more and sliding inside with a deep groan.

Andrei's hands kneaded her neck muscles, easing some of the tension while gently moving so she knew he was there with her. When she felt more relaxed than she had been for years, he picked up speed.

Moving faster and deeper, his hands held her hips as he thrust inside her, fucking her with more vigour. He moved his hand from her hip and across her stomach and down between her legs, teasing her clit.

She was on the edge of yet another powerful orgasm when he groaned. "I'm gonna cum. Inside or not?" He asked breathlessly. "I'm getting so close..."

"Inside! Don't you dare pull out, Andrei." Miranda hissed as he pushed her towards another climax.

"Oh, fuck, Miranda! You feel so good." So goddamned good!" Andrei whimpered as he finally succumbed to his orgasm.

Miranda's own orgasm overwhelmed her and she screamed Andrei's name multiple times as she tumbled over the edge.

They lay there, completely drenched in sweat and each other's juices, trying to catch their breath.

Miranda finally rolled over onto her back before turning again to face him and pulling him for another deep, passionate kiss. She couldn't believe that after the time they spent at Elias Clarke, that she had just finished making mad, passionate love with this man. It felt too good to be true that he was still here.

Andrei just lay there, still breathing heavy, but looking at her, with mischief in his eyes. "So? Are you ready to go again?" He reached down and began stroking her clit.

Almost immediately, she could feel another orgasm building. "I think you better clear your schedule for the rest of your life, Andrei. There's no way I'll ever be done!" Miranda husked. She smirked at his loud laughter before turning serious.

Andrei stopped the teasing touch. "What is it, Miranda?"

"I want you to think about things seriously, my darling. Think about the future you wish to have and ask yourself if it is really me you want. If it is, I would like us to work towards something permanent." Miranda licked her lips. "You could live here, or the girls and I could move in with you. We could even purchase a house together." She hid her face in his chest "I want a future with you and one day to call myself your wife. I want it all and I only ever want it with you."

Andrei ran a hand through her hair lightly, tilting her face up to catch her eyes. She saw his eyes blazing with happiness. "Acceptable." He whispered, pulling her up for a gentle kiss.

"None of that now, Andrei." Miranda husked breathlessly. "The twins will be home soon."

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The twins were absolutely delighted to find him at the house when they traipsed in after their day out. Upon being called by Miranda and entering the den, they squealed and clambered up onto his
knees before reeling off information about their days since he last saw them. He smiled gently, asking questions and seeking clarification as they spoke over each other to tell him everything.

Miranda was smiling softly as she shooed them away to start getting ready for their outing, advising them that they needed to get showered and dressed to impress.

Andy watched as they ran from the room and charged up the stairs. Sitting back, he heard the front door open and the tell-tale click of heels on the floor as the twins called out a greeting, over the bannister, at Emily.

Miranda stood and stepped from the room and he heard her murmuring quietly but could not catch the words. Miranda re-entered the room with her purse and a Runway tote in one hand and multiple garment bags hanging over the other.

Andy stood and helped Miranda by taking the garment bags as she gestured for him to follow. He trailed the older woman back up to her bedroom and grinned at the rumpled state of the bed.

Handing the garment bags, he started to strip the bedding.

Miranda placed her bags down and stepped to the other side of the bed to help. "You know, you don't have to do that? She stated.

"Yeah, but just think of how good it will be to climb under fresh sheets later." Andy grinned. "We sure got ourselves into a bit of a sweaty tangle." He bit his lip as Miranda rolled her eyes.

"I shall have you know, I do not sweat, I perspire," Miranda stated, arching her eyebrow at him.

"Like there's a difference," Andy grumbled good-naturedly as Miranda left the room briskly to gather fresh linen. He balled up the soiled linens and dumped them in the laundry hamper in the corner of the en-suite.

They worked together quietly to put the fresh bedding back onto the large king-sized bed and he marvelled at the domesticity of the act.

Miranda still surprised him at every turn. Many would assume that the editor would have an array of staff at home, waiting to cater to her every whim. And while there was Cara, who helped with the twins and ensured they were taken care of in her absence, and Roy, who helped her navigate traffic easily, which in itself helped her to keep to her tight schedules, she did not let her position in the world affect her private life. In many ways, she retained the lesson she had grown up with; to be self-sufficient.

Once they were done, Miranda led him to where he'd placed the garment bags and grinned. "I thought I'd have some clothes and other items brought here for you," Miranda admitted. "There are a variety of items you may find useful."

Andy pulled the first garment bag open and gaped at the black V-neck Dolce and Gabbana fitted sweater and trousers. The ribbed sweater would cling to his pecs and abs admirably. His lips twitched as he caught Miranda's eye and saw her blush. "You know, I could just run around bare-chested if you want to see my muscles." He teased.

Miranda blushed further. "I do not believe that would be suitable this afternoon, my darling." She murmured. She grabbed one of the totes and moved towards the en-suite, closing the door behind her. He heard the hot water system hiss as the shower started and looked through the other garment bags, finding a range of items from Tom Ford, Balmain and Georgio Armani. There were also True Religion jeans and Abercrombie and Finch cargo shorts in the tote bag, along with a supply of
fitted boxer shorts and socks. He was stunned by the editor's generosity, knowing the items had not come from the closet at Runway.

Finally, opening up another garment bag, he found the black and white jacquard patterned tuxedo from Ralph Lauren's Purple Label, under the jacket he found a pair of smart black dress pants and a dress shirt and bowtie. He adored the jacket immediately.

"I thought it may be suitable for the benefit." Miranda's arms wrapped themselves around his waist and he could feel her warm breath against his neck.

"It's...wow...I can't quite believe you think I can pull something off like that." Andy whispered.

"I don't think, I know. You will look absolutely wonderful, my darling. You shall stand out as my partner, a king amongst mere men. Anyone can wear a monkey-suit and look presentable, but you will make me the envy of all." Miranda turned him in her arms and he took in the fact she wore only a towel. "Plus, it will match my custom Valentino perfectly." She smirked.

"I knew there was a reason you'd chosen something so ostentatious." Andy couldn't help but smile down at her. "I should go and shower."

"Mm, quite." Miranda licked her lips making them glisten tantalisingly. "But first..." She pulled him down, catching his lips with her own and moaned. "Wear the Dolce sweater tonight." She whispered against his lips.

"Yes, Miranda." At that moment, he knew he would agree to anything. "I love you."

"And I, you. Now, go shower whilst I try to assemble my Bobbsey's into some semblance of readiness." She pulled back, causing Andy's hands to fall to her ass. Her eyes widened and breath hitched. "Will you be staying tonight?" She asked breathlessly.

"Try and stop me." Andy grinned as he released her and stepped past her to the bathroom. "I won't be long."

After showering, Andy padded on bare feet to make his way to the kitchen for a drink.

Cara jumped when she caught sight of him in nothing but a pair of dark trousers. "Whoa there, handsome. Try not to sneak up on me like that." She teased.

"Roger that, Cara. I'll try to be noisier in the future." He smirked as her eyes roamed over his bare chest and shoulders. Opening the fridge, he grabbed a soda and took a large swig.

"And perhaps try to put on a shirt too." Cara sassed causing him to inhale his soda and sputter as he laughed.

"I don't think that is required, Cara. I could get used to this look on you, Andrei." Miranda's voice hit them both and Andy coughed as Cara blushed. Getting himself under control, he pulled a bottle of Pellegrino from the open fridge and set it to one side as he hunted for glass and ice. "The twins have requested your assistance, Andrei." She stated softly as he stepped gracefully towards her with the glass in hand.

Their finger brushed as she took the glass from him and sipped. He felt the spark between them ignite and closed his eyes briefly. "Okay, I'll head on up." He stroked his hand up Miranda's jaw, careful not to spoil her newly applied makeup. "See you soon."

He ran upstairs and upon entering the twins shared bedroom, they cajoled him into drying their
hair as he had the previous weekend.

He worked quickly, ensuring their hair was dry before teasing it into straightness. Looking at his watch he realised it was time for them to get ready. "Right, my little ones, it's time to get dressed." He told them. He turned towards the bathroom and let out a bellowing laugh at the sight of Caroline who had gone first.

"What? Dandy! Why are you laughing?" Caroline stomped her foot.

Trying to get himself under control, Andy patted the chair in front of the dressing table while Cassidy stepped into the bathroom to change. "You've been a little heavy handed with the makeup, my little love." He told the little girl, who looked rather clown-like. He continued to chuckle as he wiped the makeup away "You're lucky I don't have my cell. It would make an awesomely embarrassing photo for your 21st birthday."

"Meanie." Caroline poked her tongue out at him and he returned the gesture causing her to laugh.

Trying to remember what he'd seen of Serena's work, he looked down at the makeup kit and put a little blush over Caroline's cheeks. "You are absolute perfection in your natural state, Caro, but if you insist on growing up so quickly, we should get your mom to show you how to do this properly." He told her gently as he smoothed lip gloss over her lips. "There you go."

Caroline turned and looked in the mirror, tilting her head to one side appraisingly. "Acceptable." She giggled as he snorted out another loud bark of laughter. She sounded so much like her mom it was hilarious. "Thanks, Dandy." She threw her arms around his neck and kissed his cheek. "You're the best." She whispered.

"Nah you are, along with your sister and mom." He told her. Standing up, he took two steps and banged on the bathroom door. "Cass, d'ya need my help" He shouted.

"No, I'm good, Dandy," Cassidy yelled back.

"Right, I'll see you both in 15 minutes." He tapped his watch to Caroline and offered her a wide smile before leaving the room and heading back up to the master suite.

Fifteen minutes later, he entered the den to find the twins had selected their clothes carefully. Cassidy wore a white and pink Versace dresses while Caroline chose a multi-coloured Diane Von Furstenberg print dress.

Miranda entered the den sedately, fastening a Tiffany bracelet on her wrist. She was wearing a black Ted Baker Geodeses Wrap front pencil dress and he thought he'd never seen her look as beautiful. "Wow, you look stunning."

Miranda smiled up at him, her eyes blazing with satisfaction at his choice of attire, the new Dolce and Gabanna fitted sweater and loose fit Giorgio Armani trousers paired with leather Oxford Brogues from Burberry. He had trimmed his beard, taming it to look like short stubble, after he had found the new Wahl Grooming Station set up and charging in the en-suite next to the normally empty side of the twin vanity. Finding all his favourite products, he'd also taken the time to sweep his hair back off his forehead in a side parting.

He grinned at Miranda, unable to tear his eyes away and missed it as the twins jumped up. He was jolted into the present as Cassidy and Caroline stepped to either side and grabbed his hands.

"I'm hungry, Dandy." Cassidy pouted.
"Me too, can we go now?" Caroline added.

"Of course, shall we?" He grinned happily as the twins tugged him from the room towards the closet, whereupon seeing their mom choosing her leather moto jacket, grabbed their own to match. His eyes met Miranda's as she passed him a new black Burberry EKD Logo Lambskin Bomber Jacket.

Miranda found the Plaza quite acceptable in many ways but it was also comically fancy and she knew it was ridiculously expensive. Glancing around the tea room of the Palm Court, she watched the people and realised it was a total snob-fest. She still couldn't quite believe that she had opportunities to dine in places such as this, but her position in the world ensured she was treated like a Queen, and this was no exception.

Miriam Princhek had certainly risen far from her humble beginnings and working-class roots in the East End of London. She wondered just how much Andrei knew of her past. It wasn't common knowledge, but there were a few in her world that knew, although they would never let on. She decided she would be more open with Andrei than with her previous husbands. She wanted, more than anything, for them to work.

There was something truly magical and whimsical about being seated into the lush Palm Court for afternoon tea as their "New Yorker Tea" and the "Eloise Tea" arrived at the table on circular three-tiered trays. It was presented beautifully with stunning little sweet morsels on the top tier, six small sandwiches on the middle tier and freshly baked warm seasonal scones wrapped in a cloth napkin on the bottom tier. She was looking forward to this. She had always enjoyed a good cup of tea regardless of her innate desire for a searing hot latte, and tea at the Plaza was a truly elegant experience. As she sipped her Big Ben English Breakfast tea, she wished she had thought of doing this with her Bobbsey's sooner, it was an experience they seemed to be taking great delight in.

She watched Andrei carefully as he poured toffee tea from a teapot and hummed appreciatively. There was something captivating about the man, who continued to treat her and her daughters like they were something special. Being with Andrei, getting to know him, was a revelation. A small part of her wondered if he would have turned into such a success if it hadn't been for her dismissal of him all those years before. She understood her actions had coloured his world, and in some ways, she regretted them, but watching him now, as he spoke gently to her beautiful daughter's, knowing he was willing to give them a chance to be a family brought her renewed hope. For the first time, in a long time, she felt secure in her feelings, knowing they would not be dismissed. She had been wrong to liken Andrei to both James and Stephen. She had been stupid, that was something she could admit, at least to herself.

With James trying to wheedle his way back into her affections, her mind had conjured up doubts. Every little bit of hurt had come roaring back to life. She knew James wasn't lonely as such, there were always silly little girls looking for a free ride, although he had been single for a while. Maybe he was simply having trouble adjusting to single life. She smirked when she had a fleeting thought about recommending he download Tinder or adopt a puppy instead.

"What are you thinking, sweetheart?" Andrei's voice caught her attention.

"Oh, just how charming all this is." Miranda smiled softly as she took a delicate bite of her herb-roasted prime rib, horseradish cream and watercress brioche slider. She hummed. "Oh, that's delicious." Andrei's head tilted to one side as he gazed at her. She could tell he didn't quite believe her. "Later." She mouthed.
Shrugging, he turned back to his own sandwiches and took a larger bite of his oven-roasted turkey and granny smith cream cheese on sourdough. She grinned as he pulled a face and popped the small bite of his sandwich that he had left back on the plate. "God, I'd kill for a burger." The twins heard and their laughter was boisterous. They had ignored their tiny sandwiches in favour of their chocolate banoffee cake pops.

Cassidy leaned in. "You should try a scone, Dandy."

"Or your passion fruit, cranberry custard s'more." Caroline grinned.

Andrei shook his head and smirked as he sipped his tea. "I think I'll be ending up at McDonald's." He muttered as he spread lemon curd and then double Devonshire cream on a scone.

Miranda half listened to their back and forth banter as her thoughts flittered back to the previous train of thought. Perhaps James believed she would never move on to love someone more than she had loved him and had realised, a little too late, what a colossal mistake he had made. Now, he felt compelled to throw a spanner in the works, by belittling Andrei and attempting to cast doubts upon his intentions.

She remembered how she felt upon finding James with Jacqueline. He had fallen spectacularly from the pedestal on which she had placed him and had been left angry, hurt and bitter by his betrayal. She remembered her closing words to James upon the finalisation of their bitter divorce proceedings. "When I move on and find someone who will love me and never cause such pain, that's when you'll realise just what you have lost. But by then, it will be far too late, James. I am glad this is over."

Now, with her new enjoyment of life with the beautiful man opposite, James seemingly wished to disrupt her newly found happiness. He didn't like the fact she had finally replaced him. They had remained friendly for the twin's sake because she wished for him to have a place in their daughter's lives. Due to this, their breakup didn't give either of them full closure.

She knew James wasn't really in love with her, no matter how much he claimed otherwise. His jealousy of Andrei was no doubt due to his over-inflated ego and pride or having idealised the past. Clearly hearing about her new relationship with Andrei and then seeing their dance had set him off. He had attempted to call her cell multiple times since Friday and when she failed to answer rang Runway instead. Emily had been particularly enthusiastic about giving him multiple reasons she was and would continue to be unavailable to take his calls. She'd heard the redhead muttering to the other Emily; "That's just typical. When they know you're happy, and totally over them - that's when they come back. Just to fuck with you. It's like they have this 6th sense. Bastards!"

She knew she had settled for less than she deserved with Stephen. It had been more of a business merger than a true marriage and upon reflection, she knew neither of them had been willing to make their marriage work, having found they were incompatible in all ways, especially in the bedroom. Although the press response to the divorce had been vicious, he had never spoken out against her or her daughters. He had been reasonable with her, making no excessive demands and taking with him only what he had brought to the marriage.

Looking up in Andrei's eyes, she finally believed she owed it to herself to be happy. She needed to set a better example for her daughters by showing them that love was essential.
Chapter 9

Chapter Notes

Yay, another fic idea from the lovely celesse201, who for whatever reason, holds the belief I can bring her ideas to life. This is my first major AU. Not giving too much away. Miranda is Miranda but I am making her and the twins slightly younger for the sake of the fic. Andy is not the Andy you expect (Hence the AU)

I do not own the main characters related to The Devil Wears Prada. They are owned by the original author and 20th Century Fox. Some characters will be my own.

Afternoon tea had been a success for herself and the twins but Andrei had been far from pleased with the offerings, muttering about pretentious morsels of crap.

He happily settled the bill and as they exited the Plaza hand-in-hand, heading towards Central Park, with a twin on either side, Andrei's eyes lit up when he spotted a particular food cart, Nathan's Famous.

His long legs made short work of the distance between the Plaza and the bright yellow food cart.

Ordering the kraut dog with mustard Andrei hummed appreciatively upon taking his first bite, clearly no longer disappointed. She marvelled at his appetite when within four bites the hotdog was gone.

When asked by Cassidy why he enjoyed the Dog, he waxed poetic about the beefy snap to the dog along with the hordes of sauerkraut which added a crispy, fresh, pickled flavour. The mustard seemingly added just the right amount of flavour and the steamed buns were warm and soft.

He promised the twins that he would arrange for them to try the authentic New York treat soon.

Holding his hand out to her once again, she happily entwined their fingers, and he squeezed her hand reassuringly. They walked slowly, enjoying the late afternoon, as the twins ran ahead, playing tag with each other.

It was times like this Miranda had missed. Over the years she had taken very little time to just enjoy a leisurely walk in the park but found she wanted to do this again. Her children's laughter made her heart soar.

Finally arriving at the Billy Johnson playground, where her twin daughters loved to play, they sat down on a shady bench under some giant trees and watched happily as Caroline and Cassidy picked up cardboard from the base of a large granite slide they loved to race down.

Andrei stretched his legs out and sighed. She turned her head to look at him as he grinned happily at the sound of her daughter's happy squeal. "It's good to hear their laughter." He muttered.

"Yes, it is." Miranda agreed wholeheartedly. Seeing her daughter's eyes brimming with happiness and having seen them enjoying the new experience at the Plaza left her feeling warm. And it was
primarily thanks to the man beside her. "You are good with them. Thank you."

"I love them, Miranda," Andrei whispered gently.

Unsurprised by the admission, she scooted closer. "I know." She pushed herself into his personal space and cupped his bearded jaw. "But that is not only what I was thanking you for."

Andrei's eyes blazed open and she saw his confusion. "What then?"

"For continuing to give me chances to be better," Miranda stated. "For opening your beautiful heart to this." She licked her lips, angling her face up slightly. "For trusting me not to hurt you."

She wasn't surprised when he swooped in to capture her lips with his, the gentle caress demanding her whole attention but the telling click of a camera shutter had her pulling back.

Andrei looked upset for a moment before following her eyes to see the retreating photographer. He stood up quickly and moved on nimble feet, dodging trees and low hung branches to cut off the paparazzi. She watched as he simply held his hand out for the camera.

The paparazzi searched for an escape and finding none grudgingly handed his digital camera over.

Andrei fiddled with the camera and she could see his brow furrowing as he scrolled through the photos. She caught his low growl as he tore the SD card out from the slot and pocketed it. "How much?" She couldn't hear the response, but Andrei whipped out a business card and demanding a pen wrote something down. "You can have the SD card back, once I have copied and deleted the photos I do not believe are suitable for publication. You will call me tomorrow at noon sharp, where we will discuss this breach of my privacy and the price I am willing to pay you for these photos. If I catch sight of you before then, the deal is off. Is that clear?"

The photographer had no choice but to accept, no doubt feeling the waves of anger coming off the man. Andrei exuded a sheer strength that had her clenching her thighs together.

"I want your editor's name too." The man's response had Andrei's eyes darkening. "Fine, I will deal with her too." Andrei stepped away with a final reminder. "Twelve. Not a minute before or after. That's all." He sat back down beside her, his frustration rolling off him in waves.

She grew increasingly concerned as his jaw clenched. "What is it, my darling?"

"He's a freelance photographer. He was hired to tail us by Christina Thompson, who has just secured a position at the New York Post." He whispered.

"What will you do?" Miranda asked.

"How do you feel about going public?" Andrei asked.

"I have never wished to hide you from the world, Andrei," Miranda told him. "I admit that I was grateful Page Six had not yet captured a photograph of us, primarily because I wanted us to have the time to get comfortable together, but as you pointed out, there have been one or two reports of our dates."

"Well then, how about I arrange to speak with Greg Hill over at the Mirror?" Andrei smirked. "If I remember correctly, he held an acute dislike for Christina and he's repeatedly attempted contact to ask for an interview for the lifestyle section, thanks to my work for Ana Jacobson."

"Well, I suppose that would be fine." Miranda shrugged.
She believed there could be worse ways to come out, and she knew Andrei would set the record straight regarding his relationship with her and her daughters.

Andy was not pleased by his run-in with the photographer. The photos captured that afternoon included ones of him leading Miranda and the twins from the Plaza and of the gentle kiss he had initiated, but what really made his blood boil was the multiple photographs of the twins as they played. Usually, the New York press knew the twins were off limits.

Pacing Miranda's study, he spoke quietly into his the speaker of his cell, completing a phone interview with the editor of the New York Mirror about his work. He had agreed to send photographs of his work once they had finished speaking, which would be included in the feature. Andy knew it was only a matter of time before they moved on to his personal life. He could feel Miranda's eyes on him as he spoke. They conveyed so much love, he was spellbound by them.

"So, Andy, now we've discussed your work, I want to ask some personal questions," Greg told him. Andy ran his hand through his hair. "Okay." He agreed.

"Are you happy to be in New York again?" Greg asked.

"Yes, I am happy to have returned. This city has always felt like home, having already lived here before, I know it's the place I belong." He sat down on the comfortable sofa and offered Miranda a smile. "I do love Los Angeles, especially the sunshine and the surf, but it never caught my attention the way the Big Apple has, and although my time in the City of Angels was vastly rewarding, I felt the need to return."

"And can you tell us how your life in New York began?" Greg teased.

His laughter in response was loud. "As you know, I started my life in New York as the one and only male assistant to Miranda Priestly. Those who remember me from that time, probably remember a tall, lanky young man who had no idea about fashion or the publishing world. I learned a hell of a lot though."

"And what can you tell us of your time as Miranda's assistant?" Greg asked.

"Miranda is an inherently private person but I can easily say she is a remarkable woman, and despite what anyone thinks, she is a fair boss. She rewards those who excel and holds hope that those under her meet her specific expectations." Andy told the journalist. He continued to speak softly. "I have so much respect for her, as a woman at the very pinnacle of her chosen field and as a mother. She is a marvellous mom to her two very beautiful little girls."

"You left her in the middle of Paris Fashion Week though, if the rumours are true? Greg stated.

"Yes, I did. In my youthful naivety, I walked away from my job. But there were some personal issues that swayed my decision too. My grandpa, John Blake, had just been diagnosed with cancer and I was needed in California."

"John Blake, the Sculptor?" Greg seemed stunned.

"That's right." Andy smiled sadly. "He was always the one person that had an unshakable faith in me. He always provided encouragement for me to follow my dream."
"And now you have returned, what of the rumours you are dating the Devil in Prada?" Greg asked.

"Please don't call her that." Andy almost growled. "As for the rumours, I find I cannot deny them. Miranda and I reconnected about three or four months after my return when a random act of fate had her requiring my renovation skills. I was a recommendation from Ana Jacobson."

"I'm sorry, I didn't mean to cause offence" Greg amended quickly. "So, when did you start to date?" He asked.

"We only actually started dating around two months ago, after I started work on her Hamptons home." Andy grinned. "Let's just say, it's been a roller-coaster ride."

"And what of the rumours, Miranda hides the bodies of her enemies in her basement?" Greg teased.

"I can safely say there are no dead bodies hidden under Miranda's floorboards. Regarding her basement, however, I cannot say." Andy's smile widened as Miranda rolled her eyes.

"And what are your hopes for the future, Andy?" Greg was curious.

"I want to continue to build my business, to be the best at what I do. The same goes for my relationship with Miranda. I want to be the best person I can be, for her and her daughters. Doing anything in life half-assed just isn't who I am. You have to go big or go home."

Greg's laughter filled the room again. "I think that it for today. I have enough to go on. Thanks for speaking to me, Andy. I look forward to the photos and if you wanted to include one of you and Miranda that would be so awesome."

"I'll see what I can do, Greg. Thanks for this." Andy smiled.

"It will be good to trump the Post on the latest gossip, but from the horse's mouth rather than just half-truths," Greg stated. "If I get the photos within the next few hours, I'll have it pushed out in tomorrow's edition." He reassured.

They disconnected their call and Andy looked at the woman seated behind her desk. "I'll need to go to the office. All my photos and drafts are on the cloud server."

"Well, Cara is home this evening. I could come with you." Miranda stated. "The interview went well."

"Other than him using one of those ridiculous nicknames." Andy sighed.

"I'm quite used to it." Miranda breathed. "Now, give me a few minutes to arrange things."

"Acceptable." Andy's smile widened as Miranda sashayed from the room, her hips swaying provocatively.

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Miranda looked around Andrei's modern office space curiously. It was the first time she had seen it and she marvelled at the open space and glanced at the miniature scale models on show.

The office itself was reminiscent to her own with its glass desks, comfortable chairs and large leather sofa and comfortable armchairs. The iMac on his desk sat at an angle leaving enough space for him to work. Photographs dotted the walls, before and after photographs that showcased his work over the years.
She could certainly picture the man working in this space, drawing up his designs and creating his models.

Miranda had always felt the need to prove that she could be the best at whatever she set her mind to and she now understood, from Andrei's words to Greg Hill, that he felt somewhat similar.

If she was honest with herself, she was becoming increasingly desperate to have a life outside of Runway. The time she had spent that day with Andrei and her Bobbsey's had simply enforced the realisation that being a hard-working, middle-aged woman, a workaholic, was a waste. She was missing out on so much.

Until recently, she felt it was okay to only have her children to come home to at the end of each working day. And yet, more often than not, she found them already tucked up in bed by the time she returned home. She had tried to be more present since Stephen had gone, but often it just didn't seem like there were enough hours in the day.

She watched as Andrei sat back, clearly finished with his task. He really was a handsome man and his masculine build was aesthetically pleasing to her. More than anything else, she adored the fact Andrei was the polar opposite of either of her previous husbands. She truly adored him for all he was. She loved his gentleness and sensitivity but she especially loved his strength. There was also the added bonus that he clearly wasn't a womaniser.

Andrei smirked up at her and stood, stretching his back, his muscles rippling under the fitted sweater he still wore.

Her eyes fell to his crotch and noticed he had a slight bulge. He was clearly turned on and she found her own anticipation rising.

Andrei stepped around his desk and into her personal space. Tilting her head up, he caught her eyes. "I love you." He told her. "I love watching you, how curious you are about my work."

"Andrei, my darling, I must admit, I do find you quite captivating." Miranda smiled softly up at him.

"Yeah, I find myself equally as enthralled, by you." Andrei husked. "There is so much I want to say, but I just don't have the words."

Miranda's hands moved around his waist and she hugged him tight with her ear resting against his chest. Their bodies pressed together and she could feel his semi-hard cock pressed into her stomach. The acute ache between her legs grew stronger.

Andrei pushed closer still, walking her backwards until her ass hit the edge of his glass desk. He pulled up her dress quickly.

"Oh!" Her soft exclamation as Andrei's hands brushed up her thighs, surprised her and her desire rocketed.

Andrei unzipped himself with one hand and pulled his cock free from his tight boxers. His other hand moved around her waist to cup her ass, and his strong hand kneaded the bare flesh.

"I used to dream of taking you over your desk." Andrei's words teased against her ear. He rubbed himself gently against her as he continued to whisper. "Oh, some days it was torturous to walk two steps behind you. I ached for you. I still ache for you."

Miranda moaned in response. She was soaking wet, her desire flowing freely. She squeaked in
surprise when Andrei lifted her up and sat her on top of his desk. His pants and boxers were down around his feet as his hands continued to stroke her ass, waist and hips.

"Let's take these off," Andrei muttered, trying to pull down her panties, his movements becoming frenzied as he struggled. He kicked his own pants away easily.

Miranda was momentarily tongue-tied, stunned from his words. She lifted her ass and her thong was peeled away with a hiss of satisfaction. As Andrei stepped closer again, she took his cock in her hands and started stroking it, loving the little ragged moans and the almost purr that tore from his throat as he squeezed her ass, using it to pull her closer still. He turned harder and lengthened further from her gentle ministrations.

She wrapped her free arm around his neck to pull him down for a passionate kiss. Her legs opened around him as Andrei laid her down on her back against the glass, still kissing her, his tongue invading her mouth to dance delicately around her own. He slowly lowered himself down on top of her, the tip of his cock nudging against her before he entered her slowly.

"Oh, Andrei...mmh." Miranda moaned as he eased his way to being balls-deep inside her. She loved the way he felt inside her as he thrust slowly. Within a few moments, she was shuddering as her orgasm tore through her. Andrei slowed down. "Keep going," Her demand was followed by a long sensuous moan.

Their bodies rolled together as he picked up speed, his breath coming in short bursts. She met his thrusts feeling absolutely desired and loved. It was spectacular. She urged him on, leaning on her elbows to push her hips into his touch. Suddenly, Andrei pulled out and flipped her over so her ass was in the air. He slipped back inside easily and his first thrust in that position went deeper than ever before. She yelled his name as pleasure overwhelmed her as he continued to thrust deeply. She could feel herself building towards a second powerful orgasm and as if sensing she was about to climax he thrust even more furiously.

When her orgasm roared through her, it seemed to last an eternity with her moaning under him. "Oh God, Andrei...harder." She bucked against him wildly pushing herself to a third orgasm, hopefully where he would also climax.

"I'm gonna come," Andrei groaned. He gripped her hips firmly and she bucked against him, impaling herself on his impressive length. "Miranda...Hm...So beautiful." His whispered moans as his large hands stroked and squeezed her hips and ass. His breathing turned more ragged and he groaned as he climaxed, continuing to push into her wildly, shooting his load deep into her. Her own climax, almost in sympathy to his continued explosions, surprised her.

She mourned the loss of him immediately as he pulled out carefully. Turning her head, she saw his eyes blazing with excitement and desire as they roamed over her and it took her breath away. No one had ever looked at her the way Andrei did.

Andrei turned away and bent to pick up her panties from where he tossed them on the floor. Slipping off the desk, she stalked towards him on bare feet and swatted his ass firmly.

Andrei gasped and straightened, turning into her. "Mm, you are a minx." He growled playfully, sweeping his arms under her knees and carrying her bridal style back to his desk. He placed her down gently into his chair. "Choose a photo of us for Greg Hill and we can head on home." He grinned as he opened a folder on his desktop.

Miranda's breath hitched at his words. Taking her time, she glanced through the multitude of photos that had been captured over their weeks together, but the one that stood out was of them
gliding across the atrium of her Hamptons home. In the background, the open windows and blue skies set the perfect backdrop as she gazed up into his eyes lovingly. "That one is perfect."

"No, you are." Andrei smiled softly down at her as he leaned over and dragged the photo into an email before hitting send. His lips brushed against her ear. "You are perfect for me." He reiterated before stepping away to gather his pants.

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Andy was euphoric. Sat beside Miranda on their return to the Townhouse, he felt like he could take on the whole world, and in a way, he would. The following day he would be back in the Hamptons while Miranda dealt with life in New York. He just hoped that the press fallout from the announcement of their relationship wouldn't be too hard.

He was curious about what Christina Thompson was playing at. But he would find out. If she wanted a fight, he would be ready for her. Andy understood the press would have a lot to say about the difference in their age and more than likely his social status, but he simply didn't care.

He wanted Miranda, Cassidy and Caroline in his life always. He needed Miranda's light exploring touches like he needed air.

Glancing at the older woman beside him, he sensed her contemplative mood. "What's on your mind, sweetheart?" He asked softly.

Miranda shook herself from her thoughts and smiled. "I was just contemplating how it is that this feels so right."

"It does, doesn't it?" Andy smiled. "I find peace with you." He admitted.

"As I do with you. This is the least anxious I've ever felt being in a relationship." Miranda worried her lip between her teeth. "I feel so safe and comfortable with you, Andrei. It is somewhat disconcerting at times." She turned slightly to face him. "It is effortless being with you. I don't have to chase you, wondering if you actually want to be here with me. You just seem to know what I want and need and I love the fact you are in constant communication with me, whether by text or phone calls."

"I like hearing your voice." Andy flashed her a bright smile.

"One thing I hated about being with Stephen was the fact I felt like I was going crazy. He had this ability to lead me to believe one thing and then it was like he flipped a switch and started acting differently. I questioned everything he did and said, no longer trusting my own judgement when I was around him." Miranda whispered. "My relationship with my ex-husband made me anxious, Andrei. I felt inadequate. He wouldn't make the effort to meet me halfway on anything." Miranda took a deep breath. "Being with you, someone who's interested in making a relationship work is a novelty. You constantly show me how important this is to you."

"I'll always try to be as straightforward as I can, Miranda." Andy sighed. "I need someone I can be myself with. If I couldn't be my complete self with you or if I tried to be someone I'm not just to impress you, there would be no point to this. I need to be a goofball. I need to sing and dance and occasionally act like a fool."

"I love those facets of your personality, my darling. You bring me and the twins so much happiness." Miranda smiled across at him, filling him with genuine warmth. "I love you, Andrei, truly."
Andy understood that the relationship he was forming with Miranda was the right thing for him. Their future was bright, and he swore it would be full of warm, happy moments together. He’d certainly noticed he had started thinking about Miranda, Cassidy and Caroline more frequently throughout his days, often catching himself smiling like an idiot. He spent his nights imagining all the ways he could make them all happier. He loved when they all got to spend time together as much as he loved his alone time with Miranda.

Franky, the editor had stunned him when she agreed to try surfing the weekend before, even with her fear of the ocean. It showed her willingness to trust him, believing he would keep her safe.

He wanted her to be comfortable with him. He didn't want to change her. He simply just wanted her to be happy.

"I just want you to be happy," Andy told her.

"I am. My relationship with you leaves me in a constant state of awe. I love how we've been able to talk through our issues in a mature way. I told myself, after Stephen, that I wouldn't accept it if my partner didn't listen to me. I do not want someone who will agree with everything I say but I need someone who can demonstrate to me that he cares about what I have to say." Miranda told him.

"And do I?" Andy asked curiously.

"Yes, my darling, more then you'll ever know," Miranda reassured softly. "Now, the twins will be waiting for us, perhaps we can settle in to watch this Mythbuster show they seem to enjoy."

"Awesome." Andy smiled happily, relishing in the fact he would be with the three people he loved the most in the world.

Their arrival at the house was heralded with tears from both of her precious Bobbsey's and she couldn't fathom what had occurred. She found herself kneeling on the floor with the twins curled up against her chest.

She saw Cara hovering nervously and watched as Andrei pulled her into the kitchen. She heard the explosion as his temper blazed. "What do you mean their father was here? What the fuck did he do or say to them?" There was a quiet murmur and she heard the garage door bang closed.

Cara scurried from the kitchen and caught her eyes. She could feel the waves of anxiety rolling off the younger woman. "I just explained to Andy that James was here. I left him with the twins, just while I got them a drink, and when I got back they were crying. I swear, Miranda, I have no idea what happened. I told him to get out as soon as I saw how distraught they were." Her panic was palpable.

"Where did Andrei go?" Miranda asked, standing with a daughter in each arm.

"Lexington Bar and Books," Cara whispered. "I heard James on the phone outside making plans to meet someone."

Miranda ground her teeth. She hoped that Andrei could keep his temper in check. Moving sedately up the stairs, Cara walked behind her, ensuring she arrived at her destination safely. She sat on the sofa in the living room and brushed kisses against her baby’s foreheads.

"Can you tell me what happened, my Bobbsey's?" Miranda asked.
Cassidy swallowed her tears and let out a shuddering breath. "When we told dad we were waiting for you and Dandy to come home, he got really angry with us. He asked what was wrong with us, that we shouldn't love anyone but you and him. That he does everything for us."

"Oh my beautiful babies, there is nothing at all wrong with you. Your capacity to love your Dandy is remarkable and I for one am so proud of how loving you are with everyone. It takes courage to show people what is in your heart."

"When I started crying he told me to stop being such a baby," Caroline muttered into her chest. "Then he mumbled something about me being just like you. Like it was the worst thing in the world."

Miranda was furious. Children looked towards the adults in their lives to validate their feelings, so being dismissed by their father was unacceptable. And if Caroline turned out exactly like her, she would be grateful. It was far better to be strong like her regardless of James finding it undesirable. This form of rejection was not something she would take lying down.

She whispered reassurances and over time the girls settled into a restless slumber against her chest. She gestured for Cara who stepped towards her quickly. "Can you watch the girls?"

Cara nodded her agreement and took Cassidy from Miranda's arms. Miranda settled Caroline further into her arms as they made their way upstairs to the twin's bedroom and placed them beside each other in one of the large beds.

Miranda stood back and watched as they curled around one another, marvelling at their closeness even in sleep. Miranda stepped from the room, closing the door quietly.

"I called Roy. Will you be going after Andy?" Cara asked softly.

"Yes, I need to make sure that nothing untoward happens. James is already gunning for him after the paint stripper debacle at the weekend." Miranda pursed her lips. "All this was quite unnecessary, but it will be resolved one way or another tonight."

"I hope so." Cara breathed. "Andy is a good man. No harm will ever come to you and those girls while he is around."

"I know," Miranda breathed. "But how far will that protectiveness push him to react adversely?"

"He is a good man. Just don't forget that." Cara whispered as Miranda made her way down the stairs.

**xxxxxxxxxx**

Andy was angrier than he'd been in a long time but he knew he couldn't let the intense feeling overwhelm him. If there was one thing he would not allow, it was to let anything ruin what he was building with Miranda, including his own temper.

The cool night breeze eased his burning rage at finding the twins so distraught. He didn't care what had been said, that was irrelevant, but to be upset in their own home was something he would not allow to happen.

Arriving at Bar and Books, Andy saw it suited the area. Looking down at himself, he knew he would fit in perfectly. Stepping I to the bar, he breathed in the rich aroma of cigars. Stepping down below street level into a cosy, low-lit bar, he glanced around. The room was beautiful and he adored it immediately. The bar oozed an old-time atmosphere that was other-worldly, a cross
between a speakeasy and a private library. Moving to the bar he ordered an Aberlour.

He glanced around again and spotted Miranda's ex easily holding court at a table alongside a bunch of twenty-something-year-old women and some banker types. Settling in, with his back against the bar, he sipped his Scotch, enjoying the warmth as it slid down his throat. He closed his eyes briefly until he felt the movement at his side. His eyes blazed open as a swirl of smoke surrounded him. He gazed at the older man beside him puffing on a fat, Cuban cigar.

"I know you came looking for me," James muttered darkly.

"I hate seeing the twins upset, there was no need for you to do that," Andy stated. "When I entered this relationship with Miranda, I understood Caroline and Cassidy would always come first and because I care for them, I decided to treat them the same. Maybe I was a little naive but I didn't even contemplate having to go head to head with you."

"What do you want from me?" James hissed.

"Ten minutes ago, I wanted to knock your head off your shoulders. Now, I want absolutely nothing from you." Andy shrugged as James's jaw dropped at his admission. "What I want is what is best for Miranda and the twins. And if that means I am the bigger man, so be it. I will support Miranda however she needs."

"They called you daddy." James seethed.

"I think you need a hearing aid, old man. They call me Dandy." Andy smirked as James huffed at the title. "I do not want to step on any toes, James."

"They barely even call me dad," James admitted. "It hurts sometimes."

"Doesn't it worry you that your behaviour will just end up pushing them away further? It seems like you are almost a stranger to them." Andy knew he was laying it on thick, but he didn't want to continue building hostility with the man, plus there was some truth to his words.

"Yeah, I realise I've not always been the best father," James admitted quietly. "I can honestly say I never really wanted children, and then I found I was having two in one hit. I knew at that moment my life would never be the same. I threw my relationship with Miranda away and distanced myself from them." He muttered. "I regret it."

"You know, I can understand your anger at me and even the spite of your actions last week when you destroyed my work. Frankly, it must be a kick in the teeth to realise Miranda has found someone to love, perhaps in the same way as she once loved you, but to take that anger out on your daughters is an absolutely shitty thing to do." He caught James's startled eyes.

"They are mine," James whispered. "All three of them."

"Are they? Why don't your children call you daddy? Why doesn't Miranda still call herself your wife? Tell me, James, why did you get so offended by the misunderstanding they were calling me daddy?" Andy asked.

"I love them," James whined.

"I don't doubt that, but your love for them is clouding your ability to see what's best for them."

Andy turned towards the bar and catching the bartender’s eye, gestured for a round of drinks.

"And you think that's you?" James scoffed.
"Yes, I do. I can make them happy." Andy stated firmly.

"Why are you being so reasonable?" James was curious.

"It would be so easy to hold on to my anger, and not only on Miranda's behalf. But being at loggerheads with you is not what I want, James, and it wouldn't help in the long run." Andy declared.

"I remember when you worked for Miranda." James puffed on his cigar, frowning to realise it had died. "You were different from what you are now, but you were the best thing to happen to her, even then." Andy pulled a lighter from his pocket and handed it to the man. James fired it and touched the flame directly to the foot of the cigar, rotating it around the edge until it began to burn, and then puffed on it lightly. "Do you smoke?" James asked, waving the cigar held between his fingers.

"I've been known to partake." Andy offered a smile. "I'm a little fussy though."

James eyed him curiously. "I don't see what she sees in you. Why you? She could have anyone." He asked. "I mean, you seem like a decent enough guy, but what is it that you can offer her?"

"In all honesty, James, I don't have a single fucking clue why me," Andy admitted. "We just always gravitated towards each other." Andy grabbed his drink and sipped it. He felt the air crackle and a small smile played on his lips at the old recognition as Miranda's scent flooded his senses. "And what I offer Miranda is love and support. I know first-hand how demanding and high-handed she can be. I know how hard her job is and I see what toll it takes on her. I understand there will be missed dinners and forgotten anniversaries. She takes so much upon herself to succeed in a man's world. How could I not love and admire that?" He asked. James leaned against the bar, his head resting in his hands. "Were you aware I asked Miranda to give us a chance years ago?" He asked.

James looked up. "Miranda mentioned something. What happened?"

"I fell in love with her when I worked for her. She was seriously like no one I'd ever met, but I was nobody and she dismissed me entirely. When I declared my feelings she told me it was absurd." Andy muttered. "So, I left. I disappeared across the country and after a time, set up my business. I became quite successful on the West Coast and a small part of that success has followed me across the country, which incidentally threw me back in Miranda's path."

"You shall be just as successful on the East Coast, Andrei." Miranda's voice hit them and James stiffened, clearly lacking the awareness of her presence. "Now, will you order me a drink or must I start my own tab?" She demanded imperiously.

"Macallan," Andrei ordered, grinning at her as her warm hand ran up his back.

"You know me too well, my darling." Miranda brushed a kiss against his cheek before looking up at James. "I believe we need to talk, James."

"What about?" She sensed James becoming nervous.

"Oh, about our children. They have advised me of your words to them. I believe a short break from each other is required." Miranda stated coldly.

"But our custody..." James trailed off, biting his lips. "...my lawyers..."
"By all means, we can discuss this via our legal representatives. But I will ensure you lose all your rights to visitation." She glared at her first husband, willing him to see she meant what she said,

"A break you say?" James queried softly, clearly unwilling to push her to extremes, knowing she would throw everything she could at him.

"Mm, yes. And I thought I would also take this time to provide you with a small gift." She took out her cell and tapped a quick text. Within moments, Roy was beside her, a large box in his arms. He handed the box to James, who set it on the barstool and opened the lid carefully. The four of them were met by the stunning Sapphire eyes of a grey American Staffordshire terrier puppy. "Her name is Nalo, she who must be admired."

James's lips twitched in the ghost of a smile. "Mm, I wonder how you came up with that name." He caught her eyes. "For me? Really?"

"I thought you may be lonely, it has certainly been a while since your last conquest. It was either this or making the suggestion to join Tinder." Miranda grinned as Andrei guffawed loudly. "She will be loyal to you, James. Please treat this precious girl with the same commitment."

The puppy yapped and toppled its box over in her quest to escape her confinement. James caught her easily and held her to his cheek as she licked and nipped his ear furiously.

"Hey, no dogs in here." The owner of the bar hollered at them.

James grinned and brushing a quick kiss against her cheek, rushed from the bar with his precious cargo held close to his chest. Roy strode after him quickly, calling out to him. "Hey, Mr Hetherington, there's more stuff in the car. Do you want a ride?"

Miranda had been surprised to find Andrei speaking reasonably to her ex-husband, but she was pleased there had been no major confrontation. She hoped James would consider everything he'd been told, and hopefully, he would come around for their children's sake. He'd seem particularly smitten with the puppy, much to her amusement. He was such a softie where animals were concerned.

As they sat down at a quiet table, with their drinks, Miranda cuddled up into Andrei and was wrapped up in his arms. "You realise I'm not as good with words as you?" Andrei murmured, his lips brushing against the crown of her head.

"You could have fooled me, you were perfectly eloquent with James," Miranda smirked.

"I rarely show other men my vulnerable side but I found it was required. I wanted to show him I am your biggest fan because no one on this Earth could ever be more important to me than you and the girls." Andrei leaned forward and brought his drink to his lips, sipping slowly. "I felt the twin's pain, even without hearing the cause of it. And I seriously wanted to rip James limb from limb. I wanted to protect them, and you, from further harm."

"I have never met anyone like you either, Andrei," Miranda admitted, showing him she had heard his words. "You really aren't afraid to share what's in your heart, are you?"

"Not when it comes to you, Caro and Cassi," Andrei admitted. "I want you all to know that I am here for the long run, that you are enough regardless of any flaws you may have."

Miranda pulled away and grabbed her drink. Knocking it back quickly, she stood and held her hand out. "Take me home, my darling." She spoke softly.
She watched as Andrei gulped the amber liquid in his glass and beamed one of his brightest smiles. "Yes, home." He agreed, taking her hand and pulling her from the smoky bar.

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Miranda lay in bed after a day filled with incompetence. She found she couldn't switch her brain off. She'd spent her morning dealing with Irv's irritability about the very public announcement of her relationship With Andrei and his thinly veiled suggestions about forgetting her tradesman and being with him.

By the time their meeting was over, and her budget cut yet again, she had a splitting headache. Upon her return to her office, she left word that she was not to be disturbed until her next meeting. She found herself kicking off her heels and lying on the sofa as she placed a call to Andrei, seeking comfort from his deep voice.

Shaking her head, she saw the screen on her cell light up and smiled. It had been two intolerably long days since Andrei had taken her and the twins to the Plaza and dealt with James so efficiently.

They had woken early the next morning when the twins climbed in bed with them and snuggled into their warmth. She was grateful they had seen fit to wear some clothing for bed, having just snuggled in under her comforter, talking softly.

Miranda told them about their father's new puppy and they, in turn, asked questions about Andrei's disappearance into the night.

Andrei spoke honestly to her girls about the conversation he had with their father explaining how he had misheard their new nickname for him and had grown upset over the belief he had been replaced. He asked them to give James another chance to be better.

Caroline was reluctant until Cassidy nudged her. "One more chance." She insisted grudgingly. "And only because you asked."

Cassidy giggled. "And only if you make us pancakes for breakfast." She gave him her best kicked-puppy expression and his laughter as he pulled them close was a blessed relief.

Miranda found herself marvelling at the younger man's ability to get her stubborn daughters to rethink things and decided he was a truly beautiful human.

When she had spoken to Andrei earlier that day, she had been advised that he was close to completing the work on the house and when she saw the photos he emailed earlier that evening, it showed his work was simply exquisite.

Andrei's plan was to be in the city the following day and he had agreed to dinner at the house.
She picked up her cell and opened her messages knowing there was only one person who would text so late.

**Andrei: Been thinking about you :)**

She tapped her response quickly.

**MP: Oh, really? x**

She waited only a moment for his reply.

**Andrei: Mm, yea...**

Her smile widened. Her Andrei was just ridiculously adorable.

**MP: Let me guess. Are you horny?**

She sipped the glass of water sitting on her bedside table and settled in against the pillows. After five minutes her cell pinged.

**Andrei: Are you telepathic?**

Her laughter filled the quiet room until her cell pinged again.

**Andrei: I can't stop thinking about all the things I'd like to do to you. About how stunning you looked splayed across my desk the other night ;)**

Her fingers moved swiftly over the keypad as she smirked.

**MP: You are incorrigible x**

Andrei's response was immediate.

**Andrei: Oh, I know. What are you wearing?**

She looked down at herself and grinned as she typed.

**MP: A silk nightshirt. You?**

Another instant answer was her reward.

**Andrei: Answer the front door and I'll show you :P**

Miranda threw her comforter off and launched herself from the bed, quickly making her way down the stairs.

Flinging the front door open, she caught sight of the younger man and her smile bloomed. He was a sight for sore eyes. She grabbed Andrei’s hand and tugged him inside, taking the time to glance over at his outfit, a pair of basketball shorts and a muscle shirt. His hair was curly and damp.

Kicking the door closed with sneakered feet, Andrei swept her into his arms, lifting her off her feet as he held her close against his broad chest. She loved the feel of his hard body against hers, but it was not purely sexual. Everything about him felt so right. Taking the time to simply breathe him in, it felt like time stood still.
Unable to resist she wrapped her legs around him and snared his lips in a searing kiss. She broke away and hummed. "You've had chocolate." She accused playfully.

"I had a hot chocolate on the drive over, it's a little late for coffee." Andrei's smile was bright and his eyes twinkled. "I found I couldn't stay away from the city another night and Michelle was in full agreement, so I dropped her at home and headed to my apartment, but I was lonely in bed by myself." He admitted.

"Oh, we can't have that," Miranda whispered. "Now, I believe there is a warm bed waiting for us."

Andrei bounded up the stairs nimbly with her still wrapped up in his arms as she trailed her lips along his jaw.

Andrew, surprisingly, felt no awkwardness admitting his apartment was lonely. He had wanted time to settle back in, but thoughts of Miranda, of the times they shared, had him aching for her presence.

Unable to resist, he jumped in his truck and drove across town. Stopping at one of the many Starbucks on Lexington Avenue for hot chocolate, he sat down with his warm drink and used the time to send Miranda the first message, if she didn't answer he would just go home.

He was delighted by her quick responses. Unable to keep away, he'd grabbed his drink and driven the few minutes to Miranda's townhouse, luckily finding a free parking bay on the street. He'd sat drinking the chocolate as Miranda started teasing.

He found himself amused by the sheer absurdity of the moment. Upon finding out she was ready for bed, he decided to make his presence known and told her to open the door. Stepping from his truck, he walked the few hundred yards to the house and as he climbed the stoop the door was flung open.

Miranda's smile was breathtaking, and her obvious happiness at his sudden appearance lit up her beautiful eyes. As she tugged his hand, he couldn't stop himself from sweeping her up and holding onto her tightly. The gentle, yet passionate kiss she initiated was mindblowing.

He had missed Miranda. He knew it had only been two days since they woke up together but he had hated every moment he'd had to spend away from her. What they were building together made sense, it felt so incomparably right.

He thought of the phone call that morning, of Miranda's hissed words of frustration about Irv Ravitz. He thought about the article in the Mirror, of how well-received it had been, how his phone had been ringing with new offers of work. Everything seemed to be going his way, except for one thing. When he'd returned to his office that evening, he found Christina Thompson had left a message on his phone. Her words chilled him to the core.

She wanted him to meet her, for God knows what, alternatively she would have a story printed that he was a deadbeat dad, someone who shirked his responsibilities. The child in question...her son, Paris. He scoffed internally at the ridiculous name for the boy. Paris, Prince of Troy, had started the Trojan war after a love affair with Helen of Troy. He shook the thoughts away. He would not bow down to that woman's demands, nothing would make him do something so stupid and ruin what he and Miranda had.

Carrying Miranda quickly upstairs, he spoke quietly as he set her down against her pillows and
moved to lock the door. "We need to talk, Miranda." He started to pace. "I'm never going to be able to give you the kind of lifestyle you have become accustomed to.' He said, waving his hand around.

"I've worked hard for what I have, Andrei" Miranda stated. "Surely my wealth doesn't mean you no longer want me, does it?" She was hesitant.

"No, of course not." He sighed. "But you deserve somebody who can give you everything you desire."

'Unless they can give me you, I'm not interested,' Miranda stated. "Now, will you tell me what is this about?"

She paced the room as Andrei explained about the message he received and waves of anger rolled through her when he told her he would understand if she wanted an out.

It was clear Christina Thompson wanted what was hers, but she would not get it. She would not get her claws into her Andrei, as she had not gotten her claws into Runway all those years before. No one would ever say Miranda Priestly just rolled over and gave up. She would fight dirty if necessary.

Miranda brushed her hand through her hair, her mind ticking over. She felt Andrei's disgust and distress as if it were her own.

"What will the press say, Miranda?" Andrei whispered. "How do I explain this to the twins?"

Miranda considered the photographs that Andrei had given back to the paparazzi for Page Six. The ones of her girls had been deleted entirely, leaving just a few shots of her and Andrei holding hands and the one of their kiss, but by the time they could be published the Mirror had the scoop.

From what she had heard, Christina had been furious. She had run their story that day but by that time the photo of them dancing together in her home had generated many wonderful comments and people were not surprised to see them.

"If she publishes one slanderous thing she will be met with the full force of my P.R and legal team." Miranda found herself stating firmly. "But I do have a plan, and if it comes to fruition, it will stop this in its tracks and also rid me of Irving's unwanted attention." She turned to the man. "Advise her you want a DNA test."

"I didn't sleep with her." Andrei's voice rose. "A DNA test, if word gets out, will have people thinking I did."

"We won't just be testing your DNA. Irv Ravitz should be held accountable for his child, don't you think?" Miranda stepped towards Andrei and brushed his hair from his forehead as she searched his eyes. "Unless you actually wish to sleep with her. As I have stated before, I can see how she may hold a certain appeal."

"I would rather shove shards of glass down the end of my dick." Andrei's words were reassuring if somewhat extreme.

"I would rather you didn't hurt little Andy, I have grown rather fond of him." Miranda found herself smirking as amusement lit up Andrei's eyes. "Give me a day, I will schedule a meeting with Irving in his office. I will have Emily storm in, demanding my attention, at which point I shall suggest we postpone the meeting, but before I do, I shall request the use of his private bathroom citing
necessary women's business. When I leave I shall hopefully have something that will provide sufficient evidence of his DNA." Miranda pursed her lips. "Once we have results, I will deal with Christina Thompson. I may need your assistance to get her somewhere quiet."

Andrei pulled her in close to him and she stroked her hand through his curls again causing him to hum. "You know, you're scarily adept at getting your way. I have complete faith in you." He pulled her onto his lap. "This could get messy, sweetheart. Getting a DNA test done, without consent could land us in a heap of trouble."

"I cannot simply allow this, Andrei," Miranda stated. "And I cannot lose you now."

"You won't," Andrei reassured.

"I will not give up on this, my darling," Miranda whispered. "I cannot fathom not having you in my life..." Her nimble fingers ran under his t-shirt. "...Of not being able to touch you as I desire..." She bent her head and kissed him. "...of feeling your lips on mine." Her kisses turned deeper as her nails ran alongside Andrei's ribs and he moaned. "Make love to me, my darling." She breathed.

"Why would I want anyone else when I have all I ever dreamed of right under this roof, with you and my little ones." Andrei pulled her closer.

Andrei pulled her closer.

Andy looked down at the woman straddling his lap, amazed by her words as her hands trailed over his back. He felt the thrilling burst of desire travelling down through his stomach to his groin as he let his eyes roam across the beautiful sight of the silver-haired goddess pressed against him.

His blood pumped through him quickly as his desire rose and he could feel his cock growing erect.

He couldn't believe how lucky he was to have this woman in his arms. It was beyond anything he could ever have imagined for himself. She was like no one he had ever met, which made her so vastly different from other women, especially those like Christina Thompson.

His brow scrunched in irritation as the blonde woman entered his mind and his erection deflated somewhat as memories from Paris flooded through him.

"Am I not good enough for you?" Christina stood with her hands on her hips, her skirt shucked up around her hips as she shouted.

"It's not that, it's just...I..." Andy blushed.

Christina laughed. "Are you gay or something?" She screeched belligerently. "Everyone says you are..."

"I'm not homosexual. I am simply tired and a little drunk, Christina, and you're also drunk."

Andy muttered his excuses pathetically.

"Fuck, I assumed you were a real man. You're pathetic." Christina glared balefully at him and he wished the ground would open up so he could just disappear.

Why the fuck had he agreed to this again? Oh yeah, Harry Potter...

As if sensing his inner turmoil, Miranda pulled back. "Where did you go, my darling?"
The last thing he ever wanted was that bitch in his head when he was with Miranda, but he was unwilling to lie. "Paris." He admitted.

"I know I behaved terribly, but I assumed we were over that?" Miranda pulled further away.

Locking his long arms around her waist, he stopped her from scarpering off his lap. "It's not you, Miranda. All that fell between us, I have forgiven." He took a shuddering breath. "The morning after my night with Christina, she followed me from her room in nothing but a towel, shouting at my back that my erectile dysfunction was down to having been castrated emotionally, by you. Through your coldness and clear dismissal of me as a person. My wish to still warn you of Irv's manoeuvring had her claiming I was weak and that I would always be insignificant. Her words left me furious and somewhat humiliated as they were overheard by some of the Runway crew, including Nigel and Lucia."

"You mentioned on that first day we drove out to the Hampton that she left you feeling emasculated," Miranda stated quietly. "I hope you know her words were lies. You are not weak, and certainly not insignificant. She was most likely pushing her own insecurity over her inability to get you to rise to the occasion back on to you. Many women believe men desire sex for physical reasons alone rather than for an emotional connection. She would not like the idea that you were not sexually attracted to her."

"It was a horrible night really. She treated the wait staff like shit, laughed about other people's misfortune, and tried to up play her own worth by attempting to make me think less of others." He caught Miranda's eyes and saw the recognition in them. Christina had bad mouthed her and wanted him to do the same. "The more wine she drank the more loud, annoying and ignorant she became."

"What else?" Miranda's curiosity had him smirking

"She was a terrible kisser. There was no softness and she tried to shove her tongue as deep in my mouth as it would go. It was a total turn-off." He shuddered at the memory. "I realised I found her repulsive. Frankly, I was close to telling her I would rather lick an unflushed toilet during the sweltering summer heat than lay a finger on her."

Miranda laughed heartily and he grinned shyly, pleased that he could amuse her. "Oh, dear God. Please tell her that when I am in the vicinity."

"We should sleep," Andy muttered.

Miranda hummed her agreement, but her hands were inching his t-shirt up as they ran over his back, almost tickling him. She pulled it over his head and tossed it aside. Her teeth nipped at the defined muscles in his shoulder before her tongue swept across his collarbone teasingly.

Banishing all negative thoughts from his mind, Andy pulled the woman closer against him and concentrated on the feelings Miranda coaxed from him. His warm hands kneaded her ass gently. His desire rose at the realisation Miranda wasn't wearing panties.

Miranda moaned at the feeling of her his caressing hands as they moved under her sleep shirt and made contact with her bare skin.

He let out a sigh of utter contentment. This, what they were sharing, was rapidly becoming everything to him. His feelings overwhelmed him and he took a staggering breath.

His hand moved from Miranda's ass and his fingers moved around to settle into the hot pool of arousal between her thighs.
Miranda clenched in anticipation as his thumb sought the sensitive bundle of nerves and two fingers entered her easily. "Andrei!" Miranda gasped.

He offered her a wide, lazy smile. "Yes, sweetheart?" Andy asked, feeling Miranda's body respond further to his touch.

"More..." Miranda moaned. "I need more!"

Begging was not something Miranda was used to doing, but she needed all Andrei could provide. She trembled when a third finger eased inside her, driving her out of usually rational mind. She panted as her hips starting to buck against the increased the pressure knowing a climax was imminent. Miranda's hips rocked rhythmically until her entire body started to spasm leaving Andrei to guide her through the pleasure he'd created from his touch.

As she sighed in contentment, Andrei held her gently. She could feel the press of his erection straining against her. "We should try to sleep." He mumbled yet again.

"Not yet." Miranda teased breathlessly. Her hand fell between them and she teased her fingertips against the bulge in his shorts.

"Of course not," Andrei smirked. She could feel him growing harder at her teasing. "How could I refuse you anything?" He husked.

Andrei made her want to climb to the top of the highest mountain and shout his name, or something equally demonstrative. She wanted the whole world to know she was his and he was hers and that feeling was unlike anything she'd experienced before. Her hand slipped beneath the waistband of the shorts to find Andrei was not wearing boxers. "I see you came prepared for me, Andrei." Miranda teased, cupping his balls.

"I just showered." Andrei groaned.

"Andrei, my darling," Miranda whispered his voice entreatingly and his eyes blazed open.

"Yes, sweetheart?" Andrei swallowed hard as her hand wrapped around the base of his penis.

"You are magnificent, my darling. In all ways." Miranda spoke lovingly, wanting to reassure the sensitive man.

"Really?" Andrei inhaled sharply as her hand started to pump his shaft.

"Yes, and don't you ever forget it." Miranda arched her eyebrow at the clear disbelief held in his eyes. "I am blessed to have you." She placed a soft kiss on his lips and he moaned into her mouth as she continued to stroke. "God, I love how hard you get for me."

Andrei stood up quickly and used his free hand to tug down his shorts and kick them away. Turning them, he lay her down and hovered over her.

The deep ache of desire grew as she looked up at the man hovering so gently above her, his hand stroking her face as she teased his hard cock. Andrei turned her on more than she could ever comprehend. She just couldn't get enough. Opening her legs further, she ran her feet up to his back, encouraging him closer. "Andrei, I need..." The words were cut off by his lips, his tongue parting her lips easily and twining with her own. She broke the kiss, and closing her eyes, pleaded for more. "Please, Andrei. Please. I need you."
Andrei stroked an appreciative hand across the silky material of her shirt, his eyes showing their enjoyment of the curves hidden beneath. "You won't be needing this." Andrei teased, unbuttoning the front of the shirt easily with one hand. He slipped the shirt away from her shoulders, with her rising briefly to assist and watched it join the clothes on the floor. Her arousal pulsed through her. "What do you want?" He demanded.

'You,' Miranda gulped.

"Slow?" Andrei asked. Edging himself inside, he pushed his hips steadily. "Or fast?" Their bodies seemed to fit together perfectly as if made for one another. He groaned as he bottomed out.

"Slow." Miranda hissed.

Andrei began to rock gently within her and she cried out. He pushed them towards their mutual climax slowly. "You have no idea what you do to me?" He murmured. His eyes closed as he concentrated on thrusting into her with long, slow strokes, his width stretching her and driving her on to grip the sheets beneath her fingers, Miranda's breathing was ragged as she moaned softly. "I've been dreaming of doing this since Wednesday morning." He groaned, pushing his hips forward hard before returning to his shallow strokes.

Miranda shuddered. "And yet here we are, on Thursday," Miranda teased breathlessly as he alternated between hard and soft thrusts.

"Mmm, it seemed like an unbearably long time." Andrei panted.

Miranda could feel her orgasm building, but knew, if, given the chance, Andrei would tease her mercilessly before pushing her towards multiple orgasms. "Please..." Miranda whimpered. "...oh, please...make me come." She begged. Her body clamped down once more around his cock contracting against his length. She knew, from the low growl coming from the man above, he wouldn't be able to hold off much longer.

He picked up the pace and powered himself forward. Leaning down leaned down and nipped at her ear teasingly. 'Go on then,' Andrei urged breathlessly. "Come for me..." He trailed off. "Now!"

"I love you." Miranda cried out passionately. "Oh, God!" She moaned, aware of nothing but the orgasm that was roaring through her, clamouring to escape. The reaction from her, the loud cry of ecstasy, reverberated around the room.

Andrei attempted to slow the pace and deepen his thrusts, extending her orgasm, but his own was close. "Oh fuck!" Andrei groaned deeply, the speed of his thrusts increased as the pleasure continued to flow through Miranda, vaulting her from one climax to the next. Pulling her hips towards him in time to meet his thrusts, Andrei caused them both to cry out as the first stream of his cum shot deep inside her willing body.

Miranda rocked hypnotically against him, encouraging him further, his cock timing each release with the full depth of his entry, as she impaled herself on him over and over again until she had taken every drop of his seed and he was whimpering.

Withdrawing gently, Andrei eased them both onto their sides, cradling her from behind. "I love you, Miranda." His nose trailed down behind her ear and he hummed as sleep quickly claimed him.

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There was something deeply beautiful about waking up next to Miranda Priestly and he wondered if anything could better these uninterrupted moments. Resting back against the headboard, having
shoved his shorts back on, he decided if he had to relive this day, over and over, he would be content. He grinned at the corny thoughts running through his mind as Miranda stirred beside him before her alarm. He loved that she woke up slightly before it sounded as if preparing for the day.

Miranda had once told him she usually hated sleeping beside someone but was amazed at finding she found herself comforted by his presence beside her. Her claims she felt safe and loved snuggled up in his arms or laying with her head against his chest blew his mind. Miranda turned to face him, burrowing further into the comfort of the duvet and moved towards him almost unconsciously.

He looked down and saw Miranda's sleepy blue eyes watching him. "Hi, beautiful." He couldn't stop the wide smile of happiness. The unguarded look in her eyes too the sting of having to get up and start the day a little easier but it wasn't simply that, he felt special under the intense gaze. Andy knew in these moments that what they shared was symbolic for both of them, they were equally comfortable and serious about their relationship. It wasn't huge, but the knowledge offered them both comfort.

Scooting down he rested his head on the pillow beside Miranda and pulled her close, wanting to cherish these stolen moments. Tilting her head up, he offered her a gentle kiss.

"Mm," Miranda hummed. "One of the very best things about waking up today is seeing you here with me." Miranda smiled softly. "But as much as I adore looking at you, my second favourite thing is calling my name. I need coffee. Lots and lots of beautiful coffee."

"I'll get right on that for you." Andy extracted himself and moved from the comfort of the bed only to look down into Miranda's pouting face. His smile was soft as he grinned down at her affectionately.

"One moment, please." Miranda husked. "I want to take the time to enjoy this moment." Andy sat back down and pulled Miranda close again. She buried her face against his jaw. "I'm happy like this." She whispered.

"That'll be the Oxytocin." Andy teased. "You make me feel happy, too." He admitted as Miranda's devastating mouth landed against his pulse point. "But if you continue like that, you'll get more than you bargained for."

"Mm, really." The whispered words against his skin had him groaning.

Andy dropped his mouth to Miranda's while his hands slid up to cup her breasts, caressing her hardening nipples lightly with his the pads of his thumbs. Within moments, their mouths opened to allow their desperate tongues to dance. Miranda's hands clawed his back as she moved against him. Breaking the kiss, he saw the flush of arousal flaring up Miranda's chest and smirked.

Leaning close his breath whispered against the shell of her ear. "I'll try not to make you late for work." Miranda squealed when he nipped the lobe before soothing it with the tip of his tongue. His teeth grazed the skin gently before he dipped lower, pushing Miranda back against the pillows, and took one of her taut nipples into his mouth.

Releasing his focused attention from her breasts, Andy kissed slowly down Miranda's body, rejoicing in the sound of her low throaty moans as her delicate hands twisted into his thick dark hair, urging him on. Reaching his intended destination, he inhaled the light, fragrant scent of the editor's desire. Unable to resist, he ran his firm tongue through her wet, swollen folds letting it explore.
Miranda's hips rocked against his tongue and lips, seeking further contact and her breathing turned harsh as his stubble scraped against the delicate skin of her sensitive inner thighs.

Andy's tongue caressed Miranda's throbbing clit before covering it with his lips and sucking the sensitive bud between his teeth. His hands crept to her ass, lifting her towards him and trapping her firmly in place firmly against him. Increasing his efforts, Andy sucked her clit firmly and rhythmically and experienced a feeling of intense satisfaction when the woman he loved orgasmed against his mouth.

"Oh!" Miranda breathed as waves of pleasure crashed through her. Her eyes blazed open and she looked down at him between her legs. "How do you do that to me?" She husked breathlessly. "No one has ever made me feel the way you do."

He grinned up at her happily, loving the fact he could coax such an intense reaction from her. Moving upright, he saw as her eyes landed on his hard cock beneath his shorts.

Miranda's hand wended its way into his hair and she pulled him bodily against her before flipping them. She ground down, her breath hitching at the feel of the silky nylon against her.

Andy ran his hands teasingly up and down the small of Miranda's back, loving the feel of his hands running over the smooth, warm skin. His desire rose as the wetness between her thighs made itself known against him. "You are so extraordinarily stunning, Miranda." His fingers trailed over the bare skin of her ass as he ground up against her. His thoughts were of burying himself inside her again as he grew harder from the friction between them.

Miranda moved off him suddenly causing him to groan at the loss, but instead of moving away as he expected, she pulled his shorts down over his hips and straddled him again in one fluid motion.

Miranda leaned forward with her arms above his shoulders to support herself and he could feel her warm, wet pussy pressed against his hard cock.

Catching his eyes, she raised herself and pressed down, letting him slip between her lips. She caught her bottom lip between her teeth as she moved slowly, his brushing against her but not inside her.

"You're such a tease," Andy whispered, enjoying the sight of the woman moving over him. He knew with a little thrust he would be sheathed inside the older woman but was happy for her to do what she wanted. His cock was wet from Miranda's desire and it throbbed almost painfully as it slipped over the opening then over her clit. Finally, in a move that surprised him, Miranda raised herself onto her knees and moved, so the tip of his cock was pressed against her tight entrance.

He thrust up and into her, a low rumbling moan leaving his throat. It was just the head but he found the tight warmth intoxicating. The butterflies soared around his stomach as Miranda adjusted taking all of him inside her before stopping all movement.

They looked at each other, unable and unwilling to break the tenuous connection as they simply breathed in the sight of one another.

Unable to resist, he flexed his hips up, causing Miranda to gasp. Slowly, he continued the light motion, causing her to moan and tremble. There was no pressure for anything other than to enjoy the moment.

After a few minutes of light teasing, and without warning, Miranda lifted herself so only the tip was inside before easing herself back down and impaling herself on his solid length. She rocked as
she moved, grinding her clit into his pelvis. This continued for a few minutes before she leaned back and grabbing his calves arched her back sensuously.

His cock was taken impossibly deeper and he watched, aroused beyond anything, as Miranda began to work herself up and down. The increased pressure had them both moaning as she moved faster.

Miranda's eyes shone with pleasure as she took in inch after inch of him and he knew his own would be reflecting the same intense enjoyment. His balls ached and he knew it was only a matter of time until he would find his release.

Miranda grabbed his hand and led it to her straining clit and as she moved his fingers stroked it gently. She looked incomparably beautiful riding him with his hand at the apex of her thighs.

Andy increased his pace to match hers and felt the clenching of her walls as she slowed and the touch against her clit lightened. He was so close and continued to move under her. His free hand grabbed her hip as he thrust almost wildly over and over again. His balls tightened and he pulled her down onto his cock as hard as he could. He exploded with a loud groan and Miranda followed suit quickly. He could feel the hot bursts shooting from him. The scorching blaze of fluid leaving him caused an immense wave of relief to wash over him.

Miranda's head fell against his chest and she struggled to catch her breath and rode out her own orgasm. Minutes passed with them curled against each other until the rhythmic beat of Miranda's alarm rent through the room. Her head popped up and she smiled widely. "Coffee?" She asked hopefully.

"Mm, yeah. Let me just grab some clean pants." He slid Miranda back on to the mattress and scampered off the bed, stalking naked to the ensuite and using the shower quickly. Wrapping a towel around his hips, he stepped into the closet and looked through the small pile of clothes Miranda had provided. Pulling a pair of tight YSL boxers up his legs, he followed with a pair of black cargo shorts. Moving from the closet, he saw a touselled Miranda watching him, a small smile lighting up her face. "Definitely the Oxytocin." He smirked and moved towards the bedroom door.

"Don't be too sure about that. I believe it is most definitely a case of Andrei Blake-Sachs rather than a simple hormone release." Miranda's words had him chuckling and when he stepped from the room, her laughter followed him.

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Chapter 11

Chapter Notes

Yay, another fic idea from the lovely celesse201, who for whatever reason, holds the belief I can bring her ideas to life. This is my first major AU. Not giving too much away. Miranda is Miranda but I am making her and the twins slightly younger for the sake of the fic. Andy is not the Andy you expect (Hence the AU)

I do not own the main characters related to The Devil Wears Prada. They are owned by the original author and 20th Century Fox. Some characters will be my own.

Miranda exited the elevator on the sixteenth floor searching out one person. Unable to Andrei within the ranks of his staff, she frowned. The last month had been the most perfect she'd ever encountered in a relationship and yet they had faced some difficulties.

She had managed to find numerous items in Irv's bathroom that provided DNA, including a disgusting tissue and his comb, but they had no access to the boy to compare it to.

And then last week it seemed as if the fates were assisting them. As Andrei stepped out of the Elias Clarke building one afternoon, Christina Thompson stepped into his personal space and thrust the little boy, Paris, into his arms, noisily declaring that he should take his son and spend time with him for an hour or two.

There were flashes of cameras and questions shouted by milling reporters, which Andrei ignored as he bent close to the woman and hissing that neither she or her boy had any claim to him and then loud enough for the press to hear, demanded a paternity test, which she refused hotly, declaring it unnecessary.

Andrei's jaw was clenched as he tried ineffectually to hand the squirming child back to Christina and when Miranda exited the building, having been made aware of the commotion by Security, she'd quickly taken stock of the situation.

Taking the boy from Andrei, and looking at his rosy cheeks and pouting lips, she stated there was no resemblance to Andrei although he was in dire need of a haircut. Christina, in her vapid stupidity, agreed and told Miranda to do what she thought was best, as his new step-mom. Giving the woman a small, pained shark smile, she gestured for them both to follow and led them up to the beauty department with the little boy in her arms.

Lucia and Jocelyn were sorting through items for the next shoot and glancing at the two women, Miranda gestured for Lucia to do what she could with the boy. She watched raptly as his hair was shorn, leaving a trail of blonde curls on the floor.

Unused to being surrounded by strangers, Paris cried and Miranda bent to wipe his running nose, pocketing the tissue discreetly. When the little one's hair was cut, he looked up at Miranda and offered her a small smile and once again he reminded her of her nemesis, Irv.

It was at that moment Irv entered the beauty department, clearly annoyed and the boy jumped up, squealing as he held his hands out to the man and shouting for daddy. Picking the boy up, Irv
glared at Christina and then at her and Andrei before storming from the room.

The press had a field day, but due to careful spinning by the New York Mirror, which was then picked up by other media outlets, it was Christina's refusal to agree to a paternity test that was questioned. As her little stunt backfired, she was pulled into meetings with her superiors at the Post and relieved of her position with immediate effect thanks to the adverse press she had been at the centre of.

Although things had seemingly turned out in their favour, it was the past two days which had her concerned. And for some inexplicable reason, and experiencing a strange sense of foreboding after a quiet conversation with her daughters, it had her seeking Andrei out as he worked.

Spotting Andrei's cousin talking quietly with his foreman, Seb, she stalked over to them, her heels clicking on the newly installed white marble floor. She caught Michelle's eye. "Where is Andrei." She asked.

Michelle hesitated. "Not here." She shrugged nonchalantly.

"Clearly." Miranda let out a frustrated breath. She understood Michelle was still wary of her intentions towards her cousin but the continued poor attitude was becoming quite ridiculous. "Could you perhaps advise me where I may find him?"

Michelle shrugged again and Miranda felt the urge to grab and shake answers from the young woman. It was only the fact she reminded her so much of Andrei that stopped her from tearing a strip off her.

She looked at Seb, completely blocking out the dark-haired young woman knowing she may as well be banging her head against one of the exposed brick walls. "Seb, are you able to tell me where I may find Andrei? His cell is off and I am concerned. He has joined us for dinner these past two evenings but has left for his apartment once the twins are asleep. This morning I obtained information that Caroline found him crying in my pantry when he went in search of popcorn."

Seb closed his eyes briefly. "He'll kill me for telling you, but you should know." He gestured for Miranda to follow, giving Michelle a stern look as she opened her mouth to object. "She needs to know, Mish." He took Miranda to the only enclosed office, that would eventually belong to Nigel and shut the door. "Sorry about her, she's become fiercely protective of Andy since his grandpa passed." Seb ran his fingers over his shaved head. "Andy is seeing his doctor this morning where they will no doubt run a barrage of tests. You are aware of the injury he sustained in high school, he told me he'd mentioned it, but what you don't know is that his accident caused a condition known as Primary Hypogonadism. He's been going through testosterone replacement therapy on and off for years. From what I gather, he was administered a low dose through his teens to allow him to reach full puberty, he stopped the shots after finishing College but then started them again when he moved to California."

Miranda was stunned, but it also explained much. "What are the symptoms?" She husked.

"Slight depression, a reduction in self-confidence, disturbed sleep, an inability to concentrate, a lower sex drive, fewer spontaneous erections and difficulty sustaining them," Seb told her gently. "He's never let it bother him before, but as long as I've known him he's always been single and we try to understand his shifting moods as his hormones dip. Andy's been having a break from his TRT since his return to New York, simply due to the risks associated with the long exposure to the testosterone. It can make someone fully infertile and cause heart problems or stroke. There were always some benefits though, it improved his energy levels and his muscle mass, especially after he took up kickboxing."
Miranda reflected on all she had been told. It was true perhaps that there had been a lack of physical intimacy between herself and Andrei but she hadn't let it concern her, putting it down to them both being exhausted as their lived turned busy with work, but they somehow still managed to carve out time to enjoy dinner or a movie. Looking back, she realised that it had been ten days since they had been together intimately, which after their initial insatiable desire for one another, seemed excessive.

"He recognises the signs of low-T, which is why he's consulting his doc," Seb reassured.

"Why didn't he talk to me?" Miranda was hurt.

"He gets embarrassed. Bitches like that Christina Thompson have done their damage." Seb caught her eyes. "He loves you so much, and your girl's too, but he doesn't want you to see him brought low by something he struggles to control."

"Which doctor?" Miranda demanded.

"Newman on Broadway." Seb stuttered.

Miranda nodded once and spinning on her heel, stalked from the room, her cell already to her ear. "Bring my coat and bag. Ensure Roy is waiting downstairs. I'll be back when I am back, if at all. Cancel what you can and have Nigel complete whatever cannot be rearranged."

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Andy bounced his leg nervously as he waited impatiently to see his doctor. He'd had a Scrotal ultrasound, his blood work done and had, with some difficulty, provided a sample of his semen and now he just needed to wait for the results.

The air crackled beside him and he looked up into familiar blue eyes. His own widened in surprise. The woman's presence was the last thing he expected. "Miranda, what are you doing here?" He whispered.

"Well, I thought that would be fairly obvious." Miranda pursed her lips. "We shall discuss the fact you kept this from me later, Andrei." Her attention snapped from him as she spotted a tall blonde woman stepping towards them.

"Hi Andy, I'm ready to see you now." Dr Newman smiled softly.

He stood and held a hand out hesitantly to Miranda. She took his hand, giving it a firm squeeze and stepped with him to the consultation room.

They sat in front of the doctor, still holding hands as the doctor glanced over the results, her face giving nothing away.

Dr Newman looked up and her eyes lit up on their joined hands. "I see you have decided to date, Andy? That's great." She caught his eyes. "How's your sexual function?"

He could feel the fierce blush rushing up his neck and cheeks as Miranda pulled air through her teeth. "Uh, okay..." He bit his lip, glancing nervously at the woman beside him. "...well, until last week when..."

"When your libido crashed?" The Doctor suggested.

Andy blushed even further. "Yeah. But it wasn't just that. There's been some stuff going on, a
woman trying to say I fathered her child and..."

"You know that is not an impossibility, just difficult. Your sperm count is around half of a healthy man, but the swimmers you have are active." Dr Newman stated.

"I didn't sleep with the woman. As you know I've remained single over the last few years." Andy muttered. "Although..."

"Although not celibate. Yes." Dr Newman smiled. "And as I have stated multiple times over the years, a good masturbation routine is to be expected. You are a healthy young man after all."

"Yeah, yeah doc," Andy smirked trying to cover his embarrassment.

Miranda sniggered, clearly unable to stop herself. Putting her hand over her mouth she really guffawed. Andy couldn't stop his own smile from widening at the inelegant noise. He watched as she tried to pull herself together. God, he absolutely adored her.

"Since you may feel self-conscious, Andy, I need to know if you are happy to continue to discuss this with Miranda present." Dr Newman asked.

"Yeah, this affects her too." Andy looked down, suddenly nervous.

Miranda stiffened, clearly surprised she had been recognised, "I saw the first Mirror article about Andy's work. I purchased the paper after one of my colleagues mentioned the article knowing Andy was a patient. The rest I chose to ignore." The doctor told them. "So, to start with can you tell me what prompted this visit, Andy? As you know I'm here to help, not judge." Dr Newman stated.

"Well..." He took a deep breath. "...over the last week, I have found myself becoming more emotional, to the point where one of Miranda's daughters even caught me crying yesterday. I can barely concentrate on my work, I have little or no energy and yet when I try to sleep, nothing. And then there the fact my desire to be intimate has decreased significantly. I wanted to resolve it before it put further strain on my relationship with Miranda."

"Further strain?" The doctor queried quelling Miranda's discomfort at his honesty with a single arched eyebrow.

"Miranda and I have past history from when I worked for her at Runway and there are people from the past looking to destroy what we are building. I've found that thought unbearable, and I am overwhelmed by my feelings. It has played on my mind quite a bit, especially over the last week." Andy admitted.

"Have you spoken to Miranda about this?" The doctor looked between the couple. "You surely realise that open and honest communication is needed?"

"No." Andy breathed. "I didn't want to worry her unnecessarily." Andy breathed. "I know how I get from this." He waved his hand over his lap. "I know it has to be my testosterone levels making me a little more sensitive to things that I wouldn't usually let bother me."

"Your blood work shows your testosterone levels are significantly lower in comparison with the results we received from the last tests while you were in L.A and undergoing replacement therapy, which is to be expected since you stopped it. Your ultrasound came back clear and the one remaining testicle and implant are as they should be. I would like for you to consider shots since you've had them before and can administer them yourself. If Miranda is willing to join you in the consultation?"

"Yep, that's fine." Miranda agreed.

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"Yep, that's fine." Miranda agreed.
She let Andy consider her words as she jotted notes into her computer. "You know there are going to be highs and lows as your hormone levels fluctuate, Andy, but once your testosterone levels begin to improve the emotional and sexual problems should resolve themselves." The doctor looked at Miranda. "Do you have any questions, Miranda?"

"You said Andrei wasn't infertile?" Miranda spoke quietly.

"Not at all. But a low sperm count simply makes it more difficult to conceive naturally. Andy's sperm is motile though, which means he is most certainly not infertile and all it takes is one determined little swimmer after-all." The doctor reassured her with a smile. "You'd be surprised how many successful pregnancies we see from people in similar situations to Andy."

"Oh." Miranda seemed stunned by this information and Andy squeezed her hand.

"I told you this, remember?" Andy whispered.

"Yes, of course." Miranda licked her lips. "It is quite different being told by a medical practitioner though, darling." She glanced back at the doctor. "And the implant?"

"Andy chose, a few years after losing his testicle, to have a prosthetic implant. You would have to speak to Andy more about the ins and outs of that decision as I wasn't his doctor at that time." The doctor caught Andy's eyes. "Now, the shots?"

"Okay." Andy shrugged, knowing it was for the best. He'd hate for Miranda or the twins to be affected by traces of testosterone.

He watched as the doctor bent her head and scribbled on her prescription pad. "We'll start you off on 100mg of Depo-Testosterone to be administered every two weeks. If you see no change after three weeks, call and we'll increase the dose, the same if you notice any unusual side effects, call me. I expect to see you in three months, okay."

"Yes, doc," Andy muttered his agreement.

The doctor looked up and smiled as she handed him his prescription. Standing up, she moved around her desk and her smile widened as they mirrored her movements. She moved to the door gracefully and extended her hand to Miranda. "It was lovely meeting you, Miranda." She let go and offered the same gesture to Andy. "You take care, Andy. Call me if you have any concerns."

Nodding once, Andy led Miranda from the room and out of the doctor's offices. He stopped at his truck, noticing the silver town car idling at the curb. "Um, I'll see you later?" He queried hesitantly.

"Unacceptable. I am coming with you and you can provide me with sustenance." Miranda stated.

"Lunch?" Andy queried.

"Well, of course, darling." She gestured to Roy that she would be leaving with Andy and he stepped back into the Towncar and pulled into the busy Midtown traffic.

Miranda sat stiffly by Andrei's side as he navigated traffic. Turning to the man, she spoke quietly. "Where on Earth do you think you are taking me, Andrei?"

"My apartment. I have the makings for a lovely Salad and Steak. Plus it will give us some alone time to talk." Andrei stated. "Since you are simply deigning to call me by my given name or by
"A piece of my...well, yes, you are perhaps right, but here in your car seems as good a place than any to say what I need," Miranda stated coldly. She watched as Andrei winced at her icy tone. "You said you did not wish to start a relationship unless you were completely honest and yet you have been withholding this from me. I asked Michelle but..." Miranda swallowed her rising anger. "Why? You should have told me." She hissed.

"Yeah, 'cause that would have made a delightful dinner conversation. I can just picture it now," Andrei ran his hand through his hair in frustration as he mocked himself stuttering at her. "Um...yeah...you know...issue with my cock...yeah, uh...rearing its head...not attractive...keep crying like a big girl...nothing but a disappointing, useless, fat pile of shit who can't even get it up for you." He frowned as he concentrated on the road. "It's so fucking embarrassing, Miranda. You don't have a fucking idea."

Miranda was stunned by the bitterness in his voice and realised this was not about her in any way. His unwillingness to share his pain was his own mind telling him he was not enough, that he was lacking in some way. She hated that he felt any of those things.

Unable to stop herself, she reached for the hand that rested on his thigh and held it in hers. "I realise I am not always approachable, Andrei and Runway is sometimes a distraction, but I want to be there for you, to reassure you none of those things you currently feel about yourself is true." She spoke gently and watched as Andrei took a shuddering breath. His hand was tense between hers and she stroked her thumb over the skin, loving the texture but also simply needing to comfort him.

Andrei pulled his hand away almost reluctantly and swiped under his eyes. Flicking the indicator, he pulled into the parking bay outside his building and put the truck into park. With both hands on the steering wheel, he continued to look ahead. "I don't want your pity, Miranda. More importantly, I don't wish to put you through a situation where you come to wonder if I actually desire you."

Miranda felt bruised from Andrei's pain. "You are not, nor will you ever be a disappointment and if it takes me all of our life together to show you that, I will." She placed a hand on his thigh. "All of my life, Andrei." She reiterated.

She wanted to take Andrei home, wrap him up in her arms and never let him go. "This does not change how I feel about you. It does not make me love you any less and even if we could never make love again, I will always love you. You are it for me."

She watched as Andrei slipped from the door and stepped around the car to open hers. As he held his hand out to her, she felt a rush of relief as she took it. She caught his eyes and pushed herself into him, her arms wrapping around his waist while her face buried itself in the crook of his neck. They would be okay, she would make sure of it, regardless of how long it took for her to reassure the man. She could not lose him now they finally had the chance for a future together.

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Miranda stepped across Andy's living room, pulling him to the sofa before pushing him down into the cushions and curling up on his lap, her nose trailing along his jaw.
He just couldn't seem to stop his tears and rather than pushing him or telling him everything would be okay, Miranda just seemed content to sit quietly giving him the time he needed to gather himself.

Swiping the tears from his cheeks, Andy sighed and started to speak quietly. "You know, I only had the prosthetic implanted after I left New York. Dr Newman and I discussed it, but it was something that never really bothered me before then, but then Christina..."

"Bitch." Miranda hissed.

He could feel the waves of anger flowing off the woman. "Yeah, well, you know how I feel about her. Or maybe you haven't quite realised the depth of my hatred." He whispered.

"Will you tell me about it?" Miranda asked.

"You know, for boys, there is so much emphasis on one penis and two testicles making you a man, and the bigger those things are, the more manly you are seen to be. My whole idea of masculinity was thrown into question after this happened, even before I'd considered fertility and actually having sex with someone, which by the way wasn't until I was nineteen." Andy found himself chuckling darkly as Miranda gasped in surprise.

"When I was injured, my coach pulled me to my feet, slapped my butt and told me to walk it off. I went home to an empty house and fell asleep. I woke up in the middle of the night in agony. My balls were swollen to the size of a billiard ball and it felt like someone was twisting a knife into my testicle. Embarrassed, I called out for my mom and she rushed me to the local E.R. After an ultrasound it was confirmed that the spermatic cord had twisted, cutting off the blood supply to my right testicle. They took me into surgery immediately and when I woke up I looked down, still in acute agony, and realised they'd put a drain in my scrotum. The pain of that was worse than the pain from the injury itself and I swore on all that was holy I would never undergo another surgery." Andy stood up and put Miranda down on the sofa and stepped across the room and busied himself by pouring them glasses of water.

He moved back towards Miranda, the glasses in his hands trembling as he set them down and sat beside her. "Eventually, the surgeon came and explained they'd had to remove my testicle as it was damaged beyond repair, in fact, it was dead." He swallowed, trying to bring moisture to his aching throat. Leaning forward he grabbed and sipped his water. "I remember crying in relief as the surgeon explained that I would still have a happy and healthy sex life.

"But?" Miranda prodded for more information.

"You know, I'd never had a negative reaction to the fact that I only had one ball, the very few women I have slept with barely even noticed unless I pointed it out, and then there was just curiosity. My first girlfriend, Melissa, just hugged me and asked if I was okay." Andy licked his lips and fiddled with the glass in his hands. He had always struggled to speak about this part of his life. "Things never hung the same way after the surgery, which never concerned me as I said. But then that night happened and Christina got up close and personal and I just couldn't perform as I'd stopped the TRT. Even in her drunken haze, she spotted everything was a little tighter down there. When I explained the reason, she actually laughed." He bit his lip and pushed his glass of water onto the coffee table. "She then asked if I fired blanks or could even get it up and I refused to answer. I just sat there as she belittled me, asking if I was gay and then telling me she thought I was a real man when instead I was pathetic..."

"What then?" Miranda breathed. "How is it you now seem to have two perfectly formed testicles?"
"I called Dr Newman when I returned to New York and explained I was moving out West. She put me in touch with someone in California. Shortly after my return, and still feeling the sting if Christina's words, I made the decision to put myself through the surgery." He shook his head. "I just wanted to be like everyone else and I wasn't. Christina made that perfectly clear." His tears spilt down his cheeks. "The second surgery was so painful, but Grandpa was there offering his support, even when he was going through so much, and I got through it. Things got better, I felt better about myself, until now."

Andy looked down and saw the undisguised rage in Miranda's eyes. "I will end Christina Thompson." She seethed.

"She has nothing else to lose," Andy whispered.

Miranda pulled back her eyes locked on his. "It is not enough for her to have lost her position at that two-bit rag, or to have proof of Irv's underhanded support, the regular handouts for the boy who calls him daddy, nor is it enough that we have proof of a genetic link to the boy, thanks to that skank pushing him at you." Miranda hissed. "I want her out of New York, out of the publishing world altogether if possible." Miranda hissed. "I want her gone for good, away from you so you never have to relive that pain, and I know just how to do it."

"How?" Andy asked breathlessly.

"You'll see." Miranda pushed herself off the sofa and taking her cell out of her purse connected a call. "Emily, I need you to have Roy pick up the girls and bring them to Andrei's building. Please arrange a bag of suitable clothing for us all and reserve a table at that place we discussed. That's all."

Andy caught the sound of the Brits agreement and smiled sadly. "So?" He asked.

"Dinner tonight?" Miranda asked.

"Uh, of course." Andy agreed hesitantly. He knew he wouldn't get answers off the editor until she was ready to give them.

"Good," Miranda stated.

Andy watched as Miranda stepped towards the large windows, and looked out towards the river, rubbing a hand across her flat stomach almost unconsciously.

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Miranda loved how the sun caused the Hudson River to sparkle in the distance. She really loved the space Andrei had created here on the corner of Little West 12th St and 10th Ave, but part of her wished he had chosen a space closer to Midtown or perhaps even the Upper East Side.

"What are your plans for the rest of this building, it is rather large?" Miranda asked keeping her eyes on the river.

Andrei stepped beside her and his arm wrapped around her waist, pressing her close. "Well, as you'd expect, the freight elevator was already here, I just stripped her down to her former glory and she acts as a private elevator to this floor. When I took over the building, I closed off the first floor and concentrated on this space as mine, my home. Although I've only renovated half of it for my open kitchen, living room and then the bedroom with ensuite. I put in a false wall and a hidden door that covers the rest of the floor and the spiral staircase I installed leading to the floor below. I've been doing a little work which I will show you and the twins later. The ground floor holds my
office where there's room to grow if I need it. I've had a few queries about leasing space for a coffee shop and an Italian restaurant, and half my team will start work on them next month. A local real estate agent was pushing me to renovate the first floor into apartments but I refused." Andrei shrugged. "I dunno though, right now I don't have the patience to deal with any of it, I've been too busy since my return. I need an Emily of my own to organise my shit."

"I would gladly hand the real one over, but she doesn't seem particularly fond of you," Miranda smirked, trying to lighten the mood and was pleased to see it seemingly work as Andrei let out a bark of laughter.

"True. I've never been her favourite person. After we first agreed to a date, she called and demanded I change you back. She didn't realise you were simply happy until I pointed it out." Andrei admitted, casting his eyes down in her direction.

"She said what?" Miranda was stunned.

"That I change you back to being the person you were prior to my return," Andrei stated, giving her a light squeeze. "Apparently you going around humming Aretha's I Never Loved A Man was a little too much for her little brain to handle."

Miranda rolled her eyes and her tilted her head against his shoulder. "I am sorry about today, about making this about me." She whispered. "I now realise it is not a reflection on your feelings for me, Andrei."

"I love you, Miranda," Andrei whispered. "I just didn't know how to explain this. I...I just didn't want to spoil things, they were going so well."

"I think it's time we had lunch, my darling," Miranda stated, blushing as her stomach rumbled. She rubbed her stomach again and frowned.

"You seem unsettled. Perhaps something light?" Andrei pulled away and made to step to the kitchen.

"You promised me a steak." Miranda pouted at the younger man's back.

"I can hear you pouting." Andrei's tone was teasing as he opened the fridge and took out the salad items he needed and two ribeye steaks.

Miranda's eyes lit up at the sight of the large steaks as Andrei set them on a plate and started to prepare the meal. She leaned against the counter and watched raptly as he moved gracefully, running water into a large pan and adding salt before placing it on the stove then lighting the grill.

Miranda was stunned when he stood beside her, his shoulder almost brushing hers, and started chopping cucumber, onion, roasted red peppers, artichokes, olives and feta with almost surgical precision and then whisked olive oil, red wine vinegar, oregano, salt, and a few grinds of black pepper together in a large bowl before setting the dressing aside.

When the water came to the boil, he added dried orzo pasta to the pan and stirred the contents.

She couldn't stop the smile that formed as she watched the darling man turn to the meat. He handled it beautifully, coating it lightly with oil before seasoning it with rock salt and coarse black pepper. Before placing it under the hot grill, she could see the meat was dotted with little white spots of evenly distributed fat throughout and knew it would be tender.

Rather than fiddling with the meat, Andrei simply leaned against the counter beside her with his
eyes closed. He truly looked tired and she knew the day had taken its toll emotionally. She could sense that he was still trying to hold himself together.

His eyes blazed open and he smiled at her before turning back to his steaks and rotating them 45 degrees. A few minutes later he flipped the steaks over and turned back to his pasta.

Taking a piece, Andrei bit into it and she could see it was perfectly al dente. He drained the pasta and ran it under cold water ensuring it was well drained before adding it, along with the artichoke hearts, peppers, cucumbers, red onion, and olives to the bowl of dressing. He tossed the contents together before adding some parsley and the feta and tossing again.

Taking the steak off the grill, he left them to rest and pulled plates and cutlery from the cupboards. He set the table in the corner of the room with ease.

All in all, with ultimate efficiency, Andrei had provided her with a meal worthy of any New York steakhouse in the span of just twenty-five minutes. As he held a chair out to her, she sat down and smiled up at him. "Is there anything you can't do, my darling?"

Andrei's smile was bright at the usual endearment. "It's just steak and pasta salad, sweetheart," Andrei stated, a flush gracing his face as he sat opposite her.

"If you say so." Miranda smiled softly. "I stand by my words though. YOU can do anything." She cut into her steak and saw it was a perfect medium rare. Taking a delicate bite she hummed in pleasure.

As they ate, she made plans for the afternoon, which included hopefully coaxing the man opposite into a nap and filling his script.

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Andy woke up on his bed alone and wondered if the events of the day had just been a dream. As he scooted from the warmth of the comforter he caught the sound of the TV from the living room and the whisper of voices he recognised as Caroline and Cassidy and knew that they had not.

Moving to the ensuite he relieved his bladder and washed his hands. He was stunned by the day. Miranda now knew of his deepest pain and rather than judging him she had provided her own particular brand of comfort.

He let himself think of the moments after lunch when he and Miranda had worked in comfortable silence to clean up before she had pulled him into his bedroom and sat him down, kneeling at his feet to remove his shoes and socks before demanding he rests for the afternoon. When he'd laid back and closed his eyes, the bed dipped beside him and he felt Miranda curl up around his side, her hand resting reassuringly against his stomach. He'd let himself relax into the warmth and was soon asleep.

Stepping into the living room, he saw Caroline and Cassidy sat at his coffee table, with their colouring books, watercolours and pencils. The TV was set to VH1 Classics and Meatloaf played quietly through his inbuilt sound system.

He loved the domesticity as he spotted Miranda chopping fruit at the kitchen counter but frowned. He had not really done any grocery shopping after having dinners with Miranda and the twins.

Cassidy spotted him first and smiled as she jumped to her feet and rushed towards him, throwing his arms around his waist enthusiastically. "I like your apartment, Dandy." She smiled up at him. "It's so cool."
"Thanks, my little one." He knelt down to hug her properly before rising to his feet with her cradled against his chest. He stepped towards Caroline and smiled down at her. "Is everything okay, Caro?" He asked, noticing her worrying her lip between her teeth.

"Are you and mom splitting up? Is that why you're so sad lately?" Caroline asked hesitantly.

Andy sat and patted the space beside him. He was pleased when Caroline jumped up and rushed to his side. He pulled her close and started to speak softly. "No, my little love. I have been a little poorly after I stopped taking some medicine a few months ago."

"Why do you take medicine? Are you dying?" Cassidy asked starting to panic slightly.

"No, I'm not dying, Cass. I promise. The medicine helps me keep the hormones that make me happy at normal levels, amongst other things." He didn't really know how to explain this to the little girls.

"So the medicine stops you being sad?" Caroline asked. "Why did you stop taking it, if it makes you better?"

"There's some research that shows taking the medicine for too long can increase the risk of heart problems as I get older, my little love. When I made the decision to have a break from it, I was still single and it didn't affect anyone but me. But my doctor has given me a prescription so in a few weeks I should be back to normal."

"A few weeks?" Caroline exclaimed. "That's forever away." Cassidy nodded her agreement.

Andy grinned, unable to do anything else in the face of the little girl's disbelief. "It may seem like a long time now, but it will pass by quickly." Andy reassured them. "But if I'm a little sad until then, come give me a cuddle. Both your hugs make it all better."

Caroline crawled up on his other knee next to her sister and snuggled into him further. "Do mom's?" She asked quietly as Miranda stepped close with two plates of cut fruit.

"Your mom's cuddles are the absolute best. All hugs just let someone know they matter." Andy grinned up at Miranda and saw her roll her eyes before she took what had been Caroline's place, snuggling in as well. He curled her arm around her shoulder and pulled her closer, placing a light kiss on her temple before doing the same to both the girls on his lap.

Settling his head against the back of the sofa, he closed his eyes and knew he was blessed to have these people in his life. Unable to resist, he smiled and his eyes opened as his head turned to face Miranda. "I have a surprise for the three of you." He admitted.

"By all means, my darling. Move at a glacial pace." Miranda's lips lifted in the ghost of a smile.

"Yeah, yeah, I know how that thrills you." Andy chuckled. He stood up with Cassidy and Caroline held in his arms and stepped towards the brick wall at the opposite side of his living room, he set the twins on their feet and pushed against the brick and heard Miranda's gasp of surprise as a door eased open.

Turning his head, he grinned at the surprised woman and pushed the door open further. He pressed Caroline and Cassidy through the door ahead of him as Miranda stepped by his side to take his hand. As he led her through the door, he saw Miranda's stunned disbelief as she gazed around, her eyes landing on the spiral staircase next to a wall. Her eyes moved quickly along the deep red wall holding three doors, two of which held Caroline and Cassidy's names in a flowing cursive.
Caroline and Cassidy couldn't stop their squeals of happiness as they moved to the doors holding their names and with perfectly in sync, opened them and stepped into their new rooms.

The twins charged from their rooms, passing each other quickly in their haste to see their siblings new space. Returning to the hallway, they both stood bouncing in front of Andy wearing bright smiles.

"Thank you, Dandy." Caroline started.

"They're so awesome." Cassidy finished.

"Can we stay tonight, Dandy?" They spoke in unison.

Andy looked at Miranda and saw her soft smile. "You should ask..."

"Please, mommy..." They interrupted knowing what he was going to say. They turned to Miranda, giving her their best puppy dog eyes as they pouted.

Miranda's laughter was low and melodious as she shook her head at her daughters. "Yes, I suppose that would be quite fitting." She stated as her smile widened. Letting go of his hand, she stepped to her daughters and held her hands to them. "Now, will you show me the rooms?" She asked gently.

Caroline tried to pull Miranda towards her room while Cassidy tugged her in the other direction in a move that caused more laughter to break unfettered between the three Priestly's.

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Andrei spent time before dinner, as they showed her their rooms in detail, pulling down the false wall. Now, having settled the twins for the night, Miranda felt free to go to the medicine cabinet in his bathroom and re-entering the living room passed Andrei the medication his doctor had prescribed, having filled out the script and paid for it while he slept. After waving his offer to pay away, she caught his eyes. "The sooner you take it, the sooner things will return to normal."

Andrei looked away. "I know." He sighed and turned to enter the bedroom, switching on lights as he went.

Miranda followed, blinking against the brightness of the well-lit room. She watched as he placed the 10ml vial and disposable syringe and needles on his bedside table before moving to his bathroom, washing his hands and drying them quickly. She heard the shuffling and when he returned to the bedroom, he wore only his t-shirt and boxers and was carrying alcohol swabs and a red puncture-proof sharps container.

Andrei didn't seem at all concerned that she was there as he glanced down at his thigh as if gearing up to give himself the injection. He prodded the outer middle section of his thigh and nodded once as if confirming something to himself. He pulled the testosterone into his hands, holding it in a closed fist for a couple of minutes before he took the cap off the vial and cleaned the rubber stopper with an alcohol swab. Grabbing the package containing the syringe, he looked to ensure it was not open or damaged before opening it himself and pulling the needle cover straight off the syringe. He pulled back the plunger drawing in air plunger and draw air into the syringe to the 10ml point. Inserting the needle straight down through the centre of the rubber stopper, Andrei pushed the plunger down, pushing the air from the syringe into the vial before turning the vial upside down and slowly pulled back on the plunger to fill the syringe with the medication to the 10ml point. He looked at the syringe closely, a frown marring his forehead.

Unable to resist she asked a question. "What are you looking for?"
"I'm checking for air bubbles," Andrei explained. He gently tapped the syringe with his fingers before slowly pushing the plunger up and then pulled the plunger back. He removed the needle and replaced it with a different one and checked to ensure his dosage was correct. Using his free hand, he swabbed the skin of his thigh and let it air dry before forming a V with his fingers and placing the heel of your hand on the section of his thigh before the knee, he inserted the needle at a 90-degree angle with one quick and firm motion. and removed his hand. He pulled back on the plunger again carefully. before pushing the testosterone slowly into the muscle. She saw him wince and was concerned. "It burns a bit," Andrei whispered noting her anxiety rising. He removed the needle and placed it into his sharps box.

Miranda was ready with another alcohol swab. She knelt at his feet and held it to the puncture wound until she was sure it was not bleeding. "Why do you change the needle?"

"The drawing of the drug blunts the needle making it more painful so I switch out to a smaller one. When I first started on the T, they had me injecting smaller amounts weekly." Andrei explained. "It's been a steep learning curve over the years to find out what works best for me."

"You are so very brave, my darling. To be so open about this part of yourself has me newly awed by you, by your strength." Miranda knelt up, cupping his face. "And I want to thank you for accepting me and my girl's into your home, Andrei." She placed a light kiss on his lips but unwilling to push for more, pulled back.

Andrei had other ideas. Pulling Miranda up her tugged her onto his lap and buried his face into her neck. "You asked me to think about what I wanted, to work towards something permanent." Andrei pulled back and leaning away, rummaged in his bedside table before pulling out a small light-medium robin egg blue ring box from Tiffany & Co.

Miranda was stunned when he flipped it open and looked down at the platinum ring featuring two rich round sapphires framing a classic round brilliant diamond centre stone. She looked up into Andrei’s eyes and saw his nervousness. She had no idea what to say.

Andrei spoke softly. "I know this probably seems way out of left-field, but I love you. I want a life with you and those awesome little humans of yours." Andrei licked his lips. "You don't have to say yes, Miranda. Give yourself some time to think about it. I just need you to know that this is it for me too. You know every one of my secrets, you know all my pain. I love you and I want you as my wife."

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Chapter 12

Yay, another fic idea from the lovely celesse201, who for whatever reason, holds the belief I can bring her ideas to life. This is my first major AU. Not giving too much away. Miranda is Miranda but I am making her and the twins slightly younger for the sake of the fic. Andy is not the Andy you expect (Hence the AU)

I do not own the main characters related to The Devil Wears Prada. They are owned by the original author and 20th Century Fox. Some characters will be my own.

A week passed from his proposal to Miranda and Andy still had no idea if it had been a colossal mistake or not.

Miranda had requested time to consider everything, but the more time that passed the more his concern grew. He tried desperately to hold onto the hope that Miranda would give him an answer soon. He hoped she would say yes and they would continue to move forward with their relationship. Miranda had requested he say nothing about the proposal and he stayed true to her wishes.

What concerned Andy the most was what would happen if she said no. He wasn't sure if he'd recover from such rejection. He found himself carrying around the small blue Tiffany box, with the hope, when the time was right, he could slip the ring onto Miranda's finger.

They still spent time together, more often than not at his apartment rather than the townhouse, and the twins had grown more comfortable as he added extra touches to his home especially for them. They had clothes and accessories and electronic devices specific to their requirements. They particularly enjoyed playing on his games consoles, but he'd had to put his R-Rated games away and keep things age appropriate.

The weekend before had seen him, Seb and Michelle working on the first floor while drinking a few beers when Miranda had been called away on a last minute business trip to Boston and the twins ended up with their grandparents in the Hamptons.

They worked on establishing a study for Miranda, a large room with a view of the river, so if she felt the need to work in peace, while at the apartment, she could. He was now in the process of creating a small home gym for his own use, a way to channel the extra energy the testosterone shots provided. There would also be another two large guest bedrooms.

His testosterone therapy seemed to be improving his mood and he felt more like his usual self. He had certainly found he had more energy now he was sleeping better, and although he had been unable to be sexually intimate with Miranda, he felt his desire for her rising almost daily.

Sat in his office, frowning over his accounts, Andy glanced up at the familiar crackle of air, the feeling that the room was filled with an electrical current, to find Miranda watching him from the doorway, her newest second assistant hovering behind her nervously as she glanced between her boss and him.
Andy read the young blonde woman easily as he pushed his chair back, offering Miranda a wide smile of welcome. The young woman eyed him almost hungrily and as she cut her eyes towards Miranda he could sense her mind running a mile a minute, wondering what he saw in her bitch of a boss. Yet, if only the world could see Miranda how he and the twins did, she would easily have the whole world falling at her feet, madly in love with her.

He stepped closer, holding out his hand to Miranda and as she grasped it warmly he swept in and placed a light kiss on her cheek, careful not to smudge her makeup. "Good morning, my beautiful Miranda." Andy offered her another wide smile.

"Hello, my darling." Miranda licked her lips. "I was in the area. The Hermès boutique insisted on having their preview at their new store and although I wasn't sure if you would be here or at Elias Clarke, I decided to stop by." She raised her eyebrows in query.

"Accounts and payroll." Andy grinned as he shrugged his shoulders. "A truly exciting day." He deadpanned.

Miranda snorted inelegantly before remembering her assistant and schooling her features. "Emily, coffee." She demanded.

"I can make you..." Andy stalled as Miranda held her hand up.

"Oh no, no," Miranda smirked and licked her lips before tugging her bottom lip between her teeth almost sensuously.

The new Emily clattered out, her cell in hand as she looked for the nearest Starbucks.

"You do realise the nearest Starbucks is over on 9th Ave at the corner of West 15th Street?" He queried softly.

"Mm, five minutes to walk there, the large lunchtime queue and then five minutes back." Miranda pushed herself closer and wrapped her arms around his middle, tucking her head in his neck. "The Hermès preview was abysmal." She murmured.

He could feel the tension in Miranda's back and shoulders. "I'm sorry your day has been disappointing so far," Andy whispered, brushing a kiss against the top of her head.

Miranda raised her face, looking into his eyes. She pushed herself up on her tiptoes and brushed her lips against his. "It seems considerably better right now." She whispered against his lips before kissing him again, drawing him deeper against her.

Andy's body reacted in a way that surprised both of them, with him growing hard against her. She pulled away, her eyes trailing down as her lips twitched in amusement.

Closing his eyes, he felt the blush rising up his neck and cheeks. Jesus, she hadn't even touched him and he felt ready to explode.

"Well, well. It seems little Andy is extraordinarily pleased to see me." Miranda teased softly. She stroked her hand down his chest towards his groin causing him to swallow audibly.

Andy pulled Miranda's hand back against his chest and shuffled slightly. "Any more of that and your newest Emily will see more than she ever bargained for as I fuck you from behind over my desk." His voice trembled and Miranda smirked at him when his eyes blazed open.

Miranda pulled herself free from their embrace and whipped her cell out. "Emily, forget coffee.
Andrei will be taking me back to Runway in an hour or so, have Roy fetch you and take you to Donna Karan for those blouses, then head to Calvin Klein for those skirts and Tom Ford for the items for my Andrei. That's all." Miranda disconnected her cell and grinned. "I believe I have freed up some time for lunch." She arched an eyebrow at him.

"My accounts?" Andy queried, unable to hide his grin.

"I suppose, should you not finish them this afternoon, I shall have to assist you with them this evening before the book arrives." Miranda had the grace to blush.

"Acceptable." Andy grabbed and tugged Miranda close, bending slightly to offer her another gentle kiss. "Upstairs?" He queried.

"Oh yes." Miranda breathed.

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Andrei slipped into bed beside her and raised himself up on his elbow to kiss her neck. Miranda's head tilted slightly, exposing more of her neck to his questing lips.

As the edges of his teeth raked her skin his unshaven skin tickled against her softness and she shivered as goosebumps erupted instantly over her body. Only Andrei's touch had ever been able to elicit such a strong reaction from her.

Miranda had already had one intense orgasm against the wall of the elevator under Andrei's ministrations, which had him kneeling down and pushing her skirt over her hips to use his tongue and fingers on her skillfully. But she was far from satisfied.

The gentle nip of his teeth against her pulse point hit her like an electric shock. She moaned and pressed her ass against Andrei, feeling his solid length. Her breathing turned shallow and she turned onto her back to look up at the beautiful man. Catching his eyes, she saw her own desire reflected back at her in the deep hazel of his expressive orbs.

Totally naked, Miranda's body was exposed to the cold air of the air conditioner and her breasts reacted, not only to the cool air swirling around them but also to Andrei's heated gaze.

She eyed the man hovering on his side next to her as he cupped her sensitive breast in his large hand. Miranda absolutely adored the way Andrei touched her. He was always so very gentle when caressing her, trailing his hands over her as if mapping her skin. For such a giant of a man, the tenderness was unexpected but there was grace to his caresses that left her breathless.

Miranda's breasts weren't particularly large but when she had the twins, she'd gained some weight, tipping from a size zero to a two and sometimes a four. Even though she'd gained weight, the fact her breasts and hips had filled out left her delighted.

Looking up at Andrei, she saw his eyes darkening and knew he could smell her desire for him as the scent of her arousal hung thick in the air. She could feel his hardness against her hip and turned to face him.

Feeling completely vulnerable under Andrei's intense gaze, his eyes searched hers for answers to the question Miranda was not quite ready to give it. She hated the fact she had turned so indecisive over this. It wasn't that she doubted Andrei or his intentions, but a small part of her questioned if she could give him what he needed.

Pulling Andrei closer, Miranda threw her leg over his hip and was thrilled when he pressed against
her, slipping between her folds to nudge her clit. Her eyes fell closed as he took her with one hard thrust that had stars bursting behind her eyelids.

She shivered, trying to adjust to him. Once comfortable she started to move, rocking against him, pulling him in deeper as he trailed his lips against her jaw and neck, sometimes nipping hard enough, not to mark her, but to cause her to gasp and tremble against him.

Andrei moved with her, sucking at the skin of her collarbone, actually marking her as his, while he pounded into her with the strength of his passion. She was so wet, so turned on by him and so close to climaxing. Not that it mattered. Since Andrei, she had certainly found the joys of having multiple orgasms.

Eventually, tiny whimpers tore from her throat and she pushed against him as hard as she could, holding his ass as she pulsed around him and waves of heat and a flood of desire coated his cock.

Andrei hadn't come yet, but he pulled out of her, no doubt to give her time to recover from her own climax.

Miranda found the sudden distance intolerable. There had been too much distance between them recently for that to be acceptable. Pushing one hand against his chest, he fell onto his back and grinned at her as she straddled his strong thighs. Sinking back down onto him in a single movement, Miranda felt a wave of unbridled happiness unfurl in her chest.

She was still so wet and she felt the burning ache of her desire for Andrei. She moved up and down with ease, her eyes focussed on the man below her, daring him to break their gaze.

Unwaveringly he matched her thrust for thrust, unwilling to break their connection. Leaning down she kissed him, her hunger for him no doubt leaving him feeling bruised.

Keeping up her energetic pace, Miranda felt her inner walls tremble yet again from her impending orgasm and as it crested lost the rhythm she had built up between them.

Andrei's smile was almost intoxicating when, with exquisite gentleness he turned them and hovered over her, resting his weight on his elbows as her orgasm ebbed. Just as the pulse of her climax started to fade, he thrust and another wave crashed through her, causing her to cry his name to the Heaven's.

Andrei continued to move in and out with long slow strokes, just the way she loved them and with some hesitation, she moved under him, helping him push them both towards their mutual release.

As they climaxed together, Miranda held on to Andrei tightly, loving the way he thrust harder. Tears flowed from her eyes and she buried her face in the crook of his neck.

They clung to each other, finding peace in the other's arms and when Andrei sensed Miranda was ready to let go, he rolled off her, pulling her against his chest. They stayed like that as they caught their breath, with her head resting on his breastplate, listening to his heart until his eyes fluttered closed and breathing deepened.

She would wake him soon enough with gentle kisses but for now, Miranda would let the man rest, and when the time was right, she would give him her answer.

Miranda's kisses woke Andy from his doze and he pulled her close to him as he deepened them. The long, slow, soft touch of the editor's lips on his soothed him and eased some of his anxieties.
They lay on the bed together with Miranda curled up against him like a sleek cat seeking warmth. Miranda was softer in these intimate moments they shared and Andy sensed her happiness as she stretched out in his arms. She was content and it pleased him.

Andy wanted Miranda to feel like that for the rest of her life or his, whichever came first, but he was wary of pushing her into something she wasn't comfortable with.

There had been times over the years he had believed the editor had destroyed him, but it wasn't her, he understood that from the last few weeks. It was Nate, Doug, Lily and his parents who had left him broken. It was Christina, with her mockery.

Andy was thankful for Miranda, for the lessons she had imparted, even in her rejection of him. He had lived a full, if somewhat lonely life, remaining single, unwilling to offer his heart to anyone else. He had given it to Miranda all those years before and she still held it. She seemed to cherish it.

In these quiet moments, Andy had an innate desire to uncover all of Miranda's secrets and her pain and to be the balm for her battered soul, the soft place she landed when life turned harsh, as it often did. He wanted the twins too, to be able to call them his, to show them the importance of love, to teach them right from wrong, to guide them and protect them as they grew into beautiful young women and went out to conquer the world on their own terms.

Bending his head to kiss Miranda softly, Andy knew peace. His hand rested warmly on her stomach and stroked the skin beneath his palm as he broke their kiss.

Miranda hummed and leaned closer. "That feels good, my darling." She whispered.

"Are you feeling any better after the last week? You seemed a little unsettled," Andy asked hesitantly.

"I thought perhaps it was my usual monthly inconvenience, but it has yet to rear its head." Miranda hummed again as his hand moved in soothing circles against her. "One positive over growing older, it seems to be less regular and not as much of a nuisance."

"Do you need me to get you a supply of the usual products?" He found himself blushing and remembered the first time he had been sent out for Miranda's preferred feminine hygiene products. He'd looked at row upon row of different products in abject confusion. Why the fuck did women need that many products?

"I believe I shall be okay, my darling, although my breasts are a little tender and I experienced a few cramps last week," Miranda advised, snuggling into his chest further.

Andy swallowed. "When was your last period?" He asked.

"Oh, I can't say off the top of my head. Don't concern yourself over it." Miranda waved her hand dismissively.

Andy felt a tendril of something inexplicable building in his belly. Turning Miranda into her back, he caught her eyes as they widened in surprise. "Sweetheart, I need you to focus and think back to when your last period was."

"What are you not saying, Andrei," Miranda asked, frustration coating her tone.

He could tell she just wanted him to drop it, but something kept him pushing for an answer. "Please, just think." Andy pleaded.
Miranda closed her eyes and seemed to grow pale. Her eyes blazed open. "I'm forty-five and...and..." She trailed off. "...impossible." She muttered, pushing past Andy to scramble from the bed.

Andy looked at her stood glancing at herself appraisingly in his full-length mirror.

To anyone else, she looked no different than normal, but her stomach was a little swollen, as if bloated or retaining water. He'd known she was cramping a few days before when she rubbed her lower belly. Her breasts were definitely more sensitive and her moods, always unpredictable, seemed even more unbalanced than usual.

"You know, I'm probably so far off it's laughable but..." Miranda glared at him and he faltered at the coldness in them. Andy shook his head and slipped from the bed and felt Miranda watching as he stepped towards his tallboy to grab clean clothes. "I'll dress and bring the truck around." He muttered as he slammed his way into the bathroom.

Their return towards Runway was completed in silence with them both deep in thought. Miranda's mind felt like it was running at a thousand miles per minute. She counted back the weeks since her last slight period for what seemed like the hundredth time and sighed. "I'm forty-five, Andrei," Miranda whispered.

"I am very much aware of that," Andrei stated, clutching the steering wheel as he eased to a stop at a set of lights. She could feel the frustration rolling off him as he glanced at her before returning his eyes to the road. "We don't even know if this is a fucking thing, but if it is..." He licked his lips. "...well, you have options, Miranda. You could..." Miranda saw him swallow hard and shake his head, unable to even finish the sentence.

"Andrei, I..." Miranda started.

"I thought you were on the pill or something...I believed...well..." Miranda could see Andrei was becoming worked up. "...fuck knows what I believed. But damn it, Miranda, you were the one that said it was okay to forgo protection, but now...I told you when we first started being intimate that I didn't want you to come to have regrets."

Miranda turned sharply to glare at him again. "I don't." She hissed.

"Yeah right." Andrei's tone held disbelief. He pulled out the front of Elias Clarke and kept staring ahead, keeping his eyes averted. "I need you to know, whatever happens, it's your body and your choice but I won't hang around to watch it." He took a shuddering breath. "I can't."

"I understand..." Miranda moved closer and brushed her lips against his cheek. His jaw jumped under her lips and she could hear his teeth grinding together. She pulled away, saddened by his sudden aloofness. "Surely we can talk about this tonight?" Her voice held the question.

Andrei shook his head, his jaw twitching. "No." He breathed. "I don't think that's a good idea. I need some time."

Miranda was stunned, surely he wouldn't shut her out now. "But, my darling..."

"I said I need time." Andrei was firm and she knew he was hurt. What she couldn't understand was why. "You also have to realise this wasn't how I was expecting things to go." Andrei turned his head to catch her eyes and she saw the heartbreak in them. "You have not said one word to make me believe you want this or that you are willing to accept whatever happens. I have handled the
fact you have not answered my proposal. I have done what you wanted and not breathed a word about it." He shook his head as Miranda's eyes narrowed. "And surely you have to realise that glaring at me to shut me up will not make all this, whatever the fuck this is, go away. I am not your assistant anymore and I won't be treated as such."

Miranda was stunned. She hadn't even realised that she had behaved in such a way. "I'm sorry, my darling. I didn't realise..." She bit her lip. "Drive." She whispered.

Andrei swung into the traffic in front of a cab. "Where to, your highness?" Andrei asked, his voice dripping with bitterness.

"Anywhere. A pharmacy. Please, just give me a chance to make this right. You can't imagine what a shock this is. I..." Miranda took a deep breath and touched his shoulder tentatively. "...please, don't shut me out, my darling."

Catching sight of a pharmacy, Andrei cut across two lanes of traffic causing Miranda to hold on to the roof handle above the passenger door with one hand while the other clutched the dashboard. She felt nauseous at the sudden change in direction.

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Pulling into a parking bay, Andy glanced at Miranda and saw her staring at her knees looking a little green. "I don't think it's a good idea if you go in there. You may be recognised." He spoke softly. "I'll be right back."

Miranda licked her lips and nodded. "Water." She croaked.

Andy nodded once and slid from the truck, almost running towards the pharmacy. His mind was cursing him for pushing Miranda, telling him it would have been better for her to work this new thing out for herself. He knew she needed to feel in control and this, well, this was clearly something neither of them expected.

He scanned the shelves, he walked over to the multiple pregnancy tests and bounced on his feet. He picked up a three pack of First Response Early Result Pregnancy Tests and a Clearblue Rapid Detection.

He caught the shuffling by his side and looked at the woman stepping close to his side, an assistant. She wore a soft smile and he turned away to frown at the packaging.

"I'd recommend the First Response. I used them with both of my pregnancies. It's a little more sensitive and easier to hold than the Clearblue." The assistant told him affably.

Andy put the Clearblue back on the shelf and turned to the woman. "Thank you." He husked.

"Hey, happy to help. You look a little overwhelmed. This one's easy though. In three minutes the test will show one pink line if you and your wife are not pregnant and two lines if you are. And sometimes you get faint lines, which still counts as a positive. I hope you get the results you want."

He nodded his understanding and stepping past the condoms grabbed some latex free ones. If Miranda wasn't pregnant, there was no fucking way, he was going without protection.

He grabbed two bottles of chilled water, not caring that it wasn't Miranda's preferred Pellegrino and stepped towards the counter.

The items were rung through efficiently, with only the slightest raised eyebrow at the sight of the
condoms. Glowering at the assistant, daring her to say something, he watched her swallow nervously. "twenty-five eighty." She husked.

He threw thirty bucks on the counter and turned away. "Put the change in the charity tin." He whispered.

He moved from the pharmacy quickly and slipped back into the truck, tucking the paper bag into the centre console between them. He handed Miranda the bottle of water and watched her gulp it gratefully.

Capping the bottle, Miranda spoke softly. "If I am pregnant, I need you to know, even if you no longer want a relationship with me, I could never contemplate destroying your child."

"I don't want this...us...to end. I want...you know what I want, Miranda." Andy swallowed. "And I'm trying to understand that you don't want the same, but..."

"Who says I do not want the same?" Miranda interrupted. "I asked for time, I did not say no."

"So why did you hesitate?" Andy asked. "You are the most decisive person I have ever met and..."

"In business, yes. In my personal life, not so much." Miranda frowned as drops of rain splashed against the windscreen. "Since Stephen, I do not take risks in my personal life, Andrei. In fact, before then you came back, I did not have one outside of Runway and my daughters." Miranda sighed. "In Paris, I told myself you walking away was for the best. I told myself I would end up disappointed like before but in my heart, I knew I had ruined my chance at absolute, almost unconditional love."

"Why did you come after me when I returned?" Andy asked.

Miranda turned to face him, resting her leg under her. "The truth is, I went after you because I had to have you. I could not contemplate being unable to have you as part of my life. I needed to show you how much I have regretted the decision I made in Paris, my words to you."

Andy fired up the engine, taking care as he pulled out into traffic. He did a circuit back towards Elias Clarke with Miranda's hand entwined with his.

"I hesitated because I cannot see how I can be what you need in The long run," Miranda admitted.

Andy squeezed her hand gently. "You are all I ever wanted, Miranda." He frowned as Elias Clarke loomed ahead, wishing he had more time. "What are we going to do, Miranda?" He asked.

Miranda seemed to shake herself and smiled softly. She sent a quick text before turning back to face him. "We shall go up to Runway since I have requested tea, once there I will fire off a range of instructions for Emily and what's her face, meaning they will both be freed of their shackles to their desks." Her lips twitched. "And then, well, I suppose I best urinate on one or all three of those sticks."

"At Runway?" Andy was surprised.

"It is where I found out I was pregnant with my Bobbseys, although I was alone at the time." Miranda winced at the remembrance. "It seems fitting this is where I find out what our future holds."

"If it is positive, will you marry me?" Andy asked hesitantly.
As he indicated to pull up outside Elias Clarke, Andy saw Miranda's lips twitch up in a smirk. "I will marry you, even if it is negative, my darling."

Andy could feel the waves of relief washing over him and his smile bloomed. "Are you sure?" He asked.

"Oh yes." Miranda smiled up at him in return "And if we have a child, I look forward to seeing how you stop our girls calling you daddy."

"Our girls?" Andy husked, feeling the swells of happiness crashing through him. "I like the sound of that." He stated as he pulled to a stop. "My three beautiful girls." He pulled to a stop and faced Miranda. "I'm going to make sure you all know every single day just how much I love you."

Miranda walked into her personal bathroom immediately after dismissing her assistants and took a test from the box, eying the condoms as she did so as she frowned.

This was the last thing she expected from her day. It hadn't even occurred to her that she could be pregnant, she had thought that part of her life was finished. But then Andrei had re-entered her life.

Holding the item carefully under the stream of her urine, Miranda let herself hope that this moment would cement what she and Andrei had been building. It was true, the prospect of pregnancy had been a shock, leaving her overwhelmed and feeling out of control, but the fact of the matter was, she truly wanted this.

Placing the stick on the back of the toilet, she washed her hands thoroughly before starting to pace the narrow passage. Andrei had explained that the test just needed three minutes.

Looking down at her watch, Miranda groaned. This had already been the longest two minutes of her existence so far and she had another minute to go...

Just another thirty seconds...

She looked down and saw the one solid pink line.

Negative.

Miranda felt a sense of disappointment flooding through her. She simply wanted to curl up in her bed and lie there for hours. Not to sleep, but to reflect on this missed opportunity. All she could think about the was how this would devastate Andrei.

It was negative.

Miranda told herself she shouldn't have expected anything really, but she had. Her disappointment was somewhat of a surprise because she'd used the time in the car while Andrei purchased the tests to mentally prepare herself for a positive outcome. She had allowed herself to think of her girl's joy at the news. She had allowed herself to think of how Andrei would look with their child swaddled in the safety of his arms.

The tap at the door caught her attention and Miranda sat on the toilet lid, her hands covering her face. "Come in." She whispered, knowing Andrei would hear.

Andrei's presence assaulted her senses immediately and she peeked between her fingers to see him holding the test gingerly between his, his eyes blazing with triumph.
"I'm sorry, my darling. I hoped..."

"Positive..." Andrei husked.

Miranda was amazed when he pulled her up and into his arms, whooping in happiness as he swung her up and planted a kiss on her parted lips. She was so confused. She was certain Andrei had explained one solid line meant a negative result.

"...the second lines faint, but it's there. My God. I'm gonna be a Daddy." He looked down into her eyes and saw her confusion. Taking three steps back, his smile widened before he rushed from the room and she heard him rummaging at her desk.

Miranda sank back down onto the toilet, unsure of what was happening until Andrei rushed back into the room, clutching her glasses. He sat them on her nose clumsily and pushed the test into her hand. She looked down and her mouth dropped open. She could do nothing but stare at the white stick clutched in her hand. Right there, next to the solid pink line was a second fainter line.

Andrei knelt in front of her, pulling the blue Tiffany box from his pants pocket and holding it out hesitantly. Once again he flipped it open but this time he took the ring between his fingers, his eyes searching hers. "Miranda Priestly, will you do me the greatest honour of becoming my wife? I promise I will love you and our children as long as I live."

The incongruity of the situation tickled Miranda. Here was this beautiful man, on his knees in front of her as she sat on the toilet of her, albeit swanky, bathroom, asking for her hand in marriage. It was not a romantic proposal by any means, but she knew it came from a place of love, hope and absolute joy.

As if reading her mind, Andrei grinned before letting out a loud peal of laughter that she couldn't help but join in with. Finally getting himself under control, Andrei simply beamed at her. "Here's one to tell the kids when they asked how I proposed. They'll expect all hearts and flowers but instead, it'll be a tale of me on my knees while you're sat on the can clutching a pregnancy test."

Miranda's laughter echoed off the walls as Andrei sat back on his haunches. Unable to resist, she threw herself onto his lap and nuzzled his neck. "It's perfect. You are perfect. Yes, my Andrei. I will marry you."

She looked down as Andrei placed the Tiffany ring on her left-hand ring finger and saw the diamonds and sapphires sparkling under the lights. She felt hopeful for her future with this man who rocked her world in a way no one else ever had. She knew this was the right thing for her and her Bobbsey's. This man would continue to love them, he would protect and nurture them and put them before all else and she swore she would provide him with the same.

"Now, I hope this means you have changed your mind about tonight?" Miranda teased softly. "I believe we have some news to break to our little ones."

"Just try and get rid of me, Ms Priestly." Andrei beamed down at her, one of his bright megawatt smiles. "How would you feel if I got my little ones a kitten?"

"A kitten?" Miranda was stunned.

"Well, I thought I'd start small. They asked me for, but I didn't think you'd agree to, another Saint Bernard." Andrei lifted her and stretched his legs out offering her a wide smile. "I know how much you adored Patricia, she was your shadow. How about it?"

"I say..." Miranda licked her lips and shuffled trying to get herself comfortable. "...one look into
your beautiful eyes could easily get me to agree to both." She smiled softly. "I have missed Patricia," She admitted. "I believe a dog and a baby would make our little family complete."
Chapter 13

Chapter Notes

Yay, another fic idea from the lovely celesse201, who for whatever reason, holds the belief I can bring her ideas to life. This is my first major AU. Not giving too much away. Miranda is Miranda but I am making her and the twins slightly younger for the sake of the fic. Andy is not the Andy you expect (Hence the AU)

I do not own the main characters related to The Devil Wears Prada. They are owned by the original author and 20th Century Fox. Some characters will be my own.

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Authors Musings:

My apologies for the length of time it took to get this chapter out. There has been some personal stuff come up, most recently being in a small car accident after someone cut across two lanes of traffic while I was pulling out of a parallel parking bay and ripping the front bumper off my little piece of shit car, which I rely on more than I should, as well as a flare-up of my anxiety which found me at one point last week mid-panic attack in the ladies room at work.

Many of you guys have probably worked out that I most likely do a lot of research to write which has hopefully expanded my knowledge base of random crap (like the difference between Argentinian Tango and the American ballroom tango). Many of you will have realised I write from the heart, often using my own life experiences as a backdrop to my fics. (Writing about anxiety and the effects of PTSD spring to mind from Securing The Devil). There is a part of me that hopes you all realise just how much I adore every comment/follow/kudos/favourite. I don't restrict my reviews and comments because I love the feedback I get from each one of you, knowing they make me a better writer. But I did accidentally deleted one of my comments on A03 when attempting to delete my own very blunt response. (I have since banned myself from answering anything at 3:30 am when I’ve just dragged my butt out of bed to prepare for work and I’m hormonal and wanting to eat my body weight in chocolate or cheese.)

I am going to be candid, in the hopes the reviewer (a guest) sees this. To start the comment with; "I don't usually comment on fanfics if it's not positive, but..." when there have been 11 chapters previously to provide encouragement on and have been provided nothing is going to get someone's back up. It was the fact I had Miranda stating she could not contemplate destroying Andy's child that was the cause of the comment because apparently having an abortion is not destroying a child.

I have to admit, I personally agree, having had to make the choice to abort my child 15 years ago due to a severe birth defect after my unborn child was diagnosed with Spina Bifida. And in throwing this out in the world, my pain, and the grief I still hold after all this time, I am putting myself at the mercy of people who read this who may not be so pro-choice but who I hope will not judge me too harshly.

The fact of the matter is, I did not mention abortion specifically within this storyline and there are other ways to destroy a child, from arguments, resentments and bitterness spewed in front of them, not giving them time or attention, by demolishing self-esteem, by not setting boundaries or giving responsibility, by not making them accountable for
their actions, by not showing you have to work hard for what they have/want or that no one has the right to go out into the world thinking it owes you something.

I am not always so eloquent as this (as my 3:30 am response and the second thoughts to my comment potentially indicate). I don't wear my heart on my sleeve. but I also do NOT require someone to tell me that my opinions, or that of my characters, are possibly right or wrong. After all, the world is made up of many opinions, and like assholes, everyone has one.

To be honest, I write for my own peace of mind, as an outlet to everyday stress and my anxiety and I believe if you don't like something, then don't read. There is never any need to infect someone with negativity.

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Andy was almost bouncing when he returned to his office and upon rebooting his Mac and opening his Mail client he spotted an email sent from Miranda's personal address. His smile widened until he saw the words and a frown formed.

Andrei,

It is time to teach Ravitz and Thompson a lesson. I will explain further this evening but Diane Ravitz requires proof of Irving's infidelity so I need you to do something for me. Can you please open the link below, print the documents and take them to the Ravitz home at 1060 5th Ave? They have a co-op on level 10. Please keep tomorrow AM free, we are needed at my doctor's at 8:45 am.

I love you.

M x

Opening the link, he sent the documents to print and ignoring his accounts started to read. He was stunned by the array of information, including photos, Miranda had uncovered, not only about Irv's relationship with Christina but of that with other women spanning the last ten years.

He understood why Miranda may have felt the need to have something to hold over the chairman of Elias Clarke, after all, he often made her life difficult, but he wondered how far Miranda would actually go to ensure her position at Runway. Shaking the thoughts away, he placed the documents into a binder and copied the photos to a small SD card.

Andy understood Miranda loved her work, she generally gave Runway 110% of her focus at all times and yet he knew she had been playing hooky more and more often to spend more time with him and the twins. She often left the editing of the book in the evenings and worked on it early in the mornings over coffee. He knew from their discussions as they snuggled together that she loathed office politics and ass kissing, but did what was required of her to produce the best magazine she could. But this thing with Irv and Christina was nothing to do with simple office politics, it was now personal. They had messed with something Miranda cared deeply about, something she deemed sacrosanct. They had messed with him.

He was slightly overwhelmed about the depth of Miranda's feelings and the fact his life was about to change so drastically. They had so many decisions to make in the immediate future.
Would Miranda and the twins move into the apartment with him, or would he eventually move into the Townhouse? Would they pool resources and buy a new house? There was so much that was unknown.

Grabbing the file, he locked up his office, once again forwarding calls to his cell and sitting behind the wheel of his truck, he tapped a quick email response to Miranda. Firing the ignition, he pulled out onto the road and started his journey towards 5th Avenue, Andy contemplated the future and smiled.

His fridge and freezer doors were already covered in things the twins had made for him since his return to their life and he had photographs of him with the three Priestly's dotted around his home. He truly felt like he belonged with them. He adored spending time with the family, being able to take the twins for a casual walk and having ice cream, or watching documentaries and movies. They were so smart it left him amazed. They both brought him so much joy and he revelled in their easy laughter.

He made the decision he would drop the documents off and head over to Miranda's and see the twins. He would text Miranda when he parked to see if there was anything specific she craved for dinner. Thinking of cravings, he remembered the events of the afternoon and grinned. He knew he would cater to Miranda's every whim in the coming months.

He was ridiculously happy. He couldn't quite believe Miranda had agreed to marry him. He'd known asking was a big thing, they had only been dating a matter of months, but he was certain she was the person he belonged with. Spotting the awning depicting 1060, he navigated the roads, cutting someone off as he pulled up outside the building.

Looking down at himself, he realised he perhaps should have changed out of the jeans and t-shirt he'd put on before taking Miranda back to Runway. Shrugging, he locked up his truck and upon entering the building was greeted by a uniformed doorman. After announcing himself, a call was made and he was gestured towards the elevator and told to head up to the 10th floor.

He fidgeted as the elevator moved up and once it arrived at the private elevator landing he stepped into a Gallery with access to multiple rooms. He caught the soft voice calling to him and stepped quietly into a large corner living room. He glanced around the light and airy room with its large wood burning fireplace and western and southern exposures that overlooked the park and the city skyline and smiled. It was a beautiful room. Irv was a lucky son of a bitch but Andy doubted he appreciated the beauty surrounding him.

He caught sight of the older woman he recognised from his time at Runway. Diane Ravitz was perched elegantly on a leather sofa. She waved him over and he stepped close and offered his hand which she took and squeezed in greeting before letting it go. "Good afternoon, Mrs Ravitz. I'm...

"I know who you are, Ahn-drei." Her lips ghosted into a hint of a smile after drawling out his name. "Or should I call you the dragon tamer?"

"I know who you are, Ahn-drei." Her lips ghosted into a hint of a smile after drawling out his name. "Or should I call you the dragon tamer?"

Andy frowned and dropped the folder on the arm of the chair and it slid onto Diane Ravitz's lap. "I was led to believe you wanted these documents, Diane. You have them now, good day to you."

"I meant no offence, Andrei. You have become somewhat of a legend within the halls of Elias Clarke. You are the one that got away." The woman continued to speak and he could hear her leafing through the paperwork. "But then you returned and God only knows what you see in Miranda when you could truly have anyone, but she's so happy, she almost glows with it."
Andy ground his teeth and stalled. "You seem intent on insulting us. Why?" The question came unbidden.

He heard the woman stand and caught the click of her heels on the floor behind him. "My husband would have left me for her."

"Miranda never wanted him though." Andy turned around and glared at the woman. "And you know that, and are now holding it against her." Andy saw Diane's surprise that he'd seen through her so easily. "Perhaps what you don't yet realise is that when Miranda has your back and offers her friendship and support, you feel a level of security very few others can provide. She is beautiful, loyal and headstrong. And sure, she can be blunt almost to the point of rudeness, but she is so fucking ridiculously smart and determined, it makes my mind boggle. Frankly, I consider myself lucky to have her in my life because not one fucking person has ever come close to her. No one ever could." Andy's fists were clenched at his sides as his anger rose. "Not one of those scrawny Fashionista's nor that vapid blonde that trails after her and who gives me the come hither every time I see her."

"That vapid blonde is my niece," Diane whispered. "She was fired this afternoon."

"Good. That's one less untrustworthy fool in my Miranda's life." Andy frowned. "You know, I remember you from my time at Runway too. You seemed different then, happier."

"Back then I was unaware of how much of a philandering asshole my husband was," Diane muttered.

"For what it's worth, I am sorry, but I won't just stand here and listen to you disrespect Miranda. She is doing something that will help you get rid of that vile little shit of a man you married. The one I know has been cheating on you for the last four years, the man who has fathered a child to some bitch, who then tried to claim I was the father when I never even touched her. So yeah, you know what? You can all just go fuck yourselves."

"You're not as nice as everyone thinks, are you?" Diane asked.

"Nope." Andy's mouth popped over the P. "I'm so over all this shit. I'm over your husband's condescension, his claims I'm just a tradesperson when I had a great education from Harvard. I am perhaps a little over-qualified for what I do but I have professional accolades to back up my talent. I am over people telling me I have nothing to offer Miranda, or worse, that they cannot understand what I see in her when there is so much to love. Who is anyone else to judge?"

Diane looked shamefaced. "I didn't realise..."

"Why would you?" Andy asked. "You probably see a fresh-faced kid forming a relationship with an older, beautiful, successful woman and like many, incorrectly assume I'm in it for all I can get."

Diane let out a tinkling laugh. "Fresh-faced? Oh no. Years ago, perhaps, but that beard adds a few years onto you. You were always handsome, Andrei but the ruggedness you possess now truly makes you stand out in a crowd. I'm sure women just fall at your feet."

"My looks are unimportant," Andy stated seriously. "They simply come from a random quirk of genetics." He shrugged his shoulders.

The woman turned serious and he watched her turn contemplative. "Miranda once said something similar to me, when she first joined Runway and the men flocked around her," Diane stated. "I'll take my words back, it seems both you and Miranda are lucky to have found one another," Diane
"She would give it all up to keep you, you realise."

"I would never ask that of her." Andy frowned.

Diane nodded once. "I wish to say thank you, for your candour and for bringing the files so quickly."

"What will you do with the information?" Andy asked curiously.

Diane gave a cold shark-smile and Andy was stunned by the change in her. "I am going to make Irving pay dearly. He'll be lucky to walk away unscathed. And then I will cut Christina Thompson off at the knees unless Miranda gets to her first. One thing Miranda Priestly will tolerate is anyone attempting to take what's hers." She held a hand out to him. "Goodbye, Andrei. I'm certain we'll see each other again."

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Miranda had Roy drop her off at Andrei's apartment and keyed in the code to allow her entrance into the building.

Being given the code, to come and go as she wished, was a level of trust that still left her amazed. She let herself reflect on the moment when Andrei had slipped a piece of paper into her hand one morning as he handed her into the town car and kissing her cheek carefully. He had whispered that she and the twins were always welcome in his home and he hoped they would make themselves comfortable, even if he was not present.

Andrei's truck was outside the building but she knew he was not home, having picked up the twins and in an attempt to keep occupied, headed off to Chelsea Piers for a few games of bowling.

Entering the apartment, she saw that Andrei had been busy. There was an array of fresh fruit in a large ceramic bowl on the kitchen counter and a Tupperware full of chocolate brownies. The area showed Andrei had simply done a quick clean-up rather than his usual deep clean and there was a stack of dishes besides the sink. Pulling off her blazer, she set it on the back of one of the dining chairs and rolling up the sleeves of her blouse, started to rinse the dishes ready to put in the dishwasher.

Keeping herself busy was for the best. She had no idea what the evening would bring, especially once she explained to Andrei it may be best to hold off from telling the Bobbsey's about the baby, just until it was confirmed and they knew it would be safe. She had sensed Andrei's frustration after dropping the documents off with Diane, but he had been unwilling to discuss things over the phone. She knew he would open up once the girls had gone to bed and they were alone.

She cleaned the kitchen efficiently before moving to the fridge, ready to make a start on dinner. She grinned at the array of artwork and photographs covering the doors and opening it, saw the chicken and vegetables already prepared for their meal. She had advised she wanted Honey Stir-Fry chicken but that she would cook while Andrei finished his accounts.

Hearing the elevator, she smiled widely and stepped from the kitchen and as the doors opened she held her arms out and was soon wrapped up in two pairs of arms. She bent and kissed the twin's heads before looking up into gentle dark eyes. "Hello, my darling's. Did you have fun?"

"Dandy sucks at bowling, mommy. Both me and Caro beat him by a mile." Cassidy chirped happily.

"Did you now?" Miranda looked up and saw Andtlrei's small grin. "Are you sure your Dandy
didn't just let you win."

Caroline spun around and glared at the man, her little hands on her hips. "You wouldn't do that, would you, Dandy?"

"Who me? Nah, I'm just terrible." Andrei's smile widened as his eyes widened in mock innocence.

"Whatever, we'll just have to prove we're better another way," Cassidy claimed, offering him a small smile. She let go of Miranda and stepped towards the tall man and he picked her up easily. She prodded the deep dimple in his cheek. "You have a pretty smile, Dandy. I hope when you give us our little brother or sister, it has your smile."

Miranda's jaw dropped and she glared at the man. "Andrei, what on..."

Andrei put Cassidy down and she glared at the man. "Andrei, what on...

Andrei put Cassidy down and pushed her gently away as he straightened and interrupted her tirade. "Go set up a movie, my little ones." He glanced at her imploringly and she could feel his anxiety rising. "I didn't tell your about a damn thing, Miranda, okay? They simply asked if we were going to plan for a baby and get married." He shrugged. "I told them maybe one day if I was blessed."

Miranda pinched the bridge of her nose between the fingers of her left hand and the setting sun caused the ring to sparkle.

"That's a really pretty ring, mommy," Caroline spoke softly. "Much nicer than the one Stephen got you."

"Yes, Andrei has wonderful taste." Miranda found herself answering.

"Of course he does, mommy. He chose you." Cassidy smiled happily. "Now, are we going to watch movies or plan your wedding?"

Miranda's laughter broke the tension and Andrei wrapped his arm loosely around her waist. She could feel him relax as he walked with her back into the living room. "Your girls are something else, Miranda." Andrei brushed a kiss on top of her head.

"Our girls." Miranda reminded him gently. "And don't you forget it."

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After dinner was eaten, Andy settled into his favourite armchair and finished his payroll. The twins were laid out in large floor cushions watching the live action version of Beauty and the Beast, each of them humming along to the familiar tunes. Once it was over they switched to Monsters Inc.

Glancing up, he watched Miranda frowning as she scratched out some sums on a piece of paper. He could see her double and triple checking the final figure and grinned. "You know, you could just use a calculator." He teased.

"Now where would be the challenge in that, my darling?" Miranda breathed. "I did the math in my head first, but I became uncertain. This way I know my mental arithmetic skills are still solid." Miranda pulled her glasses off her nose and brushed the arm against her lips contemplatively. "I didn't realise how much you saved with your trade account with your suppliers." Miranda raised an eyebrow. "You have made a reasonable profit off the last few jobs you completed, but could have made more."

Her arched eyebrow had him swallowing nervously and running his hand along his jaw. "Emily
didn't tell you?" He queried softly.

"Tell me what exactly?" Miranda queried, her eyes turning colder.

"That I amended the invoice for the work on the Hampton's house," Andy admitted. "You paid trade price plus labour for the work my team did. I made no profit from it."

"We agreed to a price prior to you starting the job." Miranda's tone held disbelief.

"Yeah, but then we started dating. It didn't seem right somehow." Andy shrugged. "It was a job I enjoyed and it gave us time to navigate this relationship. I would have gladly done the work for free by myself."

"How long would that have taken?" Miranda smirked.

"My first house renovation was a three by two in El Segundo. I did that myself, working from dusk until dawn, it took me nine weeks to gut the place and make it shine." Andy smiled softly. "I made $300,000 when I flipped it. The Hamptons house would probably have taken me close to four months to complete alone."

"Do you still buy to sell?" Miranda asked.

"It was the plan for this place, but I fell in love with it as I brought it to life. So no. I'm now recognisable for my restoration work and so far it has kept me and my team fairly busy." Andy sighed. "Renovating homes to sell was a way for me to break into the industry and make some cash. I didn't just want to live off my inheritance and as I've explained before, the thought of being stuck in an office didn't appeal. So I increased the value of the homes I worked on hoping someone would live in them that appreciated the space I took the time to create."

"And what's next, after the Brooklyn project and Men's Runway?" Miranda asked.

"I should be able to show you in the next few days," Andy stated. He caught Cassidy yawning against the large floor cushion she was laying on and smiled. Checking the time, he frowned. It was 9 pm and far later than he had realised. "Come on, my little loves, it's way past your time for bed."

"But Dandy..." Caroline whined.

He gave the girl a soft smile as he set his Macbook to one side and stood. "But nothing. You have a trip to MOMA tomorrow and afternoon tea with friends. You need to be rested or you'll be cranky."

Cassidy stood up and stomped her foot. "We do not get cranky." She stated as Caroline rubbed her eyes furiously.

Andy couldn't stop his smile. "Of course, you don't my little loves. I'm just teasing." He held his hands out to them and they took them while Miranda stood and stretched. He couldn't take his eyes off the woman. In casual clothes, she seemed softer and more relaxed. It was so far removed from the women who had entered his office that morning, but it was the look he loved the most, knowing it was just for him and the girls.

"Are you just going to stand there staring, my darling?" Miranda's voice broke his focus and he saw her trying to hide a wide smile.

"Uh, yes...I mean no...I mean..." Andy blew out a flustered breath and looked at the sleepy girls. Kneeling between them he hugged them close and stood up with them settled on either hip.
"Bedtime." He caught Miranda's eyes and saw hers had softened at his gentleness with the twins. "Are you coming, Miranda, or will you just stand there staring at us?" He teased.

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Miranda loved how she felt when wrapped up around Andrei’s body. At 5’5” tall and rather slender, she felt safe. Andrei was solid, he was warm and comforting. She absolutely adored him and worried quite often that he did not quite realise how much he actually meant to her.

Looking up, from her position against the back of the couch, she caught Andrei’s eyes and brushed her hands through his hair, sweeping it back. She thought of his words that he had amended the invoice for the work he had completed and the reasons behind it and felt her stomach flutter. Perhaps he did know after all.

She reached for Andrei, pulling his face down to meet her lips. At the gentle touch, she felt her body react and her nipples hardened as a sudden wave of desire crash through her.

It was always the same when Andrei touched her or vice versa. He was sincere and decent, extraordinarily smart and witty, handsome and strong, sensitive and occasionally mischievous. He was complex and yet straightforward. She adored his company and wanted nothing more than to have him by her side always. And she swore she would be, as his wife. The very idea of marrying this man, of having his child was wonderful but also quite frightening. But she wanted it, more than anything.

Now, locked in a passionate embrace, Andrei was kissing her and she returned them wholeheartedly. Kissing Andrei was like nothing she had encountered with anyone else, Miranda could easily get lost in the gentle touch of Andrei's lips against hers, and these little moments when they took the time to connect this way, were simply sublime. Her tongues inside Andrei's mouth felt heavenly. Her hands under his shirt, teasing them along his warm skin, felt like absolution for all her mistakes.

Suddenly, Andrei's hand was under her blouse and he was caressing her breasts, cupping them and softly pinching her nipples. God, she loved it when he touched her like that. She squirmed against the touch, moaning softly in the back of her throat. Miranda would usually have taken this to their bedroom, but somehow she didn't care. What she did with Andrei just felt so good, so inherently right. She never wanted him to stop.

She could feel Andrei getting excited, his kisses more demanding, his hands stroking her with more urgency, using them to push her towards an orgasm, but he had made no move to get into her pants. Miranda wanted him to continue and she could feel herself growing wetter as her arousal grew. If only...

Perhaps if she moved against him, he would just get the hint and unfasten her pants, maybe pull them and her panties down and off. She hoped his hands would tease her pussy. It was hungry, once again, for his touch.

She could just jump on top of him and fuck him right here on the sofa where they lay, and it would be explosive but it wouldn't be enough. It was never enough. Miranda stilled his hands and broke their kiss, her eyes closing as Andrei's lips teased the sensitive skin behind her ear. "Uhm, my darling, as good as that feels, tell me about Diane."

Andrei put distance between them and groaned. "Uuugh, she was a total insulting bitch. She actually told me she couldn't see what I saw in you when I could have anyone. I gave her a piece of my mind."
Miranda stroked her hand along his jaw soothing him. "My beautiful, Andrei. My fierce protector. I do not care what other people may say, and I wish you wouldn't either."

"I wish it was that easy, sweetheart" Andrei muttered. "I just get so frustrated when people think they can just say what the fuck they want about you."

Miranda pulled him in for a kiss again and her hands fumbled with the buttons of his jeans. Andrei stopped kissing, her and gazed into her eyes. The gentleness of the expression stunned her. "What is it, my darling?" Miranda queried softly.

"Bed." Andrei husked.

Miranda nodded and Andrei pulled back, sliding off the sofa and holding his hand out to her. As she grasped it, he pulled her flush against him and lifted her, carrying her towards their bedroom, his lips trailing softly against her jaw as he inched her blouse up. As they reached the bed, he set her down on her feet and pulled the blouse over Miranda's head and unhooking the front clasp of her bra before kneeling and kissing her breasts.

Miranda felt the whiskers of his beard rubbing against her soft skin and it really turned her on. Cradling his head, she moaned loudly. With his head resting between her breasts, Andrei's hands made short work of her trousers pulling her pants and panties down in one fluid motion before pushing her down on the mattress. As her bare ass settled on the cool sheets, she understood there would be no turning back on their passion that night.

Miranda loved the way Andrei moved. He was lithe and quite graceful in himself. It offered him a sensuousness many men lacked. She loved to give him pleasure, taking his thick, smooth penis in her mouth and sucking him until he climaxed. His cum was so incredibly sweet. Her absolute favourite thing though was the way he touched her, in a way that always brought her to more intense climaxes than she had ever experienced before.

"Love me, Andrei," Miranda spoke softly.

Andrei stripped quickly before moving gracefully between her parted thighs and trailed his fingers against her clit causing her to buck against the light touch. His fingers teased her opening before pumping two into her gently, building her up. "Are you ready?"

"Indubitably." Miranda's smirk disappeared when Andrei removed his hand and entered her with a deep thrust, filling her as she bucked against him. She knew this would be a night filled with love, and whispered promises and tomorrow, she would still feel this man's touch every time she moved. It would be exquisite.

"I love you, Miranda." Andrei's hot breath crested against her ear as he moved slowly and teasingly. She knew it would only be a matter of time until she climaxed as a deep ache built in the pit of her stomach.

"Oh God, I love you, I love you, I love..." Miranda's breathless chant was cut off as her back arched and her first orgasm ripped through her. "...you..."

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Chapter 14

Chapter Notes

Yay, another fic idea from the lovely celesse201, who for whatever reason, holds the belief I can bring her ideas to life. This is my first major AU. Not giving too much away. Miranda is Miranda but I am making her and the twins slightly younger for the sake of the fic. Andy is not the Andy you expect (Hence the AU)

I do not own the main characters related to The Devil Wears Prada. They are owned by the original author and 20th Century Fox. Some characters will be my own.

The week before the benefit saw Miranda extremely busy as she and Emily worked towards making the night a spectacular event for all. It was a night that usually celebrated Runway and its achievements, but this year it would act as a celebration for the start of Men's Runway the following month, under her good friend, Nigel Kipling.

She had not seen Andrei for almost a week as he took half of his team out to Brooklyn to start his new job on the warehouse conversion. Each day simply ended with a phone call, where they expressed their love and the promise to see each other soon.

News of their engagement had broken on Page Six after they were seen at dinner, with a photograph published to back up the story of the large diamond Tiffany ring sitting proudly on her left-hand ring finger.

During the days following this, she ignored the press as she always had and Andrei did the same. They made plans for the future, which included discussions about where they would live.

It had been decided they would have a fresh start, looking for a new family home in the city, but initially, they would live at Andrei's apartment. The twins decided that the townhouse held too many memories of the painful past, but the apartment was not suitable for the menagerie of animals they stated they required.

The furore from the press was short-lived after reports arrived on the gossip pages of Irving Ravitz's removal from his Fifth Avenue home, as he was seen carrying garment bags over his arms to his car. The reports were followed up the next day with leaked documents claiming he had fathered another child outside of his marriage to Christina Thompson, the same child she had tried to claim as belonging to Andrei Sachs (they couldn't even get his name right).

If Irving wondered over his soon-to-be-ex wife's sudden knowledge of his indiscretions, he kept it to himself. He had turned rather quiet and often backtracked when about to come face-to-face with Miranda. He cancelled their budget meetings, signing off on all her requests without even glancing at them.

Miranda felt only a small sense of victory when she heard that he had also been turned away from Christina Thompson's door. Christina was packing up her Tribeca loft in preparation to move to France to work under Jacqueline Follet at the small gossip magazine she became the editor for after the spectacular fall of James Holt International.
The rumour mill claimed Irving was now holed up in a suite at the Ritz, running up large bills to try to coax his way back into Diane's good graces. His attempts were seemingly futile as Diane was spotted out at dinner with various eligible men.

Moving sedately into the kitchen of her Hampton's home, she rubbed her stomach absentmindedly. The pregnancy had been confirmed and the initial sonogram indicated the baby had been conceived upon her and Andrei first becoming intimate with one another.

Miranda knew it would be hard to pinpoint the exact moment of conception, they had been so extraordinarily physical in those first nights and she often looked back on them with awe. She still wasn't certain how she had got to be so lucky.

Glancing around the kitchen, Miranda was pleased by the bustle of activity as the caterers got everything ready. She could hear the musician's she had hired setting up in the corner of the atrium under Emily and Serena's expert watch and knew everything would be going as planned.

She now simply needed to maintain a little more patience while waiting for Andrei's imminent arrival.

Her eyes landed on a young man with a scruffy beard and unruly curls and frowned as he gazed balefully at her. She realised he looked vaguely familiar but could not place him.

Shrugging, she made to turn and found herself swept up into long, muscled arms. Her eyes fell closed as she was lifted off her feet and her lips were snared into a gentle kiss. There was only one person who would do such a thing, her Andrei, but there was something different about the man.

Her hand moved up along Andrei's jaw and she gasped at the feeling of warm skin instead of the usual soft beard. Her eyes blazed open and glancing up at the man, she saw his eyes sparkling with happiness as her eyes swept over his tanned face to his short, tidy hair. The dimple in his cheek played peek-a-boo and his eyes crinkled at the edges as he fought against a large goofy grin.

Unable to resist, she surged forward to kiss his beautifully full lips and found her kiss returned passionately. It had been a long week. She pulled back slightly. "My darling, your beard..." Their lips met again and Miranda had to pull her lips away before things became heated. "...the caterers..."

"Don't care. Been too long without having you in my arms." Andrei nuzzled her neck happily, as his voice whispered of his need to hold her close. "Can't do this...can't be away from you and my imps this long, ever again..."

Miranda felt awash with happiness as Andrei set her down on her feet and smiled softly down at her, his pleasure at being in her presence once again clear in his expressive eyes.

A movement behind her caught Andrei's attention and he stiffened before taking three steps back quickly. The pleasure in his eyes gave way shock which quickly turned to anger.

Spinning around, she caught sight of the young man she couldn't place and frowned at the sight of his face twisted in a grimace as he looked at them. She glared at the man and he turned his face away from them.

Turning her head, she noticed Andrei's hands were curled into fists at his side as he stared at the man. His jaw moved as he ground his teeth together. "Nate..." The name tore from his throat in a growl.

"My darling?" Miranda queried, feeling the waves of anger building within her love. The name
filtered through her mind and she gaped as the realisation of who the man was flooded through her.

The fry-cook.

She turned to face the man's direct supervisor giving her a fleeting look that had her recoiling as Nate held his hands out entreatingly to Andrei. "Andy, please..."

She stepped between them. "You..." She closed her eyes briefly and tried to calm herself. "...you have no right to speak to my Andrei. After everything..." Miranda hissed. "...you..."

Nate scoffed. "Like you care." He glared at Miranda, his distaste was evident.

"Nate." The sharp tone from the man's direct superior, Natalie, had him turning his back to them. "You shall apologise to Ms Priestly and her..." Her tone was firm but she trailed off unsure of what title to give Andrei.

"Fiancé," Miranda stated coldly.

Nate gasped and took two steps back before getting himself under control. Miranda noticed the beads of sweat forming along his upper lip. "My apologies, to you both." The words were uttered almost begrudgingly.

"Get back to work," Natalie told Nate. "We shall talk about this later."

Looking towards Andrei, she saw him regaining control. He brushed past her and made his way to the back terrace, where the squeals of the twins could be heard, the door slamming shut behind him causing her to wince.

Glorious Foods were a company Miranda had been using since her rise to Editor-in-Chief. They had, over the years, helped her create the most imaginative events that were flawlessly executed. She would put the word out that she would not use them again. She gestured for Natalie to follow her and led her into the foyer.

Taking a deep breath, Miranda spoke quietly. "I suppose I do not have to advise you that this incident has been displeasing."

"Miranda, I...I..." Natalie sputtered.

"No, no. Please do not try to make excuses. I was sincerely hoping to use you for my upcoming wedding, however, with this latest development, I shall have to look into alternative arrangements." Miranda waved her hand idly. "The man must be talented if you hired him and I assume Jean-Claude would have something to say if I insisted on his immediate removal from my home. I will provide just one warning though. Keep that man away from me, my fiancé and our children. I cannot be held responsible for Andrei's actions should they come face to face again."

"Yes, Miranda," Natalie whispered before retreating quickly and pulling Nate to one side.

Miranda rubbed the bridge of her nose in frustration. This was the last thing she ever thought to encounter upon Andrei's arrival at her side. Moving quietly, she checked the activity in the atrium, watching as Emily guided the musicians efficiently.

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Andy stripped his t-shirt, socks and sneakers off and emptied his pocket of his keys, wallet and cell, placing them on the low table, before running and diving into the pool, not bothered by the
fact his shorts weren't suitable for swimming. As he surfaced to squeals of delight from his girls, he realised how much he had truly missed Miranda and the imps over the last week.

Frankly, seeing Nate had knocked him for six, but his pain was easily dismissed by the presence of the twins.

Propelling himself back under the water, he powered towards the twins before launching himself back to the surface and spraying jets of water over them as he broke the surface.

He couldn't stop his laughter as they squealed before throwing themselves at him and smothering his cheeks in kisses as they exclaimed how pretty he was.

"Pretty, my imps?" Andy chuckled.

"Well, your face is perfectly symmetrical," Cassidy explained. "And you have really beautiful high cheekbones. I'd almost forgotten what you looked like, Dandy."

"Yeah, you're not all craggy looking without your beard, Dandy," Caroline stated with a giggle. "You have an amazing complexion and I know a lot of ladies would kill for long eyelashes like yours."

Andy heard Miranda's heels on the stone pavers and squinted up at her. His jaw dropped at the halo of light surrounding her from the sun. She looked almost ethereal.

Bending he placed a kiss on Caroline and Cassidy's heads and untangled himself from their grip. "I'm just gonna go say hi to your mom and give her another big hug." He explained softly.

"But you just got here." Cassidy moaned splashing water at him.

"Love you, Dandy." Caroline gave him another kiss on the cheek before pushing herself away and splashing her sister. "Come on, Cassi. Grandma and Grandad will be here soon."

Andy pulled himself from the pool and tugged at the waistband of his shorts as they slipped over his hips from the weight of the water. He caught Miranda's eyes and saw her smirk, as he stepped closer to the woman and the twins barrelled past him quickly, grabbing towels before rushing through the kitchen with a small war-cry.

"Try not to lose your pants, my darling," Miranda stated softly as he stepped in front of her "You would send the caterers wild with desire."

Searching her eyes, he saw her concern behind the teasing words. "I'm sure they'd live." He stepped close and took her hand, squeezing it gently in his. "I'm okay." He reassured. "It was a shock seeing him so unexpectedly, but I'm good. I realised the past isn't what matters now. It is the future that's important. It's what we are building, our life together, raising our children to be the best people they can be."

"Children?" Miranda whispered.

"Yeah. Caro, Cass and the one to come." Andy placed his free hand on Miranda's stomach and smiled softly.

"Acceptable." Miranda pulled his hand away and smiled as she tugged him towards the terrace where he'd left his things. "Now, tell me, why did you shave your beard?" Miranda asked.

Andy ran his hand along his jaw. "I was at my barber the other day and she set the clippers
wrong." He grinned. "I believe Luce may have done it on purpose, she's been telling me to shave since before we reconnected. I was worried about tan lines though, and rightly so. I had to spend the last two days out in the sun."

"I'm sure that was such a chore." Miranda's lips twitched. "Why didn't you say anything when we spoke?"

"I wanted it to be a surprise." Andy chuckled as Miranda laughed. "Give it another day or so and I'll be a craggy, bearded caveman again rather than pretty."

"Who said you were pretty?" Miranda's eyebrow arched.

"My imps." Andy's tone was reverent when he made the admission. "Apparently, there are women who would kill for eyelashes as long as mine and my cheekbones are beautiful." He smiled. "No-one's ever called me pretty before. I get handsome and you said I was beautiful. It's different, nice..." He trailed off and bit his lip.

"You are beautiful. Both inside and out. I stand by my words regarding that." Miranda offered a small smile. "And I never sugarcoat such things." She stood and offered her hand. "You could easily grace the cover of any men's magazine, my darling. Come, James's parents will be here shortly and once we bid the twin's goodnight we should rest before the festivities."

"Rest?" Andy smirked as he gazed up at the editor. "Are you tired, my love."

"No, not tired. Simply aching to be wrapped up in your arms." Miranda pulled him to his feet and when he didn't move, mock glared at him. "Move at a glacial pace, my darling."

"Yeah, yeah. I know how much it thrills you." Andy teased as he grabbed his clothes, wallet, keys and cell and shoving what he could in his sneakers.

"Mm. There are certain instances I do appreciate it. Very much so." Miranda admitted. "Perhaps we could work at increasing that appreciation."

"Perhaps." Andy moved closer to Miranda and entwined their fingers before stepping with her into the kitchen. "I love you, Miranda Priestly." He whispered.

"And I love you, Andrei Blake-Sachs." Miranda's words were quiet but firm as she stalled and looked up into his eyes. "And I cannot wait to be your wife and to have our child."

Silence fell around them and shaking herself from the moment, Miranda glanced around and caught Nate's eyes. She twisted the ring on her finger, making it glisten in the sunlight, before offering him one of her coldest smiles and leading Andy from the room.

As they left, both of them caught Nate's muttered exclamation. "Well, I'll be damned..."

Andy chuckled darkly and glanced down affectionately at the woman he loved. "You're seriously something else, sweetheart."

"He needed to realise that I do care, that I will fight to keep what I see as mine," Miranda stated. "I will not allow him to dismiss what we have, regardless of his opinion of me."

"He never stood a chance, sweetheart. I will choose you, in every way, every time, in every lifetime." Andy breathed as Miranda tugged him towards the stairs impatiently.

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Having said goodbye to the twins, she led Andrei back up the stairs and to their bedroom. She'd had clothes brought to the house for Andrei, more items to add to his growing collection of fashionable items, but most certainly in keeping with his tastes.

She loved seeing Andrei in tailored suits and thought back fondly on the day they had met again at La Bernardin when her breath had caught at the sight of him striding towards her in his Dolce and Gabbana trousers and vest. The sheer magnetism of his presence was something to be marvelled at.

But what she loved more was seeing him comfortable. Andrei often walked around at home barefooted and barechested and whether he wore jeans and t-shirts, paired with a casual shirt and desert boots or plain sneakers or his cargo shorts, muscle shirts and workboots he was truly stunning.

Loving the man, as she did, she had no qualms over the way he looked. He wore clothes well, but nothing inflamed her more than his naked form. Andrei was simply a sight to behold in all forms.

Her eyes roamed hungrily over the man as he stepped closer, leaning behind her to snick the lock into place. Her breath caught and she felt her anticipation rising.

Andrei pulled the t-shirt over his head and snapped open the button of the jeans he'd pulled on after their return from the pool.

Unable to resist, she pushed forward and swatted Andrei's hand from his waist. Her hands ran up his washboard abs and up over chest before coming to rest against his neck.

She allowed Andrei the freedom to do. whatever he pleased with her and he offered her the same. They'd had sexual intercourse in every position imaginable and their encounters had become even more intense. She often found herself being teased mercilessly and begging for his touch.

When Andrei had first taken her, she had felt fulfilled for the first time. At that moment, she had wanted to give him everything. She would have harnessed the moon should he have asked for it. She had bared her soul to him and he had accepted it graciously.

She loved these moments they got to just be. The times where she could focus on running her hands over his warm skin, taking delight in his toned body.

She knew, once the benefit was over, she and the twins would settle into the Meatpacking district apartment he had so lovingly renovated. They would then be together full-time and would come home to one another each evening. Their nights would be spent snuggled in bed together. They would take time to have romantic dinners. Their child would grow strong within her.

Best of all, she would be able to whisper all the loving things she held in her heart in his ears as he slept. It was more than she ever hoped for.

Andrei made no secret of looking her over, his gorgeous eyes almost devouring her. "You're beautiful, Miranda." His voice was hoarse and he licked his dry lips.

Miranda swallowed hard as she flooded her panties. By the desire in Andrei's eyes, she knew what he wanted.

"Andrei, I..." Miranda cupped his face again and brought it to meet his lips with her own. She gasped when his tongue flicked out slightly and brushed against her bottom lip. She allowed him entrance and their tongues danced sensuously.

Andrei pulled away, causing her to whimper. "Just imagine how it will feel when I strip off your
clothes and spread you across our bed with your legs wrapped around my hips."

Her hand moved down, her fingers slipping beneath the waistband of Andrei's jeans. Miranda watched closely as his eyes darkened. "Oh, Lord..." She whispered breathlessly, feeling him growing erect under her gentle touch. She watched as his eyes fell closed and grasping him firmly, started to stroke.

Andy pulled the tie of Miranda's white wraparound blouse and his hands skinned over her pale skin, delighting over the trail of goosebumps that erupted over her body. Stepping backwards, so she had no option but to release him, he spun them and his hands pressed gently on Miranda's shoulders, pushing her down onto the mattress.

Miranda's stormy blue eyes, pierced him. They held so much vulnerability and love, it left him stunned.

"Miranda," Andy whispered, kneeling at her feet as he placed warm hands on her hips. "I want nothing more in this world than to make love to you."

Miranda trembled at his words and swallowed hard. Standing up, Andy's hands cupped her ass as she snapped the button of her trousers and let them pool down her legs. Stepping close, she ran her hands through his hair, using it to tilt his head backwards. "I want you to take me completely." She husked breathlessly.

"Oh God, yes!" Andy muttered, pulling the elastic of her panties down. "I want you so much." His breath coasted over Miranda's mound and she shuddered in pleasure at the warmth. "Are you ready?" Andy asked lightly.

Miranda nodded and sitting on the edge of the bed, fell backwards. Andy spread her legs and settled between her thighs on his knees. He adored how completely exposed she made herself for him.

"Please, my darling," Miranda begged.

As he moved between her legs, Miranda closed her eyes and waited, her breathing turning shallow. Andy bent and lapped between Miranda's folds.

"Oh, God!" Miranda's eyes flew open and she watched him as he took his pleasure in the taste of her. "Oh, Andrei. Please...I need you...inside..."

Andy ignored the whimpered pleas as he licked and sucked and swirled his tongue all over Miranda's pussy until her clit was sensitive to his slightest touch. Her hips bucked underneath him and he felt the waves of pleasure crashing through her.

"OH FUCK! AHN-DREI!" Miranda came hard against his mouth, a strong wave of fluid leaving her core. He lapped it up happily, humming as the flavour of the woman exploded against his tongue. Miranda moaned as he pushed her through the waves of her orgasm, blissfully licking and sucking her as she continued to climax.

Andy stopped, leaving Miranda trembling and whimpering. Standing, he rid himself of his pants and boxers, watching as Miranda's breasts heaved as she attempted to catch her breath. Her eyes blazed open and she watched him. slip beside her on the bed. She settled against him, shifting almost lazily until her head was settled on his chest.
"You are amazing, my darling." Miranda husked, nuzzling into his neck.

"No, you are." Andy breathed. "I adore watching you come."

Miranda's hand stroked down and she swallowed as her fingers folded around his cock and he groaned deeply. He sensed Miranda's wariness, recognising she was exhausted. Her body was still trembling from the aftershocks of her climax

"You don't have to..." Andy trailed off as Miranda straddled his thighs.

"I want to," Miranda stated with a gasp as the head of his cock pressed against her.

"I love you, Miranda" Andy muttered as Miranda slid down his length slowly. His eyes closed and he moaned as Miranda rocked her hips as she took him as deep as she could.

"Oh darling, I love you too." Miranda canted her hips and smiled down at him almost serenely.

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What she shared with Andrei has always been special and their intimate moments were passionate and fulfilling, but today it felt different. As she slid down his length, controlling their pleasure, she felt complete. She knew Andrei's only desire was to make her happy.

And he did.

Blissfully so.

Their eyes locked on each other as she stilled all movements, Andrei's full length resting inside her, the head pressed up against her cervix. Their fingers interlocked and she marvelled at the assurances Andrei's hands provided. She understood she was safe with him, he would love her always.

Slowly, and firmly, she began to move up and down his shaft, loving the feel of the back and forth friction inside her, pushing them both towards a mutual climax.

"Oh! That's...oh! Amazing..." Andrei cried. She could see his struggle to keep his eyes open as she gazed down lovingly down at him.

She quickened the pace, ramming herself down onto him hard. It was the sweetest torture to be stretched around him, to have him fill her after he had already brought her to such intense highs. She felt her inner walls clenching around him in preparation for the orgasm that was building deep within her.

Andrei flipped them, unable to continue to lie back and allow her to keep control. She knew he would want to be the one to take charge, to push them towards her orgasm. It wasn't that he wanted control of her entirely, he just wanted to be the one to give her pleasure.

Andrei's body took over as he pounded into her, his long, powerful stroke hitting just the right spot. She wrapped her legs around his back and thrust her hips in time with him, pulling him in deeper. She felt him grow harder, ready to ejaculate, to share in their climax.

Then he exploded and she followed him over the edge with a keening wail. Every muscle in her body tensed as she arched into him. She could feel him coming inside her as she contracted around his length, pulling moans of pleasure from deep within him. Her hips continued to buck from the aftershocks.
"Oh fuck!" Andrei stilled and his breathing was ragged.

She pulled him close as he attempted to move. "No, don't move." Miranda whimpered. "Please." She felt tears spring into her eyes. She was desperate not to lose this intimacy.

Her hips were bucking of their own accord from the aftershocks, and her grip tightened, trapping them together as her body shivered from the intensity of her climax.

Andrei snared her lips in a soft, yet passionate kiss that was meant to soothe. He pulled out carefully and broke the contact, settling beside her in his side. "If I could I would stay buried in you forever."

Miranda turned on her side to face Andrei and seeing his contentment surged forward and kissed him shamelessly, pulling him tight against her. She smiled against his lips. "What a sight that would be." She teased huskily.

Andrei's smile was sweet as he lifted his hand and caressed her face. "I love you, sweetheart." She nuzzled into his neck, murmuring. He stiffened. "What was that?"

Miranda looked up, heat flushing her cheeks. She looked away, gazing over his shoulder. "Marry me. Not simply after the baby comes. Soon...tomorrow or Sunday." She caught his eyes again. "I am terrible at marriages but I want to be your wife. I need it."

Gallantly, Andrei reached for her, pulling her tight against his chest before rolling onto his back and settling her against him. He searched her eyes as she looked down on him expectantly and nodded once. "We haven't spoken much about it. I always wanted a simple beach wedding. No black-tie event, no big fuss. I never wanted a hundred guests I barely know to watch me give my heart to someone."

Miranda found herself staring lovingly into his expressive hazel eyes as he spoke. "That sounds perfectly acceptable." She husked. "I did the whole huge white wedding with James. I wore a champagne Vera Wang gown for my nuptials to Stephen. Perhaps this time I can buck tradition altogether." Her lips twitched. "Perhaps wearing cerulean."

Andrei grinned, clearly remembering how she took him to task over his hideous cerulean sweater vest. "You could wear a garbage bag and still knock the socks off anyone else in the room."

"Oh, you..." Miranda slapped his shoulder lightly and laughed throatily. "...you could charm the birds from the trees with such talk."

Andrei's smile was wide and his eyes sparkled with an incandescent light of mischief. "There's only one little bird I hope to charm."

"Oh, you have most certainly charmed this old bird." Miranda grinned ruefully.

She watched as Andrei's eyes turned sombre. "Hey, less of the old. You are at the very pinnacle of your world. You are growing life within you. You are not old."

"People will have much to say about us once news of my pregnancy hits the tabloids, my darling. I am that much older." Miranda advised sadly.

"Hey, what they say will never be important. They know nothing about us, not really. Plus I know your hair has been silver since your mid-thirties. I've seen the photos, and it simply distinguishes you from the masses." Andrei stroked his fingers gently through her forelock. "And it's not like I'm never going to get grey and grizzly. Seb and Michelle have already started pointing out the little
streaks of grey in my beard and sideburns."

Miranda sighed and settled her head against his chest, listening to the deep thrum of his heart. "I look forward to watching you age. If your growth over the last five years accounts for anything, you will be even more magnificent."

"And you say I could charm the birds." Andrei’s tone was light. "Do we have time for a nap?"

"Not really. But we can stay like this for a little longer, then I will feed you and we shall get ready." Miranda stated.

"What about the caterers?" Andrei asked. "Nate's there."

"Not even that scruffy man-child can stop me from accessing my kitchen, my darling." Miranda leaned up, resting her weight on her elbow. "He cannot stop me from taking care of you, Andrei." Miranda licked her lips. "I will always take care of you."

"You know that goes both ways?" Andrei whispered. She could see the hope in his eyes, that she understood he meant every word.

"I know, my darling. I have complete faith in you." Miranda reassured softly.

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Chapter End Notes

So I'm trying to ease myself back into writing and it's going, for want of a better word, slow. Please lemme know what you think, I love every single comment.
Yay, another fic idea from the lovely celesse201, who for whatever reason, holds the belief I can bring her ideas to life. This is my first major AU. Not giving too much away. Miranda is Miranda but I am making her and the twins slightly younger for the sake of the fic. Andy is not the Andy you expect (Hence the AU)

I do not own the main characters related to The Devil Wears Prada. They are owned by the original author and 20th Century Fox. Some characters will be my own.

Having showered, Andy made his way to the atrium wearing his dress pants and a white shirt, unfastened at the neck but tucked into a black, silk cummerbund. Looking around, he saw the musicians idling near the windows and made his way to where Serena was stood, biting her lip nervously. "What's up? I thought they would be doing their soundchecks by now." Andy stated.

Serena jumped and spun on her heel to face him. "The fucking vocalist is off her head. Em could smell the scotch rolling off her when she stumbled in here and dragged her to the kitchen to try to sober her up. The band is furious they had concerns when they rehearsed last week but decided not to say anything."

"Oh shit," Andy whispered. "Right, I'll help Em out."

"What about the cook?" Serena asked.

"I'll pretend he's not there." Andy smiled sadly. "I'm sure his boss wouldn't be happy if he started anything. Miranda has already made her displeasure at his presence clear."

"She doesn't know, does she?" Serena asked.

"No. I will never use that word in front of her or the twins." He breathed. "I couldn't." Andy frowned. "It's such a derogatory term."

"You're a good man, Andy." Serena grinned. "I'm so glad you stayed in touch with me while you were in California."

Andy grinned. "Yeah, me too. I best go see what's what with Em." He stepped away and made his way briskly to the kitchen, dodging the caterers easily.

He saw Emily standing in the small sitting area and caught her words. "You need to sober the fuck up. If Miranda sees you like this you'll never work in New York again."

He heard the woman retch and caught the small scoff coming from behind him and knew immediately that Nate was lurking. "Yeah, the old cunt enjoys making people's lives hell."

Emily stiffened as the words carried across the short distance and Natalie from Glorious Foods rushed over to pull him away.

Andy's fists clenched and he spun around to face his old friend. Searching Nate's eyes, he saw he
was still holding on to the old animosity. "One more word from you and I'll kick your fucking teeth in." He spat the threat through gritted teeth.

"I can't believe you fell for her bullshit again, Andy. Priestly will chew you up and spit you out, leaving you with nothing." Nate stated as Natalie pulled ineffectually on his arm. He shrugged the woman off easily.

"You're wrong. Even if the relationship fails I will have a son or daughter to lavish with all the love I hold for Miranda and the twins." Andy growled. "I will always have my child."

Nate scoffed derisively. "I'd be demanding a paternity test if I was you. Those that knew you, know the real truth, that you cannot father a child." He taunted. "She's just stringing you along."

Andy looked into Nate's eyes and understood he was trying to play upon one of his oldest fears and although he knew the truth, it was an unnecessary low blow.

He pushed forward, knocking Nate back into the kitchen island. He saw the flash of the blade under Nate's hand and stalled as heels clacked towards them.

"I hope you realise Miranda has extensive security throughout the house?" Emily stated. "I can assure you if you even think of putting that knife to use you will be dealt with swiftly, as it will be caught on camera, which incidentally remains hidden from direct view." She stepped beside Andy and her hand rested on the small of his back reassuringly.

Nate moved his hands in front of him entreatedly. "Andy, I..."

"Get out." Andy was shaking, his anger palpable. "I warn you now, Nate, get the fuck out before forcibly throw you out."

"Nate," Natalie spoke softly to the man. "Just go sit in the van and take a breather, we're almost done here and then the servers will take over. Do not make this any more difficult than it already is. Think of Doug, he's waiting for you at home."

"You and Doug?" Andy chuckled in disbelief. "I thought he had better taste than that. I never would have believed he'd end up with an asshole like you."

"Doug loves me." Nate turned away, moving quickly towards the dining room which would lead him to the foyer.

"Yeah, but I know for a fact you don't love him, not in that way. You're just a selfish sonofabitch." Andy called after him. He watched as Nate stalled briefly. "I feel sorry for you. Doug will realise one day just how little he means to you, and you'll be left alone, with nothing but your bitterness for company." Andy strode forward, hovering in the doorway leading to the foyer and spotted Serena hovering.

"Good luck, Andy, you're gonna need it," Nate shouted, trying to get the last word in.

"Yeah, yeah. Whatever! Don't let the door hit you on the way out, motherfucker." Andy called out as the front door slammed shut. Swallowing hard, he then took a deep breath, his eyes falling closed. He felt a single tear trail down his cheek and swept it away quickly. He hadn't lost anything further from his little run-in with his old friend.

Turning he stepped back towards the atrium and pulled his cell from his trouser pocket and pressed a speed dial before putting it to his ear. "Amy, I need a favour. We need a singer..." Andy grinned at the squeal on the other end of the line. "...you and Mish need to get your glad rags on and get to
Miranda’s Hamptons House ASAP. I’ll hold the fort until you arrive.” He disconnected his cell and caught Serena's eyes before grinning. "Rouse Emily, tell her to get that woman down to the pool house to sleep it off. Cara’s down there and she will help. I'll deal with the band. We have a new plan to run with, starting with that soundcheck. I need ten minutes to finish dressing, and then we begin."

"Yes, Andy." Serena glanced at him, affection highlighted in her eyes. "Please do not take anything that olho do cu has said personally. He clearly cannot see just how fan-fucking-tastic you are, my friend."

Serena grinned as he chuckled and bounded towards the kitchen, calling for Emily.

Andy entered the atrium, shaking his head. He spoke to the musicians. "I hope you know some Classic Rock and Motown?" The answering grins and light laughter reassured him. "I'll be right back to start the soundcheck. Gimme a few minutes."

"Yes, boss." The unanimous answer had Andy smiling brightly as he rushed from the room and charged up the stairs.

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Miranda glanced at herself appraisingly in the full-length mirror and frowned slightly.

Her hair and makeup were flawless as usual but the embellished tulle Valentino gown was a little more snug around her midsection than it had been in her final fitting. She knew it was only a matter of time until the world knew of her pregnancy. She had announced it in front of the fry-cook and understood there was a chance he would run to Page Six with the news.

She gazed at her gown, taking particular pleasure in the crystal and bead-embellished snake design across her bust. It referenced a key motif from the fashion house’s 1968 archive, with the serpent's head, sat on the collarbone and its tail sat at her waist, where the layers of flowing tulle gathered for an ethereal effect to her Prada clad feet.

Hearing the door of the bedroom opening quietly, she glanced out at the room and saw Andrei shrugging himself into his black and white Ralph Lauren geometric art-deco inspired silk jacquard tuxedo jacket and watched as he frowned at his bow-tie. He had begrudgingly admitted to her that he struggled to tie them.

Smiling softly, she stepped out of the closet towards the man and heard his breath catch. She caught his soft exclamation of awe in the form of a breathy wow and her smile widened.

She had been surprised earlier that day to see Andrei had shaved but he looked stunning with his deep tan and she knew exactly where it did not extend to. His chiselled jaw added a rugged strength to his face and the deep dimples in his cheeks spoke of his easy-going, affable, happy nature, but what struck her the most was his expressive deep-set eyes. Andrei’s bright mega-watt smile was almost blinding as he offered her a wide smile and she noticed how his eyes crinkled up at the edges and yet seemingly sparkled, with the flecks of amber, green and brown fighting for dominance in the light of the room.

He was truly beautiful.

Miranda understood she was the luckiest woman in New York to have captured this man and swore that she would give him the world if he wanted it.

Stepping into Andrei’s personal space, she took the bow-tie from his hands and fastened the top
button before lifting the collar of his crisp white shirt. "You do realise the bow tie is a tour de force in its own right, my darling?" Miranda asked softly.

Andrei's eyes widened in disbelief, causing her to smile. "You are going to school me again, aren't you?" He asked.

"Not quite, my darling." Miranda found herself reassuring the man. "I just wanted you to realise a bow-tie is a statement that shows you are debonair, and not one to shy away from the crowd." She smiled softly. "However, correctly tying and wearing a bow-tie is not easy. A pre-tied or clip-on option is obviously out of the question, and if it was loosely tied, too large or haphazardly askew..." Miranda licked her lips. "...well, it would simply destroy the whole effect."

Miranda hung the bow tie flat around Andrei's neck, pulling the left side facing her down longer by one and a half inches. She brought the left side across the right close to his neck before bringing it up behind the shorter side and forming a simple and loose knot.

"I'm going to feel like James Bond," Andrei smirked down at her as she chuckled. "Which must make you my Moneypenny." His eyebrow arched when she simply concentrated on tying the bow by folding the right side into a bow tie shape by pulling it to the left and then folding it back over itself.

She adjusted it slightly so the fold sat directly between the collar points. "I believe I am more like M." Miranda's lips twitched and she draped the left of the bow tie over the front and folding it. She passed it through the loop behind the previous folded side. She continued to pull the bow through the loop before tightening the knot and adjusting the tie by pulling on opposite sides simultaneously. "Perfect." She raised herself on her tip toes and brushed a gentle kiss on his lips. "You look magnificent, Andrei." She caught his eyes. "Now, will you tell me what the slamming of the front door was all about?"

"You heard that?" Andrei seemed nervous all of a sudden.

"I believe they may have heard it in the centre of East Hampton, my darling." She took a breath. "Was it the fry-cook?"

"He announced to the fucking room, including Emily, that I should demand a paternity test because those who truly know me know I'll never father a child." Andrei grimaced. "He was just baiting me to get a rise. I admit I reacted, pushing him against the kitchen island, but his hand fell on a knife and until Emily told him his actions would be caught on camera, I honestly thought he might try to use it."

"There are no camera's, my darling. Heaven forbid." She shuddered at the idea of having her every move monitored in such a profound way. "He will regret his actions today. What else did he say?"

"Why do you think he had a chance anything else?" Andrei sputtered.

"Why are you deflecting my question?" She demanded. Miranda couldn't wrap her head around the fact Andrei was holding out on her now, after everything. "There must have been something to bring things to such a head after I provided Natalie warnings for him to be kept away."

"It doesn't matter." Andrei ground his teeth.

"Well, I suppose I could always demand answers from Emily" Miranda stated coldly. Her lips pursed. "She will have no choice but to tell me."

She knew she had given Andrei no choice but to respond. "I swore to myself I would never utter
the word he tosses around so casually when speaking of you. I would never willingly utter such a
demeaning term against any woman, a word rooted in misogyny..."

"He called me a cunt then?" Miranda interrupted his tirade. She watched as Andrei's mouth
snapped shut. "Yes, I understand why you may be offended. I am not, however." Miranda's voice
was quiet. "There have been a few men who have called me such. My second husband used it often
when intoxicated, regardless of the twin's presence." Miranda stepped away. "As a feminist, I
believe women should take ownership of the word. It is only an insult if you think strong women
are a bad thing as it is generally when women reject sexual advances, assert themselves in the
workplace and when they don't play nice that they get called such. Plus there are no other truly
empowering words for the female genitalia."

"Wow." Andrei breathed. "You are something else, sweetheart."

Miranda arched an eyebrow at the man. "Yet you still seem continuously surprised by that fact."
She held her hand out and Andrei grasped it. "Come, my darling. I wish to ensure the band and
singer are prepared for the evening."

Andrei stalled and bit his lip. "Yeah, about that...

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Andy was nervous as Miranda stood holding court with Emily, Serena and the bands sound
engineer. Although he loved singing and playing the guitar, he hadn't ever had the Queen of
Fashion watching him intently as he performed and it had many years since he hand a full band
backing him.

He sang at full volume as he had been taught when singing for his Glee Club and the little voice in
his head told him the whole thing sounded crappy. His mind whispered that he was terrible and the
whole idea of him doing this was the worst thing he had ever envisioned.

"Oh, you're the best friend that I ever had
I've been with you such a long time
You're my sunshine and I want you to know
That my feelings are true
I really love you
Oh, you're my best friend

Ooh, you make me live
Ooh, I've been wandering 'round
But I still come back to you
In rain or shine
You've stood by me girl
I'm happy at home
You're my best friend."

He looked at Miranda and saw her with her eyes closed, her head tilted to one side and a small
smile gracing her face. Perhaps he was wrong. Maybe this wasn't sucky.

"You're the first one
When things turn out bad
You know I'll never be lonely
You're my only one
And I love the things
I really love the things that you do
Oh, you're my best friend."

Miranda looked serene at that moment in time and he loved the sight of his lady, dressed to the nines, clearly satisfied.

Andy had explained concisely that Michelle and Amy would be arriving and although Miranda had frowned about the fact his cousin would be there that evening, she seemed pleased he had found a suitable replacement for the entertainment.

While the musicians prepared for his vocals, Serena had told him both she and Emily had been stunned to catch Miranda listening to the video captured by Nigel that first night they had reconnected or scrolling through the multitude of photographs she and the twins had captured. She swore it seemed like Miranda found peace, in moments of intense stress, from his voice or his image. It gave him confidence.

Catching Miranda's eyes, he finished the song and offered her one of his brightest smiles only to have it returned. He felt so much love for the woman.

The sound engineer moved forward and told the band they were good to go as they sounded great. The lead guitarist whined his guitar sounded crap. After one or two tweaks and adjusting the monitors, they all relaxed.

Stepping off the small dais, Andy rushed forward and came to a halt in front of his future wife. Lifting Miranda's left hand towards his lips, he brushed a kiss against the ring settled there before bringing it to rest against his cheek.

"Andrei?" Miranda queried softly. "What are..."

"I just wanted to tell you, you look breathtaking, Miranda" Andy interrupted. "I am the luckiest man in the world and I cannot wait to make you my wife, whether that is this weekend or this time next year."

"Well..." Miranda blushed and tried to hide her smile of pleasure at his words. "...thank you, my darling." She turned to Emily and Serena. "I suppose you heard fry cook's words?"

"Yes." Emily breathed.

"Cabrão." Serena hissed, having been told off Emily exactly what had occurred.

Miranda arched an eyebrow at Serena who had the grace to blush. "Quite. I will not hide the fact I am pregnant, although it is still early days. An announcement will be made eventually by my P.R firm, but if somehow it does get out I trust that between you, you will remind everyone I expect the usual response to the press?"

"Yes, Miranda." The two women spoke their agreement in unison.

Emily glanced at Andy, catching his eyes and saw him blushing. "You are better than him, Andy. Those of you that know you now, know you are a good man. Congratulations..." She grinned shyly. "...to you both." Andy understood that Serena had told Emily about his issues. He saw the knowledge in her eyes, and yet he was stunned that there was no hint of pity in them, simply acceptance. She turned away. "Jesus, another baby-dragon." She muttered. "Just wait until Nigel
finds out. God help us all over the next few months."

The words had Andy smiling. Oh yes, he was aware of how difficult Emily may find a hormonal Miranda, but he would work with her to ensure Miranda's days ran smoothly.

Glancing at Miranda he saw her smirk and knew she'd caught Emily's words too. "I think we shall have Emily babysitting, often." Her eyes twinkled with mischief as her words carried to the redhead.

"Oh, bloody bollocks," Emily muttered.

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The doors and windows had been thrown open and the valets were in place to park cars as her guests arrived. The uniformed servers were in the kitchen ready to hand out drinks and canapés as required.

Pacing the foyer, Miranda wrung her hands. There was still no sign of Amy or Michelle and people were due to arrive at any moment.

Pulled from her thoughts, Miranda looked out as cars started to pull into her drive and the valets began offering slips and taking keys.

Forcing a smile of welcome on to her face, she felt Emily and Serena step behind her and focussed on greeting the first guests. She wished Andrei was by her side but he was on the dais taking to the band.

She heard them start to play, the music familiar as a voice rose above the instruments easily.

"Comin' to ya on a dusty road
Good lovin' I got a truckload
And when you get it you got something
So don't worry cause I'm coming

I'm a soul man
I'm a soul man
I'm a soul man
I'm a soul man."

She couldn't stop her genuine smile as Andrei sang soulfully and with ease.

"Got what I got the hard way
And I'll make it better each and every day
So honey don't you fret
'Cause you ain't seen nothing yet."

The guests continued to arrive thick and fast with Emily offering names easily although she knew many of the handpicked guests. The chatter around them was lively as the servers weaved their way around guests offering champagne and taking requests for hard liquor.

Andrei continued to sing Motown Classics and people could be heard remarking how wonderful he looked or how beautifully he sang.

Miranda felt a little proud when a few women asked why he was on the dais rather than beside her
and she found herself letting out a tinkling laugh and advising them that it was a long story.

Serena stepped beside her, handing her a chilled Pellegrino and she offered a small thanks, knowing it would shock those in hearing distance.

Nigel's voice rang out from the dais and Miranda was stunned as she hadn't realised he had arrived. The music started as he spoke. "Ladies and gentlemen, we've got a special treat for tonight. I've got my friend Andy up here to sing to you ladies. Andy...come on man...."

"My name is Andy, nice to meet you can I tell you, baby  
Look around there's a whole lot of pretty ladies  
But not like you, you shine so bright, yeah"

Miranda spun on her heel, her mouth falling open in disbelief as Andrei made the Olly Murs song his own. She saw Andrei's wide smile aimed directly at her.

"I was wondering if you and me could spend a minute  
On the floor up and close getting lost in it  
I won't give up without a fight.

I just wanna, oh baby  
I just want you to dance with me tonight  
So come on, oh baby  
I just want you to dance with me tonight."

Andrei extended his hand to her, making it clear to the room who the lyrics were for. She tried to hide her smile behind the glass of iced Pellegrino, yet she was unsure if it had been successful.

He was simply adorable.

She caught a movement from the corner of her eye and turned to see Amy and Michelle entering the room. She was stunned at the sight of the women. They looked amazing.

Michelle wore a custom blue shiny Tuxedo with red shawl lapels, it was a classic yet modern look that suited the woman. Her wife, however, was stunning in a red asymmetric, draped jersey mini dress from Versace. Andrei settled in to sing Uptown Funk.

"This hit, that ice cold  
Michelle Pfeiffer, that white gold  
This one for them hood girls  
Them good girls straight masterpieces  
Stylin', wilin', livin' it up in the city  
Got Chucks on with Saint Laurent  
Gotta kiss myself, I'm so pretty."

Andrei was ridiculous. His song choice had to be a nod at her daughter's words to him that afternoon.

"I'm too hot (hot damn)  
Called the police and a fireman  
I'm too hot (hot damn)  
Make a dragon wanna retire man
"I'm too hot (hot damn)
Say my name you know who I am
I'm too hot (hot damn)
And my band 'bout that money, break it down."

Unable to resist, she stepped forward to greet the duo, with Emily and Serena tailing her. "Amy, Michelle, how lovely of you to come at such short notice. You both look wonderful." She graced the two women with her usual air kisses but her smile was genuine. She sensed Michelle was still leery, especially as Amy greeted her with a large genuine smile before and made her way towards the side of the small stage.

She looked at the young woman and ducked her head shyly. The last time she had seen the woman was when she found out about Andrei's testosterone issues. "Michelle, how are you?"

The brunette woman rolled her eyes. "You are one of very few that call me that, Miranda." The woman's smile was forced. "That man-mountain up there looks glorious.

"Oh, yes. He always wore Ralph Lauren remarkably well. I remember it fondly from when he worked as my assistant." Miranda smiled. "He was gorgeous, although quite different from his lean frame, unruly hair and pale skin." She smiled at the memories of her Andrei.

"He is still the same man, Miranda." Michelle hissed as Andrei finished his song and spoke to Amy warmly, his boisterous laughter carrying across the room.

Miranda found her eyes locking with those of the young brunette and her jaw clenched as she bit back a scathing retort. "I am very much aware of that, Michelle. Excuse me. I should return to my guests. Enjoy your evening."

Miranda heard Serena speaking to Michelle, disbelief clouding her voice. "What's your issue with them?"

"She broke him once. I'm scared she'll do it again." Michelle spoke quietly, hoping not to be overheard.

"She did not break him and going off that rock on her hand, Miranda's agreed to take up a permanent place in his life. Em says the townhouse is being packed up ready for them to move to Andy's apartment so I'd get used to this thing if I was you, you'll only end up alienating him otherwise." The Brazillian spoke firmly.

"You're probably right. Now, I know you're on duty but how about we hit the bar while Amy does her thing?" Michelle grinned.

"Ah, Emily is summoning me. I'll meet you there shortly." Serena tripped across the room to Emily's side.

Miranda glanced at Andrei and saw his eyes holding worry as he looked between her and Michelle. She understood she had to make more of an effort. Regardless of the knowledge that he would choose her, should he be forced to, she did not wish him to lose anyone else because of her.

She couldn't bear it if he came to resent her presence in his life. With that knowledge, she excused herself, dismissing Emily and Serena quietly by telling them to enjoy themselves and moved back towards the brunette.

Spotting Irv from the corner of her eye and frowned. She'd been led to believe he would be in
Seattle for the weekend. Glancing around, she saw Diane Ravitz holding court with the board of Elias Clarke and sensed sparks would fly.

Andrea stepped off the stage thankful that he could hand the evening off to Amy in the knowledge she would get the job done. She was running through the music before taking her place on the stage.

Trying to navigate the room towards the bar was a nightmare as people stopped him to introduce themselves and pull him into a conversation about his song choices, work and sport.

Emily finally stepped up with an ice-cold bottle of craft beer and he grinned appreciatively at her. "Miranda needs you." She stated loud enough for people to pay attention to her.

"Oh, of course. Thank you. I'll just..." He gestured towards Miranda, "...excuse me." Andy smiled apologetically to the men who had been discussing The Knicks while he'd struggled to keep up. Stepping beside Emily, he grinned down at her. "Thanks, Red."

Emily frowned, her lips pursing in a similar way to Miranda's, indicating her displeasure at the nickname. "I have told you time and again not to call me that." She glanced up at him and saw the mischief in his eyes. "You are absolutely absurd."

"Yeah, but you have to admit, I've grown on you." Andy teased the uptight Brit.

"Like mould," Emily muttered before softening slightly. "You know I meant what I said earlier, right?"

"Can I have that in writing?" Andy grinned.

"No." Emily clenched her jaw. "If you can't take it seriously..."

Andy's hand wrapped around Emily's wrist as she made to flounce off, stalling her. "Thank you, Em." He eyed her seriously. "I appreciate what you said, truly."

"Yes, well..." Emily trailed off. "...she's happier than I've ever seen her. It makes things..."

"Easier?" Andy prompted. "You could just say thanks, you know?"

"Shant." Emily grinned up at him as a flicker of recognition lit up his eyes followed by amusement. "You aren't so bad, you know. You're certainly better than the others."

"Wow, great praise indeed." Andy couldn't stop his smile. "Go on back to Serena, I'll handle things from here."

"I have complete faith in you," Emily admitted. "Though I shall strenuously deny ever saying so should it become public knowledge."

"I wouldn't expect anything else," Andy stated. Go on, now." He nudged her in Serena's direction. "Time to stake your claim before the hounds start sniffing around the future Mrs Charlton." His smile widened as Emily skipped away.

He moved quickly towards Miranda and his cousin but stalled upon hearing Michelle's hissed words to Miranda. "...and you'll just end up treating him like you did your previous husbands. But unlike them, he'll stick around and take it."
He watched as Miranda turn pale and stepped beside her, wrapping his arm securely around her waist, his palm resting warmly on her stomach. Miranda turned into his touch and he saw the tears in her eyes. He was furious with his cousin. "Michelle, stop!" He glared at his cousin. "I will only say this once, and you best be paying attention."

Michelle swallowed nervously before nodding once to indicate she was listening. It was rare for him to ever give her full name, it showed his seriousness.

"As much as it would hurt, if you cannot support me in this, in my happiness, I will have no choice but to cut you from my life. That means no longer working with me." Andy's tone was firm.

"You would choose her?" Michelle's voice held her shock.

"Yes." Andy glanced down at Miranda, pulling her closer. "I will choose Miranda and our children over anyone or anything."

He watched as Michelle caught the meaning behind his words. Her eyes roamed to where his hand rested protectively against Miranda's belly. "Children?"

"My two little ones and the one to come," Andy stated quietly. "You are one of the first to know. We only told the twins yesterday afternoon." He couldn't stop his small smile. "They're thrilled."

"And it's yours?" Michelle queried.

Andy found himself growling at the woman. "Michelle Andrea Blake!"

"Sorry, it's just..." Michelle ran her fingers through her bangs nervously before catching Miranda's eyes. "I'm sorry, Miranda."

Miranda turned cold eyes on his cousin, causing her to take two quick steps backwards. "You cannot say I have not been willing to try, to be gracious in the face of your blatant disapproval, but you have insulted us both deeply this evening." She glanced up at him. "I will never ask you to choose, Andrei, you have lost so much already."

"I have gained so much too." Andy desperately wanted to reassure Miranda. "I have a future with the woman I love. I have two children of the heart another on the way. Please, Miranda, just..." He didn't know what he wanted to ask of the woman but he simply did not want to lose her over this. "...

Miranda searched his eyes and sighed. "I will always choose you too, Andrei." It was her turn to offer reassurances. "Now, will you dance with me?"

"That would be my pleasure, my love." Andy felt relief wash over him. They would be fine, they had to be. He put her beer down and nodding once at Michelle, took Miranda's hand and swept her towards the area set aside for dancing.

Pulling Miranda close, her arms wound around his neck, playing with the soft hairs at his neck as her head rested against his chest and they swayed to the music. Andy allowed himself to forget everything but the woman in his arms.

He heard Miranda's quiet voice rumbling against his chest. "I fear one day I will be the cause of you losing everything you hold dear."

Bending his head, he spoke into Miranda's hair. "Everything I hold dear is right here in my arms, sweetheart. Never doubt that." He dropped a kiss on the crown of her head before pulling back and
twirling the older woman under his arm and offering her a blinding smile as she came to rest in front of him, her eyes sparkling with satisfaction.


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The night continued, with little by the way of drama until the closing moments after Miranda had given a short speech about Nigel's new role as Editor-in-Chief of Elias Clarke's newest undertaking, Men's Runway.

As she congratulated her oldest friend and longtime colleague and her words were followed by applause, she watched as Irv sidled up behind his ex-wife and leaned in to whisper something in her ear.

Diane spun furiously on her heel and the slap the woman gave Irv echoed around the room and the gasp from onlookers was audible. She followed the slap with a prod to his chest as she hissed at him to fuck off to his girlfriend and bastard child because she was no longer interested.

It took Charles Clarke, the usually affable grandson of one of the founding duo of the publishing house, to step between them to stop Irv from retaliating as his hands balled into fists.

Miranda sighed. She had known, upon seeing Irv, that sparks would fly, it was only a matter of time. She stepped from the dais, gesturing for the musicians to play as Andrei moved close to lead Diane away.

The little man decided to spew his vitriol at their retreating backs. "I suppose you have to find frigid old bitches to be with, Sachs, since you can't get it up for someone your age."

Andrei stiffened momentarily but shook himself and continued to lead Diane away. She could see his jaw clench and understood that Christina Thompson had spoken adversely about their night in Paris.

Irv brushed past the onlookers. "I guess Miranda simply isn't enough for you to have gotten your grubby mitts on, you want the crowning jewels and the Bernstein fortune at your disposal too." Irv made to grab Andrei's bicep and was shrugged off easily. Nigel swept in and pulled Diane away and Andrei tried to follow but found his arm being grabbed again. "Nothing to say, Sachs?" Irv taunted.

Andrei flicked the hand off his arm again and turned his head to glare at the man. Irv stepped back quickly knocking into some onlookers.

"It's Blake-Sachs and frankly you are nothing to me, Ravitz so your opinion of me means very
little." Andrei turned and looked Irv up and down balefully. "You are frankly pathetic. You have screwed around and betrayed someone who has done nothing but stay loyal to you over the years, someone who gave her life up to raise your children. You treat people with contempt, having an unwavering belief you are better than the regular man because you married into money and that bought you a position into a company that would succeed much better if you were not at the helm." Andrei smirked as Irv's mouth opened and closed in disbelief. "You undermine people's work when you are unable to get what you want from them, whether that is monetarily or sexually. And fair enough, I may have not been able to perform for that slut you fathered a child with, but that was because she was an obnoxious, classless, ignorant bitch who repulsed me." There was a smattering of chuckles, most notably from the editor-in-chief of the Mirror and his plus one. "And that was even before I found out you had stuck your shrivelled little dick in it. Now, why don't you do what Diane says and jog on? I will not have you spoil this evening any more than you have done already with your boorish behaviour."

Irv sputtered red-faced as Charles Clarke stepped close again. "Andrei is correct, Irv. It is time to leave. Be assured I will be calling a board meeting to discuss these events."

Irv's anger was palpable as he swept from the atrium and he could be heard demanding his car be brought around.

Miranda closed her eyes, feeling suddenly nauseous and her step faltered as the room spun. A searing pain spread through her mid-section and she fell to her knees and retched.

The last thing she heard before darkness descended was Andrei's panicked voice demanding everyone give her space and calling her name before shouting for a doctor or an ambulance.

After that, it felt as if she was floating. There was no pain and no voices in the darkness that surrounded her.

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Watching Miranda fall to her knees on the floor and vomit before passing out had been the scariest thing Andy had ever encountered and he was in a state of shock. Miranda was in and out of consciousness as the doctors nonchalantly threw around words like spontaneous abortion and even ectopic pregnancy until he mentioned the fact everything was okay on their first ultrasound. Due to the blood loss, Miranda was anaesthetised and rushed to the operating room to perform an emergency laparotomy.

The coldness of the explanations left him furious. It felt like the doctors did not see their loss as something that mattered, something that didn't count due to it being so early in the pregnancy.

But for him, it felt like a punch in the stomach. The world was playing a cruel hoax on him, giving him all he ever wanted in one breath only to rip it from his clutches in another.

Upon being transferred back from the O.R, he was advised Miranda had suffered a uterine rupture in the right part of the uterus, where she had scarring from the removal of fibroids a few years before. These ruptures were very unusual in the first trimester but the surgeon had repaired the tear and he was advised Miranda was extremely lucky not to have required tubal ligation or a hysterectomy. It was advised any future pregnancies would need an elective Cesarean Section so another rupture could be prevented.

The doctor spoke briefly about the development of the foetus that was still present when they started the surgery. It was found their baby's heart had stopped the week before, at 9 weeks. The life inside Miranda had ended over a week before and neither of them had even realised.
He swallowed hard. Miranda still did not know. It would be up to him to tell her and to comfort her once she woke up.

Looking at Miranda as she slept peacefully under the effects of a sedative she had been given, Andy felt useless. Although he knew deep down it was stupid of him to feel that way, his mind whispered that he should have been able to protect Miranda from this pain. He understood from the doctor's words, Miranda's recovery wouldn't be easy, she had almost bled to death having lost almost five pints of blood and had needed a blood transfusion.

He would need to remain strong and to help deal with the twin's heartbreak. He would save Miranda from having to explain, but he wasn't entirely sure if he was up to the task. His own heart felt like it was shattering into a million pieces from yet another loss. His grief had to be silent, but he would always feel it.

Placing his head beside Miranda's hand on the mattress, he let his tears flow quietly.

Miranda woke to the sound of beeping and a warm face pressed against her hand. Forcing her eyes open, she glanced down and saw Andrei hunched over the side of their bed. Somewhat confused, she wondered idly why he wasn't beside her.

The beeping noise raced through her mind, and she took the time to look around, noticing the white sterile walls and paraphernalia that indicated she was not in her bed but a hospital.

Freeing her hand, she ran it soothingly through Andrei's hair and watched as he stirred, his eyes lifting to meet hers. She saw pain and worry etched in his expressive orbs and tried to speak but no words came. Her throat ached, her mouth was dry and she felt as if her abdomen was on fire.

"Water," Miranda finally croaked.

Andrei rushed to his feet and out of the room quickly, knocking a chair in his haste. Miranda saw he was still wearing the same trousers and white shirt he had been for her benefit, although the shirt was no longer tucked into his pants and was unfastened around his neck and cuffed up to his elbows. She wondered how long she had been in the hospital.

Miranda felt weak and lightheaded, and trying to sit up, she stopped as the room spun and her eyes fell closed. She felt the energy of the room shift as Andrei stepped beside her holding a small cup of crushed ice. He set it down and raised the bed for her before handing her the cup of ice. "The nurse asked me to tell you to take small mouthfuls, after..." Andrei swallowed, unable to continue.

"After?" Miranda coaxed, wincing at the rawness of her voice. She took a mouthful of ice, letting it melt on her tongue.

Andrei seemed to shudder and she saw tears pool in his eyes.

No words were needed really. She understood immediately, but part of her needed to hear it, to make it real.

She watched Andrei take a deep breath, clearly trying to gather his words. "Last night, you suffered a uterine rupture for which needed surgery to correct. As the surgeon's were repairing the damage, they knew the baby was already lost after completing an ultrasound and finding no heartbeat." He explained quietly.

"Oh," The waves of devastation rolled through her and her eyes fell closed again.
The initial news of her pregnancy had been a surprise, one she had warmed to quickly as images of creating a family with Andrei swept through her. She had already started thinking about possible names, she imagined what features their child might inherit from them both, she was planning the nursery, wanting the space Andrei would create to be perfect.

A single tear trailed down her cheek and she made no effort to brush it away.

The visit to her two weeks before had been marvellous. With Andrei at her side, she let herself feel excited by the prospect of having the child. She'd watched him flicking through a parenting magazine in amusement while they waited and knew he would be an amazing father.

The first ultrasound was nerve-wracking for her, but she got the validation she needed that she was, in fact, pregnant. Her doctor assured them everything looked to be progressing as it should be before turning the screen and pointing to where their baby was.

Andrei had smiled and insisted it looked just like a little jellybean, it certainly didn't look like much, but he was so excited by the knowledge that they were looking at their baby. His joy was almost addictive, especially when the doctor turned the sound up on the monitor and they both heard the initial wooshing followed by the impossibly fast beating of their child's heart.

Andrei's eyes lit up and expressed their immense happiness. It was a humbling moment and was captured in her memory entirely as he bent and rested his head against her stomach, whispering lovingly to their unborn child.

On their way out of the doctors, feeling incomparably happy, Andrei held the first photograph of their baby against his heart. He was ridiculously proud and was almost bouncing in his excitement.

Her eyes blazed open and she saw Andrei's grief. Her mind whispered that she shouldn't have jinxed things by telling people. What was she supposed to say to Nigel, Serena, Emily or Michelle? How on Earth was she going to explain this her Bobbsey's?

"I need to be alone." Miranda husked brokenly.

As Andrei nodded and rose to his feet, she turned her face away from his kiss, unable to face him and let him see the profound sense of loss she felt.

Of course, he knew he could never go through the bodily experience of pregnancy or a miscarriage, but that did not make his feelings any less important when it came to such a profound thing that affected his life.

Andy decided he would respect Miranda's wishes for solitude, but only because he was too tired to argue with her. He would not be pushed away. They would continue to face the coming days together and take the time to speak to Cassidy and Caroline.

Stepping out of Stony Brook Southampton Hospital, Andy was stunned to realise it was now slightly after dawn. Hunching his shoulders, his hands slipped effortlessly into his pockets, and with his head down he started to walk.

He didn't have his truck, his wallet or his cell. His tuxedo jacket had been ruined as he carried Miranda out of the atrium to the waiting ambulance and he'd thrown it at Emily as he stepped into the back of the vehicle behind Miranda, growling out instructions for them to wind things up and get everyone out.
Hearing his name, his head jerked up and he saw Nigel leaning casually against Miranda's Towncar. He sighed in relief at the sight of his old friend and as he stepped close, was pulled into Nigel's arms and held close. It was strange to be in the arms of the slender bald man, but the comfort, so easily offered, was welcome.

He sniffed back his tears as Nigel pulled away and opened the car door for him. "Come on, we'll take you home." Nigel urged.

Slipping into the comfort of the leather interior, Andy's eyes closed, inhaling Miranda's perfume that lingered in the air tantalisingly.

Nigel settled beside him and held his hand gently. "We organised the cleanup and James will be taking the twins..."

"No," Andy stated. "They're having a break from one another."

"Do you have the authority to stop him from taking them?" Nigel asked quietly.

"Yeah, Miranda had some paperwork drawn up last week. In the events that anything happened to her, I have the power to act in loco parentis. I just didn't expect..." Andy shrugged. "...I suppose I'll need to call her lawyer and publicist."

"You need to shower and sleep," Nigel asserted. "Emily has been speaking with Leslie and she will no doubt have notified Maxwell. She is aware of what is required of her in an emergency." Nigel moved slightly, his eyes expressing his concern. "How was she?"

"She nearly bled to fucking death while they dithered over how to treat her. It was a fucking nightmare. She came out of the surgery okay and remained sedated through the night and then..." Andy took a shuddering breath. "...she lost the baby sometime in the last week but it hadn't come away. And then this..." The tears he had been holding back pooled under his lashes. "...she looked so lost when I told her, Nige. It was like the news just snuffed out the light from within her. It's left her broken and she won't let me comfort her."

Andy curled up on the seat and cried, not caring about Roy, Nigel or the rest of the world at that moment. He didn't care what anyone thought as he let himself mourn for a loved one he would never know.

The rest of the journey was made in silence but as they reached the winding driveway of Miranda's East Hamptons home Andy straightened and rubbed the heels of his hands over his puffy, bloodshot eyes.

He seriously needed a stiff drink. He just hoped it would send him into oblivion, where for a short time the last twelve hours could be temporarily forgotten.

Entering the house, Andy saw the cleaning crew at work, he could hear Emily on the phone in Miranda's study and Serena and Cara talking quietly in the kitchen. He moved up the spiral staircase and headed for the small dry-bar in the corner of the room. Lifting the Scotch from its place and eyeing the remaining liquid, he decided it wasn't necessary to use a glass and unscrewing the lid, took a fortifying swig of the amber liquid.

Stepping towards the floor to ceiling windows, still clutching the scotch bottle, he watched the clouds move across the sky before opening the French doors and stepping onto the balcony. Leaning against the ledge, he continued to drink, hoping beyond anything that it would help him switch his brain off. It wasn't like there were any funeral arrangements to distract him from the
gravity of this loss.

There was no blame attached to Miranda. She had followed the doctor’s orders, had started taking prenatal vitamins and iron supplements. She had cut out alcohol entirely and reduced her caffeine intake drastically.

He wasn’t sure how long he stood there but he finished the scotch. Letting the empty bottle fall from his hands, he looked blindly out at the distance and clutching the balcony ledge in his hands, he leaned back and let out, his anger and grief out with a ferocious roar that held all the pain he felt.

His tears seemed to him like a selfish indulgence. They still had the twins to care for and his little one’s and Miranda would need him to be strong so they didn't have to be. Miranda was hurting, and easing her pain was all that mattered to him. He had to protect her. He had to shield his three girls.

He may not be able to take on Miranda's physical discomfort and emotional stress, no matter how he wished otherwise. He knew he couldn't shoulder her grief as well as his own.

Miranda heard the doctors words, although she wished dearly he would stop his insistent chatter as he spoke of the 'missed abortion' where her baby had died but her body had not recognised the fact. It was explained how this had caused an infection, which caused some scarring on the wall of her uterus to rupture.

She couldn't allow herself to care that this man threw the word abortion around like it was going out of fashion.

She had spent the better part of the morning telling herself this was a nightmare she would wake up from, just another bad dream where she would wake up wrapped up in Andrei's arms and all would be right in her world. And yet, she knew it wasn't simply a nightmare.

Miranda felt empty. There was growing loneliness forming inside her from the loss of this child. There were no words to explain the depth of despair that she felt as she tried to understand that all her hopes and expectations had dropped out from underneath her.

The whole incident the previous night was surreal. When she tried to remember, it was like she was watching something happen to herself from a distance.

The doctor continued to babble about her trying to have another child, as if replacing the one she had just lost, so unexpectedly, was going to make things better. She glared up at the man coldly until he finally got the hint and scarpered.

Miranda thought back to her request to be alone. She needed time to process things. In the space of 24 hours, her world had turned on its head. She tugged nervously at her fingers, a gesture she had once spotted in Andrei when he worked as her assistant and he was particularly agitated. These days he rubbed his jaw in a gesture she found rather endearing.

She was not surprised she had turned away from Andrei that morning. She understood he would try to hold things together for her sake and she wanted him to have the time to mourn his loss too.

She was trying to keep her emotions in check, but the little voice that niggled at the back of her mind told her that this was all her fault. It asked what she had expected at forty-five. She was in the wrong age bracket to carry a healthy baby to full term, she worked too hard, she drank too much wine at times and some would say her coffee habit was excessive. Andrei would come to blame her
as she was now blaming herself.

Glancing down at the ring Andrei had placed on her finger that fateful day two weeks before, she understood that she had made promises that may end up broken.

Her tears started in earnest. She had ruined things, she would never be able to give Andrei what he needed and there was only one option left to her before she rained down more hurt upon the man she loved or his eyes filled with hatred, or worse, disappointment every time he looked at her.

Andy kept the twins close after their return from their grandparents on Sunday and had taken them to the hospital as soon as they asked after Miranda.

He sat there quietly, at Miranda's soft request the evening before, and listened as she explained she had needed a small operation, but it meant that she would no longer be having a baby.

Cassidy cried at the news while Caroline sat stony-faced. Miranda tried valiantly to coax both into a conversation, asking if he had been taking good care of them and seeking information on how they had spent their time with their grandparents.

It was clear they knew something was happening between him and Miranda, he just wished he knew what. She had remained distant, barely talking to him.

Miranda was released from the hospital the following day and they spent the night at the Hamptons house, giving Miranda time to rest. Andy was worried. Miranda seemed listless and she continued to keep her distance even as they had lay next to one another. The silence between them grew oppressive and he didn't know how to breach the barriers she had erected around herself.

he hoped their arrival back in the city and would have things returning to a semblance of normality.

Entering the townhouse, Miranda moved slowly up the stairs to the master suite and Andy helped the twin's settle in. He could smell something cooking, which meant that Cara was around. She would take care of the three Priestly's as long as she was needed.

He stepped from the twin's bedroom, walking slowly towards the master bedroom and let himself in quietly. Glancing towards the bed, he saw Miranda lay on her side, her eyes closed as she clutched his pillow against her chest.

She looked so forlorn, his heart ached for her. Stepping lightly across the room, Andy sat on the edge of the bed next to her hip and decided it was time for him to speak, he hoped he could get through to the woman. "I'm so sorry, Miranda."

Miranda's eyes blazed open and he was stunned by the anger in them. "And what are you sorry for? Was this somehow your fault? Was it you, who somehow, magically, caused my baby to stop developing? Was it your body that betrayed you?" Miranda shook her head and the tears in her eyes spoke volumes.

"I...just...I..." Andy had no idea what to say.

"Just leave me alone, Andrei." Miranda's voice was cold.

Andy winced. He could see Miranda was wrapped up in her pain, but he'd had no idea that she was blaming herself until that moment. He realised it was her way of allowing herself to gain some control of an event she couldn't understand. Yet, he also knew there were no answers for why this
had happened. They would never have the answers.

Miranda lived in a world where she was at the forefront of an industry where women could not escape messages about how their bodies should look and how they should be treated. Runway dedicated pages to telling people how to eat drink, pluck, tuck, boost and pose. And as a mother, she had an innate drive to protect her children from harm, and in some small way, she must believe she had failed in both of these. He could almost taste her guilt.

Andy tried again. "It wasn't anyone's fault. No one is to blame for this, sweetheart."

"Don't." The word was forceful. She didn't want to listen to his platitudes. He watched as she threw his pillow down beside her and struggled to raise herself into a comfortable position, with the incision area still tender. He made to help and she slapped his hands away. "Don't touch me."

Andy sat back, stunned. "Okay." His voice broke and he swallowed hard. Closing his eyes, he started to speak. "I know you are hurting, but so am I. I am trying to be strong, for you and the girls, but you can't keep just holding me at arm's length and pushing me away. That's not fair. This isn't just about you, Miranda."

"Oh, so now I'm the selfish one?" Miranda was becoming red-faced.

"I didn't say that. Don't put words in my fucking mouth." Andy got up and paced. "Why the hell are you trying to pick a fight? All I want to do is talk to you." His voice was hoarse. He just wanted to gather the woman up in his arms and hold her but she had made her feelings clear. "Please, don't push me away now. Talk to me, yell at me...anything but this." He pleaded, his hands raised in supplication.

He saw Miranda stiffen, and could see the edge of determination in her eyes. "I need you to leave, Andrei." He watched her intently, not understanding. She licked her lips and averted her eyes. "I cannot give you what you want in the long run. I should not have agreed to continue this by accepting your proposal. It's over."

Andy heard the small catch in Miranda's voice at her final declaration but felt powerless in the force of his disbelief. "You can't mean that."

"I do not have a habit of saying things I do not mean." She looked at him for what seemed like the first time since she had woken on Saturday.

His heart rate sped up as he started to understand Miranda meant what she was saying. At this moment, in her grief and guilt, she could not see a way forward for them. He saw her outstretched hand, offering him the ring that he had chosen for her with such care.

Unthinking, he took it and his fingers curled around its warmth. He spun on his heel and exited the room quickly, unwilling to let her see his heart shatter. Taking the stairs two at a time, he rushed out, scooping his keys up from where he had dripped them on the side table. He heard the slam of the front door behind him.

It was over.

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Miranda knew her faults, she understood her tendency to bottle things up and felt compelled to hide her pain from the world, but by refusing to talk to Andrei about things, it felt easier to sweep it all aside. She hadn't just lost a pregnancy but a whole future she had started to plan for, albeit in the depths of her mind. And now all her dreams were dead. It was too painful for her to contemplate
imagining anything positive from the experience.

She continued to try to tell herself it was for the best. Andrei would be better off without her and she almost had herself convinced.

Things had been so good between them, but she was so lost in her pain that she couldn't see past it. She couldn't see her life without the gaping void that came from this loss on top of everything else she had ever lost.

The house was quiet after Andrei's departure and moving gingerly down the stairs, she saw Cara unpacking the items that had been placed into boxes ready to be taken to Andrei's.

"What are you doing?" Miranda asked.

"I received a text from Andy. He asked me to unpack knowing you would all need the items at some stage. He sent a package over for you, it's in your study." Cara turned away, unable to look at her.

Miranda poured a glass of Pellegrino and turned on her bare feet towards her study. She stalled in the doorway at the sight of the large rectangular box that sat on her desk. On top of it, she saw the thick cream A4 envelope that had her name scribbled untidily upon it. Andrei was usually so careful with his penmanship and the scrawl showed just how upset he was.

Setting the envelope to one side, Miranda pulled at the edges of the box and gasped at the sight of the sculpture held within its depths. It was the one Andrei had commissioned his grandfather to complete all those years before. She pulled the sculpture free and set it to one side, marvelling once again at the detail.

Taking the envelope in her free hands, she sat on her desk chair, closing her eyes as the incision site stretched and burned.

She took a sip of the water before using her ornate letter opener she carefully tore the fold of the envelope and pulled out the contents. She was stunned to find the original sketch to match the small sculpture on her desk, another sketch of Andrei as a child with a hummingbird on his outstretched hand and the accompanying photograph that showed his wide, dimpled smile with a missing front tooth. He had been a handsome boy. His eyes were wide and happy and his hair flowing around his face in unruly curls.

The last item was a letter rolled and inserted into the middle of the ring she had been wearing until that morning. Pulling it free, she frowned. Going off the crossed-out words and smudged ink it had been written quickly. Her eyes skipped over Andrei's words and her heart thudded almost painfully.

*I am trying to understand that your world is crashing down around you now, but I cannot help you if you do not allow it. No doubt you wish to hide from the world and that is fine, and perfectly understandable, but you have people around you that simply wish to comfort and support you.*

*Yours is not the only heart that has shattered into a million pieces by this, Miranda. You are not the only one doubting your worth or blaming yourself. I have asked myself multiple times since Friday if it was something I did that caused this. Was it a quirk in my genetics mixed with yours? My testosterone therapy? Have I been overly rough with you as we made love? Did I somehow inadvertently harm my unborn child?*

Miranda's hand moved to her mouth and she stifled her sobs as she read. She hated the very idea
that Andrei had put any blame on himself. For her, it was like she had killed the life growing inside her and she took it as a sign that the fates did not wish her to be happy. And now she had destroyed her relationship with Andrei, simply because her mind had whispered that he would come to blame her as she was blaming herself.

In the time you were in surgery I made so many promises to whatever deity that was listening that I would never drink, complain or cuss again, whatever was required of me I would do, as long as you survived. I never even contemplated that in my bargaining that I would lose you in another way.

I hope you can eventually cry, scream and rant at the world, it would be warranted, but don't shut the world out. Don't give up on the hope that has carried you through life so far. You are much more than the events of this last week. This loss might change the person you are, but don't let it turn you cold. Do not let it stop your capacity to love. Because you can love, Miranda and you are loved. Don't ever forget that.

I hope you eventually harness the power of your pain and do something you've always wanted to. Maybe that trip you've always dreamed of to New Zealand, or growing out your hair, or even colouring it every shade of the rainbow should you wish. Promise me you will try to leave the comfort of your sadness and do something new, something that doesn't carry with it the weight of this loss, something that offers you a bit of relief.

"I promise," Miranda whispered to the room before looking down and continuing to read.

I know we're not the best version of ourselves when we are uncomfortable, scared, overwhelmed or grieving and perhaps in my willingness to give you space, you saw it as blame or rejection. I don't know what was going through your mind as you shut me out. No matter what you currently think, this happened to us both. Yes, it happened physically in your body but you have dismissed the fact that my heart and mind is experiencing the pain as well. It hurts that you couldn't or wouldn't speak to me about things before throwing us away. I would have had your back, no matter what, even when you messed up. We could have learned and grown from this together.

You were right about the choices we make, but sometimes they aren't the right ones. You have used something that could have bound us closer to push us apart and I don't know if I can forgive that. That doesn't mean I regret giving us a chance, it has been a beautiful thing to love you and have my love returned, but I cannot remain here and watch you piece your life together without me. And with that in mind, I have accepted a job in London that I previously declined before we set out on this journey. I fly out in a few hours and start work immediately.

I leave you with my sculpture to match the one you already have, as well as the original sketches that will double the value should you choose to sell them. I am giving you the ring I had made for you when I chose to ask you to be my wife, as a remembrance of sorts for all we could have had.

I will always love you, Sweetheart.

Miranda closed her eyes, letting herself cry as she clutched the letter against her chest and leaned back in her chair.

"Mommy, when's Dandy coming back?" Cassidy's voice assaulted her ears and her eyes blazed
open.

What the fuck had she done?


Chapter End Notes

My current bout of anxiety and the usual seasonal affectiveness disorder has made this a little more angsty than I expected. I hope you all forgive me. As always, I will be working towards a happy MirAndy ending.
Michelle glanced at him from the driver's side of the car as she navigated the busy roads.

"Just say whatever it is you have to say." Andy's voice was raw from the hours spent crying.

"This isn't the right thing to do, Andy," Michelle stated.

"Miranda didn't give me any choice the matter." Andy was annoyed. Both Seb and Michelle had done what they could to change his mind after he called and asked to see them. And it was only reluctantly they agreed to take over the supervision of their current jobs.

"You know, she's not my favourite person, but she loves you, Andy. She's just hurting right now, and its those we love the most that we lash out at in the depth of our despair." Michelle spoke softly. "You have just rolled over and let her push you away. Where's your fight?"

Andy remained silent, watching the city as it passed by slowly. His thoughts returned to the letter he had written after emailing the London based remodelling architect who had sought him out to work on a large property in Mayfair. He wondered what Miranda had thought about it all. Had she read it or had she just pushed it aside as she had done to him.

For him, it seemed a month in London would give him the necessary time to regroup. He just wished he hadn't felt the aching need to escape.

"So what did those mischievous little imps have to say about you leaving?" Michelle asked, trying again to coax him into a conversation.

"I'm sure Miranda will give them some excuse," Andy muttered.

"You didn't say goodbye?" Michelle seemed dumbstruck by that. "Why the fuck not?"

"What was I supposed to say to them." He asked. "Miranda told me to leave so I left. I gave her what she wanted as I always do." Andy tried to defend his actions.

"No fucking way." Michelle indicated and cut through a side street. He could hear her muttering under her breath something about stubborn, foolish male pride.

"This isn't the way to the airport, Mich" Andy stated.

"Fuck the airport. You're can be the most stubborn, infuriating man in the world and you can
always rearrange your flight if you need to, it's not the only one that leaves the New York today."
Michelle sighed in frustration as she came to a stop at the lights. "You have this thing, where you make snap decisions and just run with it, regardless of the consequences. It's ridiculous." She was annoyed with him. "You are ridiculous."

Andy groaned. "I have no idea what you're waffling on about, Michelle."

"Yes, you do. We were all doing so well in California after the Burnside job, and the phone was ringing off the hook with offers of work. And then one day, you stopped pencilling in further jobs and while we sat drinking a beer, celebrating another job well done, you simply told us you were heading back East. You had bought an old warehouse at auction, sight unseen, to set up the business from. It came out of nowhere, Andy."

"Not quite," Andy admitted. "I saw this feature about Miranda and there was a photo of her with the twins..." He stalled. It was something he'd never admitted to anyone. "...I just wanted to be close to her. Not in a creepy stalker way or anything, and I never expected our paths to even cross. I just needed to be here."

"Oh, God." Michelle ran her hand through her bangs. "You are something else. Seb, Amy and I had faith in you enough that we followed you across this Godforsaken country. We packed up our lives for you on some fucking whim." Michelle banged her hand against the steering wheel in frustration. "And now you're running away again, just like in Paris. You are an ass Andrei Blake-Sachs."

"Where are we going?" Andy tried to ask but he could easily recognise the streets of the Upper East Side.

"I'm taking you to say goodbye to your little ones. They deserve that much. You can't just come and go from their lives. They see you as their daddy, even if you didn't allow them to call you that. Which is stupid by the way." Michelle licked her lips. "You don't just walk away from family and they chose you to complete theirs."

"Ours walked away from us," Andy muttered.

"Yeah, and just look at how that has shaped us as people. You're running at the first sign of trouble in your relationship, with the only woman you have ever truly loved and well, I..." Michelle stalled. "...I'm not always as supportive of the little family I do have, as I should be." She glanced at him again. "Amy and I know what you are going through, Andy. We have been through what you and Miranda have, and we came through the other side." She turned onto East 73rd St where Miranda's townhouse was and glanced around looking for parking. Luckily, the spot right outside the townhouse was free and she eased into the parking space and came to a stop, one or two reporters were lurking but not the usual hoards that circled like vultures. "Go on." She urged gently.

"What if she demands I leave again?" Andy asked brokenly.

"Then you tell her no. It's about time someone refused to let that woman ride roughshod over them, and I believe you may be just the man." Michelle glared at him. "You love her, Andy and I know, despite how much she is hurting right now, Miranda loves you too. It was so fucking obvious on Friday night." Michelle smiled gently. "The way she looked up into your eyes as you danced, it was like at that moment, you were her whole world." She caught his eyes. "And those little imps of hers adore you and they look up to you as a father figure. Think about it, Andy. The kind of feelings you have for that family are special and they won't just disappear, if they did, you would have been married to someone else and have a gaggle of kids by now."
Andy bit his lip nervously. He was certain he would be the last person Miranda wanted in her home.

Michelle continued to offer her advice. "Tell her she has the month and if she wishes to continue seeing you, make her work for it."

"Yeah, yeah, 'cause telling an angry Miranda Priestly anything is so easy." Steeling himself to be turned away, Andy slipped from the car, straightened his shoulders and made his way up the stoop. He pressed the buzzer and waited.

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"Dandy's here!" Caroline's yell of delight bounded down the stairs was followed by the doorbell.

Miranda frowned. Andrei had a set of keys and the only reason why he wouldn't use them would be from believing he was not welcome. She watched as Cassidy barrelled from the room and flung the door open with a squeal of delight.

"Did you forget your keys, Dandy?" Caroline's feet hit the foyer as she called out to the man.

Miranda listened for his voice and caught his small murmur but couldn't hear what he was saying to her daughters.

"But you can't go away now, who will look after mommy?" Cassidy asked.

"We're too little." Caroline reminded him.

The sound of her daughter's one-sided conversation was frustrating. Inchng to her feet, she moved towards the study door but stalled when Andrei's voice could be heard.

"I have to work, my little ones. It's only for a month and then I'll be home for a week or so and then I'll need to head out for another two weeks to finish up. Your mom will be in Paris by then." From its hoarse almost raw quality, Andrei's voice showed he'd spent quite some time crying and was close to tears again.

She experienced the overwhelming urge to try to ease his pain, but it would not be that straightforward. She wished to make arrangements so he would not just disappear from her daughter's lives, from her life.

"Don't cry, Dandy." Caroline's voice was muffled and finding the courage to step through the door, she saw Andrei on his knees with her daughters wrapped tightly against him. Caroline's face was buried in the crook of his neck.

She adored the spot Caroline was currently rubbing her nose against. It was one of those little spots that raised goosebumps over his skin as she kissed or nipped it and it had often left her intoxicated when he growled in pleasure at her teasing touch.

As he looked up, she saw the pain in Andrei's eyes, and it hurt her to know she was the one who had put it there. Miranda swallowed the lump forming in her throat and spoke quietly. "You should go clean up for dinner, Bobbsey's. I'm certain Andrei needs to catch his flight soon."

Andrei looked away. "Your mom is right, my little loves. Michelle is waiting to take me to the airport but I just wanted to say bye."

Miranda could see the lie and understood his cousin may have had something to do with his
reappearance. She watched as he placed gentle kisses on her Bobbsey's foreheads and gave them an extra long squeeze.

"Go on, now." Andrei urged before climbing to his feet. "I love you both very much."

Caroline and Cassidy shouted their goodbyes and shot back up the stairs leaving them alone in the foyer.

"Andrei, I..." Miranda didn't know what to say to the man.

"I'm sorry for coming by unannounced." Andrei interrupted.

"You're always welcome." Miranda insisted. "That's why you have keys."

"Yeah, about that..." Andrei trailed off as he pulled his keys from his trouser pocket and unhooked those for the townhouse. He offered them to her, keeping his eyes on the marble tiles of the floor.

"My darling, I..." Miranda closed her eyes as Andrei scoffed and interrupted her again.

"Don't call me that. Not now. I am not your darling. You made that clear earlier." Andrei glared at her and she felt his anger. It was so far from the gentle words in his letter, it shocked her. "You let me think I could be part of this family and I will stand by that for those little ones because they don't deserve to have me walk away from them, but that doesn't mean I have to listen to you now."

"I understand that. It's just..." Miranda tried to speak but was unable to complete even a sentence.

"Just, nothing." Andrei wore a small smirk, knowing fully he would be infuriating her. "I'm angry with you right now, Miranda." He looked up at her, finally meeting her eyes. "I need to go or I'll miss my flight. But when I return I expect us to have a serious conversation. You have a month to decide what you want. I have hope that we can overcome this, but you need to meet me halfway. You need to be open and honest with me. I will not tolerate you continuing to shut me out." His voice was firm.

Knowing just how much Andrei meant what he said, a small idea entered her mind and she decided to act upon it. "Take the keys to the London house," Miranda shuffled towards the kitchen and grabbed a single keyring holding a skeleton and cruciform key. "Make yourself at home, enjoy my birth city, but not so much that you stay there." She held the keyring out to him hesitantly.

"Can I just ask you one thing?" Miranda nodded. "Do you love me, Miranda?" Andrei asked.

She saw the tears in his eyes and her own closed against the sight. "Yes." Her voice was low. It was true, she did love him and always would. "So very much."

"Then why?" He sounded so hurt.

"Because I'm angry." Miranda was honest. "I am so confused, Andrei." She licked her lips. "And I feel so empty."

Andrei nodded as if he understood and took the keys from her. "If you need anything, call me. And thank you for the offer of a home base." He husked.

"Anything?" Miranda found herself querying to his back. She saw his head bob in agreement. "So, if I asked you to stay?" She queried.

Andrei turned to gaze at her. "No." His voice was low but carried. "That's not something I can do. I
cannot just backtrack on this job now, plus I believe we both need space to reflect on all that has happened. You need to decide if you can picture a future with me, because earlier..." He faltered and rubbed his eyes with a closed fist. "...earlier you meant every word you said to me and I cannot let myself remain if you are simply going to change your mind at a later date."

Tears formed in her eyes and cascaded down her cheeks and he stepped closer and brushed the hair out of her face gently and used his thumb to wipe them away. Andrei had always been so gentle with her. His arm wrapped around her, pulling her against him and she allowed herself to breathe in his scent, clutching his t-shirt.

"I read something earlier and I need you to hear it," Andrei told her.

"Okay." Miranda agreed.

"Remind yourself of what you have been able to overcome. All the times you thought you weren't going to make it through, you proved yourself wrong. You are more powerful than you think. You are a warrior." Andrei quoted softly.

"I'm sorry, Andy." She was sorry for so much that she was unable to voice.

Andrei pulled back and gazed at her thoughtfully. She had only called him Andy once before when needling Irv in the elevator. It was unusual for her to use a nickname other than the one for her twins.

"No apologies." Andrei's lips pressed against her forehead before he pulled back. "I'll be seeing you, Miranda." He pulled away and stepped quickly to the door as she sobbed softly, her eyes closed, unable to watch him walk away.

She heard the soft click of the door and felt a warm hand creep into hers. "He'll be back, mommy. He promised." Cassidy stated.

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Andy loved Miranda's London home in Kensington. It was a white, detached, seven-bedroom family house sprawling across five floors. The house provided off-street parking and a beautifully maintained south-west facing garden backing onto Holland Park. He found himself spending most of his evenings when he wasn't working, in the garden. As he moved from room to room, he found himself wondering why Miranda maintained the house. It was larger than her New York home and had a modern yet classic finish. Someone had done an astounding job at renovating it.

That first week, he'd had multiple reports that Miranda had barely moved from her bed and it left Andy concerned. He'd talked to Cara, Nigel and the twins and they all urged him to hurry home, but his job wasn't finished. He couldn't just leave and he had specified a time frame for Miranda to think things over.

The hardest thing about being in London, other than being away from Miranda and the twins, working on this project, was that most of his time was spent, not on-site as he'd expected, but in an office drawing up plans after the client was unhappy with those drawn up by the original architect. He had assessed the current structure, met with the clients to determine their needs and preferences and had been advised of their budget. The work was boring.

He found as the days passed he was less angry but still hurt by Miranda's actions. He held onto the hope that they could work things out, but that was not a certainty. It depended on Miranda herself. He hadn't attempted to speak to her and she had not been in contact either. This was hard after their
time together as he had been in touch every day they had been apart and he had so much he wished to say to her.

That first weekend in London, Andy decided he needed something to remember the child they had lost. Moving through a snug garden centre in Kentish Town, he purchased a small cherry tree, knowing it would be a fitting tribute for the fragility and beauty of life, a remembrance. He planted it the following day in between short, sharp rain showers, ducking for cover when necessary.

It became clear throughout the second week that Miranda was back in business. Photographs arrived on the online gossip pages, showing Miranda wearing her large sunglasses as she entered and left Elias Clarke and the townhouse. These gossip pages questioned the fact he was no longer in New York and the rumour-mill stated there was trouble in paradise for the Devil in Prada and her future Mr Priestly. He hated that there was so much speculation about her disappearance the week before and now his.

He continued to despair over his decision to take this job. The work he was doing was the work he'd been dead set against when he'd set out on his career path, mainly due to him also needing to work with his hands. The closest he'd got to anything remotely manual was climbing a latter to take some measurements. The client had been requesting one meeting after another, where he had to explain the design in great detail, answer their questions and addressing minor problems and concerns. The architect he was working with was the one doing all the legal grunt work, ensuring they obtained permits and met specific building codes.

For his own business, he was the remodelling architect, the construction manager and the interior designer. Not having that capability for this job was weird for him, and working with others on the same level within different areas was something he was not used to. He'd already gone toe-to-toe with the flamboyant interior designer about clashing colour pallets telling the man he was colour-blind and offending him.

Needing to occupy his mind, after a stressful week, in the late hours of a lonely Friday night, he looked at the photographs gracing the online gossip pages while nursing a cold beer. He was stunned to see his ring sat almost proudly on Miranda's left-hand ring finger. Hope flared within him and he sent the first text.

Andy-Pandy-Dandy: I miss you, Miranda.

His cell was lit up with a reply when he woke up early the following morning.

Miranda Priestly-Blake-Sachs: I believe I shall have to ban the Bobbsey's from using my cell phone. My name and half of my contacts names have seemingly changed. Donatella is now Bella-Donatella and Nigel is Bakewell Tart.

Andy couldn't stop the small snort of laughter. It was true there was no major declaration of love, but it was so very Miranda. Shaking his head, he jumped out of bed and shrugging himself into some clothes and his sneakers decided to go for a run. It was going to be a long two weeks until he was back in New York.

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"Andy never really spoke of you after his return to L.A. When Michelle and I reconnected with him again, we knew something had happened for him to leave New York but John wouldn't talk of it and neither would Andy."

Amy and Michelle's arrival at the house that evening stunned her. She had wallowed in her pain
that week and wasn't quite ready to face the world. She listened half-heartedly as Amy continued to speak.

"When Michelle tried to push for answers, as she is prone to do, she was told in no uncertain terms to leave it." Amy smiled at her wife and to take the sting from the remembrance lifted her hand and kissed her palm. "And then she saw Andy's tattoo and oh boy, you couldn't possibly imagine her disbelief."

Michelle took up speaking. "The family I still have contact with have never been particularly polite when speaking of you. They had heard stories, from Andy when he worked for you, but also from his mom and his old friends and then there is what gets printed in the press." She licked her lips. "Because of that I haven't given you a chance and for that, I am deeply sorry, Miranda."

Miranda arched an eyebrow. She had no idea what to say really. She remained silent, simply looking at the two women.

"We understand what you are going through now." Michelle continued. "Amy and I have been there twice and it was hard, you know. My Ob-Gyn wouldn't run any diagnostics to find out why I couldn't remain pregnant. I struggled to let Amy and our donor close and felt like they had no idea what I was going through and that they would blame me." The brunette bowed her head.

Miranda could see that Michelle still had difficulty in voicing everything and she understood it fully. She currently felt so numb to everything. She had lost so much, some of it beyond her control and some of her doing.

"I had no idea," Miranda whispered, her voice hoarse from all her tears that week.

"I've found women don't speak of it. For me, the whole word, repeated over and over again by medical practitioners, miscarriage, was like an accusation, puncturing me over and over again and after that, it's just seemed awkward. But then one of Amy's cousins told me she had three miscarriages before carrying a healthy child and then other women I knew shyly admitted their losses. It was extraordinary and I found it helped." Michelle explained softly. "To know I was not alone in this helped, and over time I learned to communicate with Amy and Seb about our loss."

"Oh." Miranda was dumbstruck that these two young women had felt that they should try to help her. After everything. She attempted to shake herself from her funk. "I seem to have been remiss. Where are my manners? Would either of you care for a drink?"

Michelle grinned. "A beer would be great."

Amy nudged her. "I'm sure Miranda meant tea or coffee, Mich."

Miranda looked at her watch and saw it was close to 7 pm. "I think I can scrounge up a beer or two. Andrei always enjoyed one with supper and..." She faltered. "...have you heard anything?" She asked.

"He landed safe, slept badly and started work immediately. I believe he may be regretting his rash decision." Michelle smirked. "He enjoys absolute control and this job isn't providing that."

Miranda stood and winced. Moving slowly, she gestured for the two women to follow her before leading them towards the kitchen. Pulling two wine glasses from a cupboard she poured wine from a bottle chilling in the fridge and extracted a bottle of Sixpoint Sweet Action, the blonde ale that Andrei preferred. Carrying the drinks, she set them down on the breakfast bar and looked at Amy. "I seem to recollect you prefer white." She sat carefully.
"Should you be drinking?" Amy asked.

"Probably not, but I haven't taken the medication provided for the pain for a few days and I'm sure wine will be sufficient to numb the discomfort." She leaned her elbows on the island and ran a finger along the rim of her glass, making it sing. She glanced up. "What has surprised me the most about all this is my capacity to hate. No matter how I am portrayed I've never been a hateful person. I am aware I can be spiteful and cold but it was never from any overly strong feelings of hate. But when I lost my baby, the tiny, hopeful whisper of a new life was replaced by rage. My hatred was so powerful and it could only focus on one person. My Andrei."

"Let it all out, Miranda." Michelle took a large swig of her beer and let out a little belch that had Amy and herself scrunching their faces up. "Excuse me." Michelle had the grace to blush.

Shaking her head, Miranda found her lips twitching in the hint of a smile. Michelle was so much like Andrei and yet so different.

She looked down and raising her glass sipped her wine and sighed. "I feel like such a failure and it seems so absurd that there are all these people, going about their business as usual while I...alone I am okay, I can lose myself in my anger, my pain. But when with people I have no control over my emotions. Like Andrei, I need control. I hate my weakness and vulnerability." Her wine was gone and Michelle leaned across the island and poured her another with a small smile. "My word, you look like Andrei. I should put you in my magazine."

"We have the family looks. I swear that's why we were banished from our family." Michelle's lips twitched up into a wide dimpled smile. "Jealous fools, the lot of them. Plus we bagged ourselves the biggest hotties."


"But why? It's true. My big lug of a cousin possesses exemplary taste." Michelle grinned at her wife before turning to Miranda. "If I was single, he wouldn't have got a look in. I'd have wooed you within an inch of your life, Miranda."

"With your natural clumsiness and awkwardness?" Amy teased.

Miranda understood they were trying to lighten the mood, and unbelievably it was working. She looked at the two women and smirked. "It worked like a charm for Andrei, however, he has one thing you do not possess, Michelle."

"Damn. The dreaded D strikes again." Michelle finished her drink and slammed it down on the counter.

"I have no idea what you mean." Miranda was temporarily confused and the two women giggled. "Dedication, determination, drive?" She queried.

"Dick." The two women chorused together.

Miranda's jaw dropped and the two younger women couldn't stop themselves from laughing heartily at her blatant disbelief.

More drinks were shared and they settled into the den, sharing stories about their lives. The time passed quickly and another bottle of wine was opened while Michelle nipped out for another six-pack. Miranda was feeling the warmth of the alcohol she had consumed and she felt easier about everything.
She knew what she wanted, but it would take some arranging. "I think I should go to London. I could show Andrei where I grew up." She muttered as she walked Amy and Michelle towards the front door to see them out.

"Wow," Michelle muttered. "Is that something you've done before?"

"No," Miranda admitted. "It is a part of my life I've tried to forget. But it is part of who I am, more than I care to admit."

Michelle nodded and held her hand out for Amy. "If you need a sitter for those two terrors of yours, we need the practice."

"You're trying again?" Miranda asked. "With Seb as a donor?" The previous conversation filtered through Miranda's mind.

"We have hope." Amy grinned. "We decided I will carry the newest Blake baby. I'm being inseminated on Friday."

"Oh, that's wonderful." Miranda was happy for them, now knowing of their losses, but also sad.

"It's terrifying," Michelle stated quietly. "Goodnight Miranda. Call us if you need anything, okay? You're not alone in this."

Miranda was surprised by the statement but saw the honesty in the young woman's eyes. "Thank you, both."

"We're family now." Michelle grinned and pulled Amy forward, using her free arm to wrap Miranda in a hug. "And you're stuck with us."

"Why does that sound more like a threat than a promise?" Miranda muttered.

Michelle and Amy laughed as they pulled back. "Oh, you ain't seen or heard nothing yet." Amy continued to chuckle as Michelle wagged her finger at her and smirked. "Miranda, I have one bit of advice for you. Go shower and change out of Andy's clothes. You stink." With that, they let themselves out of the townhouse.

Miranda realised that her small family was growing in new ways. She had been accepted by Andrei's nearest and dearest. Now, she simply had to prove to him that this he what she still wanted.

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Andy woke up early on Sunday morning to find a warm body pressed firmly against his back and a familiar scent assaulting his senses. He turned to find sleepy blue eyes watching him almost shyly.

"I'm sorry for waking you. I thought I could just lie here and wait for you to wake up." Miranda spoke quietly and he could sense her nerves.

Scrubbing his face with his open palms, Andy breathed deeply. "Hey." He glanced at the editor's makeup-free face and saw her tiredness. "You look tired. You should try to sleep, Miranda." He stretched and realised he had fallen asleep naked the night before. A blush rose up against his stubbled cheeks.

Miranda smirked at his realisation. "My da...Andrei..."
"You can call me whatever you want," Andy reassured. "Including Andy." He offered, his voice holding his hope.

Miranda rolled her eyes, a familiar gesture that left him relieved. It was so good not to see her anger focussed in his direction. "I was simply going to remind you that we have been very naked together before now and your embarrassment is unwarranted." She told him lightly.

Andy groaned. He understood what she meant, but things had changed between them. "Things are different now though." He stated sadly.

Miranda eyed him warily. "Would it make you less uncomfortable if I was also unclothed."

Andy groaned. "No, not really." He closed his eyes and sighed. "It would be a test of my patience, as it always is." He admitted. "I'll just get some clothes on and make some coffee. I doubt either of us will sleep now."

He made to move from the cover of warmth but was stopped by Miranda warm palm on his forearm. "Stay," Miranda pleaded. "Please, Andrei."

He settled back on his side, pulling her comforter between them, the last thing he wanted was for Miranda to be faced with his morning glory. Having her there, so close, had seemingly worked its usual magic. "Why are you here, Miranda?" Andy asked. "I thought we agreed to a month?"

"You gave me a month. I, however, decided that was far too long." Miranda glanced up into his eyes. "I found, after everything, the two weeks we have been apart rather intolerable."

"You told me to leave," Andy stated. "You gave me back my ring."

His hurt was clear and he watched the older woman close her eyes against it. "I was foolish to push you away." Miranda's voice conveyed her pain. "I couldn't see past my anger at the situation and I told myself you would hate me. You were so happy after we found out, Andrei. It hurt me to realise I had taken this from you and so I told myself it was better to have you leave me before I hurt you any further." Her eyes blazed open. "I know I was wrong. I didn't take into account your pain. Forgive me."

Tears sprang into her eyes when he shook his head. He saw her pain and understood she thought he was rejecting her, unable to forgive her for everything. Andy knew he had to try to fix her misconception. There could be no miscommunication between them now, after everything.

Inching closer, he wrapped her arm around Miranda's back and pulled her closer. The way she fit against him as if she was made just for him, still left him stunned. He spoke softly into her hair. "I know you struggle when you are overwhelmed and it makes you lash out. But you can't keep pushing me away."

"I'll do anything to make this right." Miranda sobbed.

He felt the woman's tears against his neck and his own broke free. "I tried so hard to stay strong for you and the twins, but you wouldn't let me be there. I couldn't offer you comfort." He sniffed his tears away. "This whole thing broke me a little. More than all the other losses I've ever had, so I chose to leave." Andy sighed. "But it was a mistake. I couldn't just throw myself into the work as I'd assumed and I've found myself alone and surrounded by all things Miranda Priestly, not knowing if I would ever have the real thing again. I just wanted to be back in New York, to have you perhaps see me, and maybe realise I am what you wanted and needed."

"You are what I want and need, my darling." Miranda pulled back and curled her hand around his
"I spent that first week, after your departure, in the bed we shared, wearing one of your t-shirts and wishing you were there. I felt so lost, and not just from the baby, but because I knew I had perhaps squandered the chance to have you in my life." She admitted. "I was so scared I'd lost you too."

"What changed?" Andy husked.

"I had a visit from Michelle and Amy." Miranda smiled. "We drank a little too much, talked about everything and anything and then as they were leaving Michelle told me I smelled."

Andy laughed and it held a deep note of relief. "I assume my cousin continues to run for her life?"

"Oh no, it is far worse than that," Miranda smirked. "She and Amy have the twins," Miranda stated with an arched eyebrow. "I'm certain they are unprepared for our Bobbsey's."

"Lord, help them." Andy continued to chuckle and swiped at the wetness under his eyes. He glanced down, suddenly shy and entwined his hand with Miranda's. "May I kiss you?" He asked faltering.

"You'd better." Miranda pushed herself forward and snared his lips in a demanding kiss.

He felt so much and was uncertain how to proceed. His brain screamed 'CAUTION' while his heart expanded with joy and relief. He gentled the contact considerably, unsure of how much he could take at that moment. He needed to slow things down and pulled back, his breathing ragged and watched as Miranda pouted. He swept his hand through her hair soothingly and bent again to steal a chaste kiss. "Would you go on a date with me?" He asked with a smile.

"Aren't we beyond all that?" Miranda continued to pout, her lips pursed.

Andy looked down into stormy blue eyes and turned serious. "No. I think we need to start again. Perhaps, we can rewind slightly and recreate some of our better memories as we let go of the painful ones."

Miranda closed her eyes and after a few moments sighed. "I suppose that is an acceptable compromise. But I am not taking off this ring." Her thumb ran over the stones unconsciously. She looked up again. "I should advise you that I have quit my job."

Andy was stunned. "You quit?" He yelled, launching himself from the bed. "Why the hell would you do that? You are Runway."

"Because I took a new job. I am to be Chief Executive Officer of Elias Clarke Publications." Miranda stated. "Irv's gone, my darling, and It means I can have a life outside of my work and perhaps, given time, we could try again for another baby."

"You want to try again?" Andy sat on the edge of the bed and caught Miranda's eyes.

"Not right now." Miranda blustered.

"You know what I mean." Andy offered her a mega-watt smile. "You still want this?"

"You are absurd," Miranda grumbled. "Of course I do, you foolish man. Why else would I have travelled three and a half thousand miles? I will fight for this." She cupped his face again and her lips pressed against his forehead. "For you." Her lips moved to his. "I want you to know me. Will you come out with me today?" She murmured against them.
"Where are we going?" Andy asked, curiously.

"To see my parents," Miranda whispered.
Chapter 18

Chapter Notes

Yay, another fic idea from the lovely celesse201, who for whatever reason, holds the belief I can bring her ideas to life. This is my first major AU. Not giving too much away. Miranda is Miranda but I am making her and the twins slightly younger for the sake of the fic. Andy is not the Andy you expect (Hence the AU)

I do not own the main characters related to The Devil Wears Prada. They are owned by the original author and 20th Century Fox. Some characters will be my own.

After preparing for their day and taking their time over coffee and toast, since Andy had done no grocery shopping that week other than to buy bread, coffee, milk and cereal, he was stunned to find himself being led outside by the hand.

He caught Miranda's eyes, knowing his own would be holding his disbelief at the sight of the red 1957 Porsche 356 A Speedster. "Woah." He breathed. "Serious, your car collection is phenomenal."

"I miss this Porsche. One of these days I shall have it shipped to New York." Miranda smirked at him.

"Are we going out in that today?" He queried, almost drooling over the vehicle.

"Well, yes. I don't fancy spending all our time on the Underground. The Mini would be more suitable for today's activities. Less circumspect, however, there's only room for the one car and I never give up the opportunity to drive this one."

"Oh, right." Andy could seriously understand her view. Part of him simply wanted to lift the bonnet and marvel over the engine, another hoped he would have the chance to drive it.

"Come along, my darling. It will take an hour to cross the city. I promise you can drive us somewhere later." Miranda slid into the driver's seat and waited, her fingers tapping on the steering wheel nervously.

Andy slid in beside her and put the seat back as far as it would go, grinning at the woman beside him. Miranda gunned the car and looking over her shoulder, backed out of the parking bay with a loud screech of tyres. She swung onto the road easily causing Andy to clutch at the handle above his door as she shot forward.

Andy glanced at the woman, who seemed to be comfortable behind the wheel. "This car suits you." He said after a few minutes. Miranda hummed and gave him a small smile. "So, tell me about the house? It seems rather large for somewhere you don't live."

"I inherited it, from a very dear friend," Miranda admitted quietly. "I was 30 when she passed away. We had formed a bond from the time after I left school and moved to Paris and we remained in touch."

"Will you tell me about it?" Andy asked. He didn't want to push, but he was curious.
"Back then, when we first met, I was known by my birth name. Miriam." Miranda spat the name almost bitterly. "I was born into a working-class family. My father did not see the point of my education beyond the basic '3 R's'. He was old school and left school at 15 and started his life as a labourer on the dockyards. He expected the same from me, as the eldest child. It was my job to work and bring in extra money to help out. So, I was pushed into a full-time job as a shop assistant in a little antique store up in the West End. I eventually took night classes in Fashion and Journalism after some coaxing from my employer, Genevieve. I worked hard and saved as much as I could, eventually escaping to Paris."

"Was Genevieve the good friend?" Andy asked.

"Yes. She was like a mom to me, after..." Miranda swallowed. "Can we revisit this later?" She asked.

Andy could hear the tenseness in Miranda's voice. "Sure, but only if you want to. No pressure, okay?" He pulled her hand into his and let his eyes wander across the changing landscape as they passed The Royal Albert Hall opposite Hyde Park. "Is Harrods near here?"

"Yes, Knightsbridge is just down the road from here. We can go later if you wish." Miranda seemed relieved by the change in conversation.

"Awesome." Andy was happy to do whatever, as long as he was with Miranda.

"Keep your eyes peeled," Miranda told him. "Hyde Park corner is coming up and Buckingham Palace will be on the right, and we shall also be passing Trafalgar Square."

Andy's eyes widened, he hadn't realised they would be passing so many famous places. "You're taking me into the heart of the city?" He queried.

"I could have taken an alternate route, but from what I heard from Michelle, you haven't taken the time to sightsee," Miranda explained. "So what I want to know is how you have spent the last two weeks?"

"I've been working. I needed to draw up new plans for the client. The wife was not happy with Gerald's work, or the architect he hired after I declined the offer initially. She threatened to dump his firm and come directly to me, she has since been made aware I am simply doing this as a favour for an old college friend." He shrugged. "I've had two evenings out. Gerald and I hit some pretentious wine bar one evening and on another evening we had dinner with the clients." He rubbed his jaw soothingly. "I've spent a lot of time in the garden. I planted something, a cherry tree." He admitted.

His nerves ratcheted and he tried to untangle his hand from Miranda's without luck as her grip tightened. "A cherry tree?" She queried.

"Yeah. I hope you don't mind. I just thought...I needed..." He stuttered to a stop when she squeezed his hand gently.

"A cherry tree will be a welcome addition. After Genevieve passed and I was handed the deeds to the house, I started to have it modernised. Once it was done, I took the summer to organise the garden. It must have been one of the wettest summers on record, and yet I didn't mind. I planted the roses for her. She loved having freshly cut roses around the house."

"She must have been a wonderful woman to have inspired such a relationship." Andy smiled softly.

"I find myself, sometimes, acting just like her. She had this innate ability to push people to be the
"You do make people want to succeed. In myself, I wanted to prove I was worthy." Andy admitted quietly. "I still feel that urge sometimes."

"I will do my best to reassure you, although I may struggle at times," Miranda told him.

"That's okay. It's my issue, not yours." Andy shrugged. "Sometimes I just need to realise I am not the boy I once was."

They continued in silence until they reached the Chrisp St Markets and Miranda pulled over. "We shall walk from here. It's not far."

xxxxx

She entwined her fingers in Andrei's and started walking through the centre of the market, past the pharmacies bargain basement stores, the local Greggs Bakery and Maureen's Pie and Mash, a route that would lead them to her father's home.

The area hadn't changed much in itself since she was growing up in the 70s. It was still multicultural and very much working class, yet she knew the council had plans to redevelop the area. They were trying to push people from their homes in the hope they could rebuild and sell for higher profits.

Her father was one of the lucky ones. When she received her first bonus from Elias Clarke, she had bought the house she had grown up in and gifted it to him. Not that he'd been grateful.

She could see that Andrei was stunned by the area of Poplar she was leading him through. If only he had seen it as it was before being redeveloped after the war although she was sure her father still had photographs of the dirty brick tenements and cobbled roads.

"The architects here seem to have preferred brutalist structures. It's quite ugly." Andrei muttered, glancing at the post-war concrete highrisers that dotted the landscape.

"They needed to develop affordable homes after the Blitz." Miranda shrugged. "It seems perfectly normal to me having grown up here."

"Yes, I can see why it would." Andrei smiled at a pair of little boys wearing West Ham football shirts, who grinned back cheekily. "So your mom and dad still live here?"

Miranda hummed. "My father." She told him. "He didn't meet Stephen and wasn't a fan of James. I should warn you, he may not be as polite as he ought..."

"Okay." She felt Andrei's nerves rise as she led him across Ricardo Street towards her father's home, entering a small street of cream bricked Maisonettes.

Opening a wrought iron gate leading into a small, unkempt front garden, she glanced at the weeds and shook her head. There was no excuse for it to look so untidy although she wasn't surprised in the least. Her father doing anything to make his life a little more beautiful was something he had no interest in.

Turning to Andrei, she spoke. "Are you ready?"

"What should I expect?" Andrei muttered.
"Rudeness because you are American and I should warn you, he's a hoarder?" Miranda stated, opening the door.

"A hoarder?" Andrei queried. "What exactly do you mean?"

Miranda waved her hand airily and gestured in front of her at the haphazard stacks of newspapers, VHS and books lining the walls on either side of them from floor to ceiling.

A tall, white-haired figure loomed ahead of them and Miranda stepped back into Andrei's arms.

"So, Miriam. You've finally returned." The voice was strong, with a hint of his cockney accent hidden within its depths.

Miranda sighed. She could sense this wasn't going to be a good reunion.

xxxxxxxxxx

"Hello, dad." Miranda seemed suddenly shy.

"It's been five years, Miriam. Why are you here?" The older man tossed the words over his shoulder carelessly as he moved back into the room he had come from.

"I...I..." Miranda faltered and Andy squeezed her hand, offering his support. He had no idea what had happened with Miranda and her dad, but he would be there for her. She turned to look at him and gave him a look of gratitude. "Careful." She warned quietly.

Miranda squared her shoulders and moved forward, tugging him along behind her.

He nodded once and continued to follow her. The house smelled dusty and Andy felt itchy all over. He thought of all things that could be hidden between the stacks of things and shuddered.

He stepped through a narrow path through to the living room, weaving through the stacked boxes and floor-to-ceiling books, past an old wood-panelled TV and a multitude of other items, more books, magazines and journals, before reaching the small semi-clear space that held a sagging two-seater couch and the armchair that was now occupied by the man. There was a table beside Miranda's father holding a dirty mug, a book, a tobacco pouch and an overflowing ashtray.

Miranda looked down before muttering about tea and nodding at him to sit on the couch before walking from the room.

He sat down and felt like he was about to sink to the floor as the springs gave way under his weight. He watched as the old man eyed him as if expecting him to say something.

Raising an eyebrow, he smiled warmly. "Hey, I'm Andy."

"What? No comment about what a nice place I have?" The man smirked familiarly and Andy could see where Miranda got some of her looks. They had the same shaped jaw and the slightly crooked nose.

"Nah, I'm a terrible liar and you're anything like Miranda, you'd see straight through it." Andy shrugged. "You'd make a fortune at a garage sale though."

"My name is Joseph." Joseph raised his eyes to him and stared at him. "You can call me Mr Princhek."

"Yes, sir," Andy muttered.
"No. Not sir, Mr Princhek." Joseph raised an eyebrow before turning away muttering about those 'damn Yanks'.

Andy smirked. "Would it help to know that I am of Romanian descent on my father's side?"

"I am of Polish descent." Joseph frowned at him. "Is what the newspaper's saying true?"

"Which part?" Andy asked.

"The part that says she miscarried at a private party and had to undergo surgery?" Joseph stated.

Just as he opened his mouth, about to answer, Miranda's quiet voice trailed from the kitchen. "Andrei, can you help me please."

Joseph scoffed. "She didn't always talk like that. Run along, Andrei." He exaggeratedly drawled Andy's name and flicked his hand in the same way Miranda often did.

Andy couldn't stop his small snort of laughter and shook his head as he stood up to head carefully towards Miranda's voice. He entered the kitchen and groaned. More stuff piled high. "Was it always like this?" He asked, looking at the empty bottles crowding the top of every appliance and the boxes of packaged food, some empty, that covered every surface. Piles of dishes were jumbled in the mess on the counters and top of the washer and dryer.

"After a fashion." Miranda had somehow assembled a tray, holding an old brown earthenware teapot and three mismatched cups, a small jug of milk and sugar. "He no longer feels the need to keep up appearances for my sake, or that of his other children or grandchildren," Miranda stated.

Andy could sense her sadness. "What happened?" He asked.

"I used to bring Cassidy and Caroline here for visits, they loved playing hide and seek amongst all this." Miranda waved her hand airily. "One day, as I was coming in from an emergency meeting at British Runway, I heard an almighty crash. The whole contents of the second bedroom had fallen around Cassidy trapping her." She shuddered. "I was so scared and Caroline was inconsolable."

"Oh, shit." Andy breathed. He knew how protective Miranda was towards her daughters. He could imagine her reaction.

"I threw everything aside, trying to get to her, and when she finally came into view her lips were blue. I struggled to bring her around and called him to get me an ambulance and he just stood there, doing nothing, floundering. I yelled at him to watch her and rushed from the room. It was then I found out he hadn't paid his fucking telephone bill and had been cut off. We had a terrible fight and he told me to get out. I ran next door, with Cassidy in my arms, and Caroline still sobbing as she ran after me, and I begged them to help me." There were tears in her eyes, making Andy furious. "He didn't even ask how she was afterwards, he only seemed to care about the mess his granddaughters created in this chaos. I remember Cassidy once asking me how come Gramps didn't clean his house. But they loved him and still wanted to come and see him, now he is simply a distant memory." She let out a small hiccuping sob. "The teabags are rotten."

Andy groaned and pulled her into his arms, rubbing her back soothingly. "I'll head out and get some in a minute. I think I saw a co-op near the market."

When Andrei left, almost reluctantly, Miranda took the time to get herself together before she moved back towards the living room.
She understood where her father's predisposition came from, the hoarding of what seemed like such inconsequential things. Her grandparents had not been able to keep anything from her father's childhood as they fled Poland. She was grateful for some possessions like the boxes of photographs; but the childhood books, magazines, and videos were a bit much and it was not only dangerous but also embarrassing and not only for her.

Her father glanced at her. "You didn't answer my original question, Miriam. Why have you come here?"

"I wanted to show Andrei where I came from." She admitted, looking down. "He has gone to the supermarket," Miranda explained.

"You wanted to show him this?" Joseph's voice held disbelief.

"He is important to me," Miranda added. "He should know where I come from, the things that have shaped me as a person."

Joseph nodded. "Perhaps. I understand he is also young enough to be your son?"

"Don't be ridiculous, dad." Miranda found herself becoming uncomfortable under her father's scrutiny.

"I follow the news. I know although he's doing well for himself, he's only 30." Joseph added snidely. "And also I know he knocked you up and then left you in New York once you lost it." He scoffed. "God, you that desperate you don't care, do you? Willing to chase him down and spread your legs like some..."

She found herself becoming teary from the bitterness of her father's words, and didn't hear the front door opening.

Andrei's voice hit them both. "You will apologise to Miranda, right now." His voice was colder than she had ever heard it and she glanced towards the doorway, with some difficulty and spotted him holding a small box of Twining's loose-leaf English Breakfast in his hands.

"I will not apologise for speaking the truth." Joseph sputtered, rising gracefully from his chair. "She is damaged goods and you will leave her as all the others have."

"You don't know me, you are judging by what you've read, the fact her ex-husbands were idiots and maybe the fact I am an American. And for your information, I left New York because Miranda told me to, not because I wanted to. I love your daughter and granddaughters, and you'd know that if your embarrassment and pride wasn't so ridiculous you had apologised for almost killing Cassidy and still have a place in their lives."

She saw Andrei had the measure of her father and stood to step towards him as her father blustered, unable to form a coherent sentence. "You will not leave this house with that boy, Miriam Princhek." Joseph eventually thundered.

Miranda was reminded of her childhood, the small rage her father would go through, throwing items from the windows of their fourth story flat and scaring her and her younger siblings as her mum tried to smooth things over.

Her head bowed but she soon felt Andrei's reassuring warmth as he raised her head. "I think we're done here, sweetheart." He muttered softly.

She looked down to see him holding his hand out to her and stalled.
She knew Andrei meant safety. He would do anything to keep her and their children safe from the madness of the world. Having Andrei in her life meant having that one person who would always support her. He would stand by her and their children, offering his love and encouragement and letting them believe they could achieve anything they wanted. Being with Andrei meant having someone who would take care of her, everything she was, her mind, her soul and her wellbeing.

Sighing, Miranda took his hand and felt him relax. She looked up into Andrei's eyes and saw the love he held for her expressed in their depths. She could only hope her own would show the same depth of feeling.

Miranda glanced over her shoulder at her father. "I will be marrying Andrei. You're welcome to attend as long you can try to be happy for us and keep your negativity to yourself. You can call my assistant and have her arrange things." She caught Andy's eyes. "Leave the tea. I think a spot of lunch is warranted before we head to our next destination."

Andrei's smile was bright and he squeezed her hand. "Yes, Miranda."

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Andy hadn't been able to stand there and listen to Miranda's father tear strips off her about her relationship with him. It was unnecessary and knew it would have hurt. He'd understood, from her silence, she was stunned. Miranda wasn't one to stand by and let someone speak to her in such a manner.

As they walked together, he could sense Miranda's anxiety rising and wanted to ease her mind. "You mentioned lunch?" Andy offered hopefully.

Miranda stopped walking and looked at him, he could see she was hanging on by a thread. "I'm sor..."

"Hey, no more apologies," Andy told her. "Now lunch. Pie and Mash at Maureen's?" He queried.

"Acceptable." Miranda husked. "After that, I thought we might visit my mother." Andy was confused. He had thought her mom was gone. "At the cemetery." She stated.

Comprehension dawned. "We'll pick up some flowers. What were her favourites?"

"She liked sunflowers." Miranda looked down. "Such a cheerful flower." She started to walk towards the small pie shop and opened the door for them to be greeted loudly upon being noticed.

"Well, if it ain't Miriam Princhek. How ya doin', Luv?" The older woman's broad smile had Miranda relaxing.

"Hello, Maureen. How's the family?" The way Miranda eased back into her old ways, surprised Andy.

"Were good, Luv. Choose whatever table you like, Karen will be out to take yours and Andy's order." Miranda's raised eyebrow had the older woman chuckling. "We read the papers, 'though we all pay no attention to the bad stuff. You look happier though, in the most recent pictures."

Miranda squeezed his hand and he looked down at her and offered one of his brightest smiles. "I am, truly."

"Well, that's all that matters, Luv." The older woman grinned at them. "Now, take this handsome one and go sit. You look like you need feedin' up."
Miranda laughed and led Andy further into the shop, decorated with white, modern tiles, plastic tables, each holding big bottles of malt, chilli vinegar, salt and pepper.

Upon reaching a table he pulled out a seat for her with her back to the room. They settled in and Andy looked over the menu, a frown marring his forehead. "Jellied or stewed eel?" He queried, feeling slightly intimidated by the unknown.

"I recommend the salt beef beigel with English mustard as a starter and then pie, mash and liquor." Miranda grinned.

"Liquor?" He queried.

"Eel juice and parsley, thickened with flour," Miranda explained. "I should warn you, pie and mash here is served with a fork and spoon. Request a knife and Karen or Maureen will likely tell you to fuck off."

Andy laughed loudly. "That sound like a challenge." He winked at Miranda and was delighted when she blushed. He leaned forward and whispered the words in his heart. "You're so beautiful, Miranda."

They were interrupted by a rosy-cheeked woman who smiled happily at them. "What can I get ya's?"

Andy raised an eyebrow at Miranda and grinned when she ordered for them both.

"We'll each start with a salt beef beigel and then a minced beef pie and mash, one with gravy, one with liquor. And two mugs of tea, one with no sugar. Thanks."

"Be with ya in a jiffy." The woman continued to smile as she walked away.

"I hope you are hungry, my darling." Miranda smiled. "The place may not seem like much, but the food is to die for."

"Why is it I think I'll need to take an extra-long run tomorrow?" Andy grinned.

They held Andrei's hand as she led him through the gates of the City of London Cemetary stopping at the florist and purchasing a bunch of sunflowers.

They travelled on foot through the gardens and she found it peaceful. Upon arriving at her mother's grave she was horrified at the state of it, there were grass cuttings thrown over the gravestone which had baked under the glaring sun. Kneeling, she arranged the flowers and tried to remove what grass she could, but it was stubborn in its removal.

She felt Andrei settle beside her, his head bowed, and glancing at him, saw his lips move silently in prayer. He then took out a small Swiss Army knife and scraped gently at the stubborn grass using the nail file. She watched him working almost methodically until all the grass was removed and was stunned when he finally spoke. "I can come back and remove the stains if you want?"

"No, I expected some wear and tear, it has been almost 35 years since she passed," Miranda explained before turning back to the grave. "I think my mum would have liked you."

"What's not to like?" Andrei smiled softly down at her before standing up. "I'll leave you in peace for a few minutes. I think I'll just take a stroll."
Miranda waited until he had disappeared before speaking quietly. "Hello, mum. It's been a long time since I came to see you, but there isn't a day that you don't cross my mind." She swallowed her tears. "You fought against cancer so hard, wanting to live and see us grow up, but we lost you anyway. I was so young when you left and I did the best I could with dad, Kathryn and Joseph Jnr, but without you, I no longer felt safe and loved. I still needed my mum, I wanted to know you."

Miranda shook her head. "I have made so many mistakes and there have been times I needed your guidance to push me in the right direction. I've disappointed people and have done everything wrong, but it has brought me to Andrei. He's beautiful, mum. He loves us all so much and Cassidy adore him. He's so extraordinarily gentle, compassionate and tender, but he's strong too. I know you would love him just as much as we do."

Miranda swiped at a tear. "Thank you for making me so strong in the time you were here, for teaching me that I am capable, resilient and independent. I carry that strength with me every single day, though, if I'm being honest, I feel more so now I have my Andrei. I'm going to try not to make the same mistakes again, to let him in and love him with all my heart and to love our life and our children when they come." Her voice cracked. "I need you to look after our little rainbow baby. I think of him or her as Andy, after Andrei. It hurts that I don't know if it was a boy or girl but I will always remember that its life lived on inside me, even for such a short time."

Miranda took a deep shuddering breath before continuing. "I miss you, mum. I miss your laugh, your voice and your hugs. I miss all of you and I always will. I look for you in everything I do. You are the reason I am the person I am today, all my success has been for you, for all the dreams you had that you couldn't fulfil. I hope I haven't disappointed you too much and that if you are looking down, I have given you a chance to burst with pride."

The wind washed over her and she heard the crunch of Andrei's feet on the path behind her. Turning, she saw him holding two takeaway cups of coffee and smiled up at him. He always knew exactly what she needed, but it was time to go home.

Miranda let Andy drive the Porsche back to Kensington and they remained silent except when she had to give directions. The silence between them wasn't uncomfortable, and her head rested against his shoulder while her hand sat on his thigh. Once they were home, he followed her to the lounge and watched as she toed her shoes off and settled on the sofa. The morning had taken its toll on her.

Moving to the kitchen, Andy frowned at the lack of food. He needed to take care of his Miranda, to build her up after everything. Grabbing the car keys and his wallet, he stuck his head around the living room door and saw Miranda curled into the broad sofa, her mouth slightly open as she breathed deeply. He smiled softly and decided he wouldn't disturb her just yet.

Within an hour he was back at the house, having navigated the local Tesco. After putting the shopping away, Andy filled the kettle and waited for it to boil before arranging tea for them both. Looking out of the kitchen windows, onto the beautiful garden, he couldn't quite believe he was still in the bustling metropolis that was London.

Allowing the tea to steep, he reflected on the past few weeks before shaking himself from his thoughts and carrying a small tray, holding the tea items, into the large living room.

Andy bit his lip at the sight of Miranda, laid out on her back with her arm above her head. Her blouse had risen, showing the rectangular Primapore strip covering the incision on her lower abdomen.
He made it to her side, and set the tea down and took the time to study Miranda's features. There were dark circles under her eyes, showing her lack of sleep. He knew she was still struggling over everything, but he understood they had turned a corner in their relationship. She had told her father they were getting married.

Miranda wanted him, in some ways she needed him and he wanted and needed her too. He knew that more than anything after the past two weeks. He functioned on a day to day basis because he had to, but a part of him was in New York, with this woman and their children.

His eyes trailed over Miranda's features. Her face wasn't classically pretty, but she was beautiful, and so ridiculously sexy without even trying.

In sleep, all the things that she brooded upon in her waking hours, the things that left her frustrated, were washed away, leaving her seemingly peaceful. He wondered what had made Miranda so happy in sleep. Was she dreaming?

"Are you going to kiss me, or what, my darling?" Miranda's lips quirked in the hint of a smile as she teased him.

Andy gasped in shock. Miranda's eyes remained closed so how did she know he was watching her?

Andy watched as she smiled shyly and unable to resist knelt beside her and touched his lips to hers softly. Miranda immediately parted hers; her tongue flicked out to swipe against his bottom lip before he reciprocated, his hands cupping her jaw gently.

The need for air had them breaking apart and they were both breathless. "I made tea," Andy explained. "But I didn't want to wake you."

"Oh, you woke all of me with that kiss, Andrei." Miranda breathed.

He looked down at her and grinned. "I should make a start on dinner. I thought we could recreate our first date." Andy saw the tears forming in Miranda's eyes and stroked his thumb over her cheek lightly. "What are you thinking, sweetheart?" He asked.

"How divine your lips are. How I easily lose myself in the comfort of your touch." Miranda swept his hair back from his forehead and smiled before tugging him down to snag his lips in another kiss.

His lips slid over hers, his hand drew her closer and tighter against him as their tongues danced sensuously. He knew they were on a slippery slope to him carrying her off to bed to make love to her, going against all the doctor's warnings.

He groaned as Miranda's hands made short work of the buttons of his shirt and snaked under his t-shirt and pulled back, his breathing ragged once again. "We can't, sweetheart. Doc told me no sex for six weeks." Miranda groaned in frustration and he found himself running his fingers gently through her hair, tucking some of the soft, silky strands behind her ear before cupping her jaw again. "Though he did not say anything about masturbation." He could feel Miranda's pulse fluttering against his palm.

Miranda's eyes blazed upon him and he was lost when her arms came round him and drew him close, pressing him tight against her body. She kissed him softly, tempting him, opening her lips and letting him taste them.

Andy dived further into the kiss and Miranda responded by threaded her fingers into his hair. His arms tightened and he lifted her easily, moving so she was hovering above him. He hesitated for a
moment then he moved his hand slid down her back to cup her ass, squeezing it in his hands.

Miranda pulled her lips away from his and let out a sigh, her warm breath ghosting over his lips. "I need you." She breathed hesitantly.

Andy didn't need to be told twice. His hands made short work of Miranda's blouse and bra, tossing them aside easily before fumbling with the button of her jeans and growing frustrated.

Miranda slid from his lap and unclasped the button before tugging the skin-tight denim over her hips and down her legs and kicking them away. Her hands covered her stomach almost shyly.

Seeing her in nothing but a skimpy pair of boy shorts, Andy pulled his shirt off and followed it with his t-shirt, he unfastened the button of his pants and unzipped himself, but kept them on. Crooking his finger to the woman he loved, he offered her a reassuring smile. "Come here, my love. Let me take care of you."

Miranda's hands moved away from her stomach and she stalked towards him gracefully. Andy's breath caught. God, he was a lucky sonofabitch.

xxxxx

Most of the men Miranda had known, knew where they wanted to stick their penis, but other than a general sloppy licking, really had no idea how to please her with their mouth and tongue.

For her, what Andrei did with his fingers and tongue was the most pleasurable intimacy they could experience as a couple and it took her back to that first night at the Hamptons after he chased Cassidy's monsters away.

She had never anticipated having such a gentle, selfless lover, someone who considered oral sex something more than foreplay. Someone who had the stamina to drive her through multiple orgasms in such a way, to make love to her with only a tongue. She wondered if Andrei was simply comfortable with his masculinity. or if it was something to make up for the fact he had, at times, some issues.

Andrei loved to tease her, prolonging her pleasure. He kissed the inside of her right thigh, just above her knee before licking the soft skin on the inside of her thigh. Miranda shuddered, no one, before him, had ever done this either and it drove her a little crazy as her desire rocketed. Without even touching her pussy, Andrei had somehow turned her on more than she'd ever been. He followed with her left thigh and once again traced a path upward with the tip of his tongue.

Having lavished her inner thighs with attention, he licked along her perineum, causing her hips to rise off the sofa. The moan that tore from her throat was loud and she offered a panted plea. "Andrei, please."

She caught Andrei's small chuckle as he placed his hands on the insides of her thighs, gently spread her legs as far as they would go, pulling them over his broad shoulders as he settled in. He slowly swept his tongue the length of her pussy, causing another shudder to radiate through her.

The touch was so gentle, yet so powerful, his long, slow licking offering steady contact, except where she needed it the most. He hadn't touched her straining clit.

Miranda knew if Andrei touched it with the tip of his tongue it would be over. It would send her spiralling over the edge into a mind-blowing orgasm. She wanted that to happen, and yet she also didn't want him to stop his gentle, steady torture.
Andrei continued licking, alternating licks along each side of her outer lips, covering every inch of her. She knew his face would be drenched by the juices flowing freely.

Sprawled flat on her back, breathing fast and moaning, all she could feel was the pleasure of Andrei's touch. His tongue passed achingly slowly over her sensitive clit, his tongue swirling against the straining bundle of nerves lightly before sucking it into his mouth and pressing his tongue over it firmly.

Miranda grabbed his head with both hands and held it down against her pussy, calling out to him. "Don't stop! Oh God, Andrei." Tears of deep joy sprang into her eyes as he pressed down harder with his tongue, licking her in a frenzy and humming as she climaxed against him, her hips bucking off the sofa.

Her back arched and she let out a keening wail of his name, as she continued to jerk her hips and rode the waves of cascading pleasure that held her body in its grip.

Finally pulling herself together, she felt Andrei's lips ghosting over her scar. She lay there, her hand still entwined in his short hair, his face pressed against her, just breathing in the moment. It felt like nothing else existed but them, sharing the moment.

She pulled Andrei up and they lay cuddled beside each other, their legs entangled, still not speaking, but enjoying the warm sensation of one another's body. Time had disappeared for them as they basked in the deepening twilight.

Miranda eventually broke the silence, worrying her lip between her teeth. "Do you need me to..." She waved her hand airily over his crotch.

"Nah, I kinda climaxed when you did." Andrei's face was suffused in a deep blush as she looked at him, stunned by the admission.

"You climaxed without me touching you?" Miranda caught the note of accusation in her voice and winced.

Andrei held her eyes. "You were touching me. Your hands were wrapped in my hair pushing me into your glorious honey-pot." His lips twitched in amusement as her jaw dropped.

"Honey-pot?" Miranda sputtered.

Andrei's smile widened. "Oh yeah, an apt description. After all, I ate you, like Pooh bear face-fu..."

"Do not finish that sentence, Andrei Blake-Sachs." Miranda interrupted, pressing a finger against his lips. Shaking her head she grinned at the laughter in his eyes. "You. Are. Absurd." She removed her finger and punctuated each word with a kiss. "But I love you."

"I know," Andrei smirked when she huffed, expecting to hear the sentiment returned.

He caught her eyes again and stroked her slightly sweaty hair from her forehead. His eyes turned serious. "I love you, Miranda. I always have and I always will. You are the only woman I have ever loved and that will not change."
Chapter 19

Chapter Notes

Yay, another fic idea from the lovely celesse201, who for whatever reason, holds the belief I can bring her ideas to life. This is my first major AU. Not giving too much away. Miranda is Miranda but I am making her and the twins slightly younger for the sake of the fic. Andy is not the Andy you expect (Hence the AU)

I do not own the main characters related to The Devil Wears Prada. They are owned by the original author and 20th Century Fox. Some characters will be my own.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

It had been hard to say goodbye to Miranda upon dropping her at Heathrow two days after her arrival in London, but she was needed at home, for the twins and to handle the fallout of Irv's dismissal as CEO.

It had been the longest week for them both, but each day they carved time out to talk to each other, just as Miranda was settling in for sleep each night and when he was just waking up.

It was hard to be apart after the time they had shared in London, but it gave them the time needed to focus on what they wanted from their relationship and they discussed it easily each day.

Andy now felt he understood Miranda much better after she truly opened up to him about her childhood and the loss of her mom, and her hopes for their future.

He knew, without a doubt, she wanted to share in a future with him and he wanted the same, a life with Miranda and the twins, even if that meant he never had children of his own.

Miranda needed time to heal fully and it wasn't certain that she would be able to have another child, although she had claimed she wanted to try again.

Having finished his work slightly earlier than anticipated, and seeing his clients happiness in his plans he decided to surprise Miranda and the twins three days before he was expected home.

He'd roped Nigel in to help him get Miranda to Barcelona's, to complete his surprise. As it was Friday night, there should be no issue and he'd been told the twins were at a sleepover with friends.

He had a feeling Miranda would possibly dig her heels in, and he was right. When she'd mentioned it that morning, stating she was too busy for such nonsense, he told her it would be good for her to enjoy a night out with Nigel and the rest of the Runway gang, as a final hurrah before her final issue went to print after Paris Fashion Week. He hoped he'd somehow convinced her.

Walking through arrivals at Newark Liberty shortly after lunch, having caught the early morning flight, he grinned to find Roy holding out a placard with his name emblazoned on it. He smiled at the driver and shook his hand. "Hey, good to see you, Roy."

Roy rubbed his neck and grinned back. "I never thought I'd say this, but I'm glad your back." He took Andy's holdall and gestured for him to follow.
"What's been happening?" Andy asked as Roy placed his bag in the trunk. He felt so out of the loop.

"Irv's attempting to sue Elias Clarke for unfair dismissal. He also slapped a lawsuit on the Mirror when they wrote a step-by-step account of what happened at the benefit citing invasion of privacy. He won't win but he's making things as difficult as possible."

"God, I should have thumped him into next week when I had the chance," Andy smirked when Roy laughed.

"Miranda seems okay, especially since her trip to London. She's had Cara packing all the items that you told her to unpack." Roy grinned. "Cara wants to bang your heads together."

Andy slid into the Towncar beside Roy and stretched his legs. "Things got a bit messy there. We're working through it though."

"She loves you. I think she always has." Roy muttered as he pulled into the traffic to take them back to the city. He cit his eyes at him. "She was different once you left that first time. Sadder. It's why I struggled to accept you being back. I didn't want her to hurt again."

"I don't want my presence in her life to hurt her," Andy stated softly. "I want her to be happy."

"You gonna get married?" Roy asked.

"She told her dad it was happening. So yeah, I can see it happening eventually." Andy grinned. "It won't be a big thing though. She knows I don't want that."

Roy chuckled. "Yeah, good luck with that. Small to Miranda is two hundred of her closest acquaintances."

"God help me." Andy laughed a little before they lapsed into silence. "How did you know I was landing today?" Andy asked after fifteen minutes.

"Nigel. He didn't want you held up." Roy grinned.

As the city skyline came into view, Andy knew he was home again and understood nothing could keep from the city indefinitely. It was where his heart was, and it beat in the chest of a certain woman.

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Miranda stalked out of the board meeting having just found out that Irving's unfair dismissal case had been thrown out. The board's unanimous vote to relieve him of his position was not something he could fight against.

What helped was the fact that many women had come forward, from the various publications under Elias Clarke, Human Resources and the admin teams across the publishing house, to provide proof of his sexual harassment.

The mess this had created would take some cleaning up, but she knew she was just the woman for the job. She wanted Elias Clarke to be a safe environment for all, regardless of gender, race or sexual orientation.

Miranda walked into her outer office and saw Emily working diligently. She had palmed so much work on her in recent weeks and the redhead had risen to the challenge admirably. She knew she
would be leaving the magazine in good hands, and now it was time to advise Emily of her promotion.

Stepping into her office, she sat behind her desk. She looked down at her cell and smiled. Andrei had kept in touch, leaving her various messages throughout the days since they parted, often, and this was one of those moments, to simply express how much he looked forward to seeing her.

"Emily." Miranda set her cell to one side as she called out to the woman.

"Yes, Miranda?" The hint of a question was there.

Miranda smirked and arched an eyebrow. "Close the door and sit."

It still stunned her how everyone rushed to do her bidding. Emily was almost hyperventilating as she sat opposite her. She looked at the younger woman, giving her a once-over. "You have been with Runway for almost six years now, and every offer to move you on has been met with refusal. I want to know why?"

Emily inhaled deeply. "Well, I believe in learning from the best and you are most assuredly that, Miranda."

"So it wasn't in the hope you could become me?" Miranda was teasing, although Emily seemed oblivious.

"N-nooo." The drawled out denial had Miranda's lips twitching. "There's only one Miranda Priestly. I couldn't do what you do."

"Pity." Miranda deadpanned. "I suppose I shall have to locate someone else who feels capable of stepping up to the plate."

Sometimes Miranda cursed Andrei for all his baseball metaphors but in this instance, it was fitting. She watched Emily trying to decipher her words and hid her smile.

"What do you mean?" Emily breathed, finding the courage to question her.

"Weren't you just saying you were not suited to take the position of editor in chief?" Miranda queried.

"WHAT?" The loud screech was no doubt heard in the depths of the closet and the shrillness had Miranda wincing.

"Maybe I was wrong, but now you've done communing with the dolphins you can advise me if you believe you are capable of taking such a position." Miranda licked her lips.

"I...Oh, bloody hell...I..." Emily could barely produce a coherent sentence.

"I do not have all day, Emily. A yes or no will suffice." Miranda stated coldly.

"I...I...yes." Emily finally found her words. "Yes, I believe I am capable of doing the job. I won't let you down, Miranda."

"Good. Ensure your flight to Paris is upgraded to first-class alongside Nigel and me." Miranda waved her hand airily. "That's all." Emily took the dismissal as she always had and lept to her feet ready to run. "Emily. We are equals now. Do not forget that, mmh. Go tell what's-her-face that I require coffee and have her get one for you. On Monday you will be shadowing me. You have a
month to prepare."

Emily rushed towards the door before spinning around. "You won't regret this, Miranda."

Miranda offered a small genuine smile. She was quite fond of the Brit. "I know. Oh, and Emily? Thank you, for everything."

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Andy cleaned his apartment before showering and letting himself settle in the comfort of his bed to sleep. The afternoon easily turned to early evening and when he woke up, he decided to order pizza and while he waited for the delivery he contemplated his return.

He had been pleased to see the work had started on the Italian restaurant that was to open next door to his office and when he poked his head in he'd greeted his employees with a large smile when they called out to him, telling him how happy they were to see him.

Michelle hung back and smirked at him and he couldn't help but laugh. He took her to the one side and she told him about the time she and Amy had spent with Miranda and the twins.

To say he was thrilled with the changes was an understatement and unable to resist he'd pulled his cousin into a bear hug and placed a smacking kiss on her cheek which she wiped away furiously while blushing bright red. She shooed him away and told him she, Seb and Amy would be at Barcelona's that night, upon having Nigel extend the invite.

Looking at the clock, he realised how close he was to seeing Miranda and butterflies took flight in his stomach, he was excited by the mere thought of being in her presence again.

Once his pizza arrived, he ate half of it washing it down with a beer before getting himself ready for the night.

Wanting to make an impression on his love, he pulled out one of his Ted Baker three-piece suits and paired the vest and trousers with a blue and white floral print cotton shirt Miranda had chosen for him from the same designer.

Glancing in the mirror, Andy realised he looked very much like he had on the day he first reconnected with Miranda. His beard had grown back while he was in London and he had trimmed it earlier that day before showering. His hair was a little longer than usual, but it made it easier to sweep over his forehead.

Grabbing his cell and his keys, Andy decided he would walk a little to find a cab. The fresh air and foot-traffic would be a welcome distraction from the nervousness he suddenly felt.

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Miranda was enjoying a lively debate with Serena about the joys of South American food when she felt the air crackle familiarly. Losing her train of thought, she glanced around but couldn't see anything that could have caused the sudden awareness of Andrei.

Shaking the feeling off, she decided she felt Andrei's presence simply because of their shared experience at this bar. Their first real kiss had been here and their first dance, when he'd held her close and she'd felt his rippling muscles against her own body.

Turning her attention back to Serena, Miranda listened as she waxed poetic about brigadeiro.
Once again she felt the air crackle around her and she saw Nigel, Amy and Michelle grinning at something behind her. Spinning on her heel, she almost collided with someone and large, warm hands sat on her hips to steady her.

Lifting her eyes, she found herself gaping as she looked upon her Andrei.

God, he was beautiful and he was here, at last. She felt the warmth of him where he touched and wrapped her arms around his waist as her head rested against his chest.

He held her gently against him and she was soothed by the familiar scent of his cologne. She felt his lips brushing against the crown of her head and smiled. Miranda realised this was what had been missing over the last week. Andrei's strong arms holding her close, making her feel safe and loved.

Pulling back slightly, she glanced up at him and her eyes trailed over his features. She no doubt looked like a love-sick fool but found she didn't care in the slightest. Finally noticing he didn't even have a drink, she took his hand and dragged him towards the bar without having uttered a word.

Eventually, they found a space to settle and between people trying to get the bartenders attention and shouting their orders, she spoke. "You came home early?"

"Yeah, I found I couldn't keep away." Andrei grinned.

"You are a sight for sore eyes, my darling. I've missed you." She couldn't take her eyes off him. "So, do you have to go back?"

"Yeah, in two weeks." Andrei looked upset.

"I have Paris, that week." Miranda reminded him. "The girls have decided they wish to stay with their father. They spoke on the phone this afternoon."

"Well, we have the fortnight together until then," Andrei stated. "And we'll both be busy for Fashion Week with you in Paris and me in London. I'm sure it will fly by."

Miranda felt her lips purse and knew her disappointment would be evident. "I am not looking forward to Paris. I haven't enjoyed it in years." She admitted. "I half-wished you could attend with me."

Andrei's eyes widened in surprise. "You didn't say anything."

"I meant to, but with everything..." Miranda trailed off and bit her lip.

She watched as Andrei caught the bartenders attention and gestured for a drink for himself and Miranda. They knew what he drank and grabbed him a Lagunitas and a gin and tonic.

"I wish I could be there," Andrei stated, picking up on her sadness.

"Yes, well, I will simply have to ensure we are all settled into the apartment before we leave," Miranda stated.

Andrei's smile was wide. "Awesome. And when we come back, I believe we should do some house-hunting."

"Acceptable." Miranda's hand stroked along his jaw lightly. "Have I mentioned how much I have missed you, Andrei?"
"You might have, but I'll never tire of hearing it," Andrei muttered.

They only stayed at Barcelona's long enough to have a couple of drinks and to raise their drinks to Emily for her promotion before heading back to the apartment.

They prepared for bed silently, with Miranda removing her makeup and changing into one of his t-shirts, while he changed into a pair of cotton-knit shorts and a sleeveless muscle shirt. Settling onto the couch, Miranda scrolled through movie choices before landing on A Star is Born. He hadn't watched the movie, although he was a fan of Lady Gaga's music. He pulled Miranda close and they watched the movie unfold.

Andy's attention was caught up by the movie and he barely registered Miranda's light teasing touch along his thigh. It was only when she tickled a sensitive spot that he tore his eyes from the TV and glanced at her. Pulling her hand away, he grinned as he kissed her palm and refocussed on the movie.

The problem was that it no longer held his attention as after a few minutes Miranda started her assault on his inner thigh again, her fingers trailing under the leg of his baggy shorts to tease his bare skin. Andy turned to watch her and saw her small smile as she pretended to watch the movie but her nails scored the skin softly.

"I thought you wanted to watch this." Andy queried.

"I am watching." Miranda's smile widened.

Andy couldn't help but chuckle. "I best not distract you by kissing you then, hey?" He teased.

Miranda's head snapped to the side to look at him. "You wouldn't hold out on me surely?"

Andy leaned close and tugged her closer, knowing she would no doubt be able to feel his hardness against her stomach. Touching his lips against Miranda's gently, he was unsurprised when she climbed onto his lap and deepened their contact, kissing him as if her life depended on it until they struggled to catch their breath.

"Wow." Andy breathed. His hands stroking down to cup Miranda's ass. He realised they had missed quite a bit of the movie while making out and smirked.

Miranda took the TV remote and switched it off. "Bed?" She demanded hoarsely.

"We still can't..." Andy reminded her.

"I know, my darling." Miranda interrupted as she sat back on her heels. "But there are other things we can do."

"Oh!" As Miranda stood and stretched, her eyes landed on the tent in his shorts and her lips twitched. He shifted uncomfortably and Miranda held her hand out to him. He grasped it and was tugged to his feet.

"I suppose it is only right we deal with that impressive erection." Miranda teased, her hand trailing down his bare chest to the waist of his shorts.

He gulped audibly. "Or we could just cuddle and try to sleep," Andy stated. "It'll go away if I think of something hideous."
"Sleep is the last thing on my mind, my darling. It has been a long two weeks and your lack of presence has been an inconvenience to myself and the Bobbsey's." Miranda bit her lip as her hands snaked under his waistband. "And I thought we could take this opportunity to try something new."

"Oh, like what?" Andy was curious. They had tried a few different positions, and the foreplay between them was out of this world.

"You'll see. Come along." Miranda tugged impatiently in his hand and he followed her willingly.

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Miranda lay silently face-down on the bed wondering how it had come to this. Andrei had insisted before they did anything he wanted her relaxed. With her face gently pressed into the pillows, the only light in the room was cast by a small lamp in the corner.

She adored this room. It was, in the day time hours, suffused with natural light and its walls, where the brick wasn't exposed, were a warm terracotta colour that showed her how Andrei's taste had been influenced by the American Southwest and Spanish styles that would have been prevalent in parts of California.

She took a deep breath and her body tingled in anticipation of the massage Andrei had offered up so willingly. The fact that she was completely nude was inconsequential with her beautiful Andrei. She knew he adored every inch of her and made his pleasure known in all ways when he touched her so lovingly.

She caught the sound of Andrei's bare feet on the wooden floorboards and caught the scent of his cologne and sweet almond oil. Almost immediately he straddled her ass and his hands were on her shoulders. She could feel the oil coating the skin where he touched and moaned.

Andrei's hands pressed against her firmly as they stroked soothingly and his thumbs pushed against the tension knots making her hiss and moan in turn. It was a pleasurable pain, leaving her relieved. She could feel his strength yet also understood he was restraining himself, not wishing to cause her undue pain. In a way, it made her love him even more.

"How are you feeling?" Andrei asked. "Are you enjoying this?" His deep voice was always so soothing but the fact he needed reassurance surprised her.

"You are exceptional. I may have to fire my usual masseuse." Miranda moaned in pleasure at his touch.

She wanted his talented hands elsewhere, there was simply no denying it and going off the erection digging into her ass, he needed more too.

"If I'd known how receptive you'd be, I wouldn't have held off so long to offer my services." She heard the smile in Andrei's words. "You know, I wish I had inherited some of my grandfather's talent for sculpting. You would have become my muse and I would have moulded your likeness in clay so the world could forever marvel in your beauty as I do."

Tears sprang into her eyes at the beautiful words. "Flatterer." She accused lightly.

Andrei's hands stroked further down and he adjusted himself accordingly. His touch was firm yet tender. With his fingertips pressing on the upward sweep before using his open palms to slide down in the opposite direction.

Andrei eventually lifted his hands off her and slid down to lie beside her and turned her on her side
to face him. "Do you need a foot rub?"

"No, this has been an unexpected pleasure, my darling. Thank you." She smiled softly at him. "I am thinking of doing something different once I'm CEO. Taking more time for our family is a priority but perhaps also something for myself, an art or cooking class or perhaps horseback riding."

"I could teach you how to build or refinish furniture, or maybe some martial arts if you were interested in doing something together." The hope in Andrei's eyes, made her realise she might actually like that.

It was surprising as it wasn't something that had occurred in her previous marriages. "I like the idea of refinishing things very much, the art of giving items a new lease of life. Thank you for the suggestions and the offer to teach me."

Andrei swept her hair back from her face. "I would understand if you wanted to just take time for you. You've been so busy for years and..."

"Do not make me karate-chop you." Miranda teased. "My martial arts skills will be phenomenal." Andrei's laughter was like music to her ears and unable to resist she pulled him close and kissed him hungrily. "Enough talking..." She husked against his lips.

Miranda wanted Andrei's fingers inside her or rubbing her clit. She needed them caressing her breasts and teasing her nipples. Or holding her tight as he filled her and eventually unloaded his cum inside her.

However much she wanted him though, Miranda knew he would obey the doctor's words in regards to penetrative sex, regardless of how ridiculous she thought it. She wanted him, she felt ready for more. Goddamnit, she was fine now.

Andrei's hands wound in her hair as they kisses and rubbed against her scalp unhurriedly. Her mind buzzed pleasantly as he lulled her further into a relaxed state and yet keeping her desire rising.

She sighed against Andrei's lips and he pulled away slightly. "You sure you're okay?"

His fingers left her hair and stroked along her cheeks, nose, eyelids and lips. It was an intimate caress, and somewhat thrilling. "I'm content," Miranda admitted. "Being here, with you, after everything..." She couldn't continue. She'd been so close to throwing this away, to losing Andrei. The thought was intolerable.

They had spoken at length about their hopes and fears while they walked through Hyde Park on the second day of the three blissful days she had spent with him in London.

Opening her eyes, Miranda caught Andrei's gaze and saw the sadness in his expressive orbs. She had hurt him beyond measure and yet he had graciously accepted her apologies for her behaviour after their return from the Hamptons. "I love you, Andrei." She told him. Miranda hoped he would see the truth of her words.

"I know," Andrei smirked and pulled back, his hands reaching down pulling his shorts free. "Now, since you are naked, it's only fair that I am too. I promise to behave."

"Do not make promises I do not intend to let you keep." Miranda moved close again and there was no escape unless he wished to end up on the floor. "Now I have you where I want you." She told him, flashing him a devilish grin. "What are you going to do about it?"
Now completely nude, and with Miranda relaxed, Andy returned his attention to Miranda's body. Lying on their sides, his hands passed between her breasts and down to her stomach moving his hands in circles on either side of her belly button, careful not to put pressure on where the pink scar was. He could feel the little hairs on her body rising to meet his touch as her fingers trailed over her hips.

Andy wanted nothing more than to wrap Miranda up in the safety of his arms so she would never be scared and never leave him.

"My heart's pounding." Miranda panted, arching into his gentle caress. His palm settled on her left breast and felt her heart beating hard inside her chest. Making to pull it away, Miranda grabbed Andy's hand and squeezed his fingers so it encased her breast fully. His hand massaged, grazing against her nipple. Miranda moaned through clenched teeth.

He released her breast and devoted his attention to the other, offering his gentle massage. Miranda whimpered as his fingertips caressed her nipples, playing with them, teasing them slowly, his face holding a confident smile. He loved how the woman reacted to his touch. When his hands left Miranda's breasts, Andy chuckled at her whimper of displeasure. Easing the woman onto her back he placed a hand on each thigh and guided her legs apart and knelt between them.

Miranda glanced down at him through hooded eyes, her breathing rapid. Her eyes focused on his erect cock.

Andy ed he could be sheathed inside her. He rested one hand on each thigh and massaged her thighs and running his hands upwards to her crotch. His thumbs landed against her outer lips and he used them to stroke up and down her folds. "You're so wet," He marvelled.

"And you're hard," Miranda stated. "Let me fix that for you?"

"What did you have in mind?" Andy asked, his breath heavy as his thumbs continued to sweep through the pooling wetness at the apex of Miranda's thighs. His thumb rubbed her clit in circles building up speed, hopefully driving her wild.

"You'll see." Miranda gasped. "I need you inside me."

"No, not yet." Andy kept rubbing. "Six weeks." He reminded her as she squirmed under his touch. "After Paris."

Miranda groaned and raised her hips, offering herself up to his touch. His long fingers stroked over her straining clit, stimulating the bundle of nerves. As he felt her body tensing in preparation to climax, he moved his hands against her hips, trapping her beneath him. He bent and his lips enveloped her clit, slowly sucking it. Not finding the gentle contact to be enough, his hands moved again, grabbing Miranda's ass and pulling her up against his lips. She was soon ready to explode and her orgasm hit quickly. Miranda moaned his name loudly through her heavy breathing and grabbed the sheets beneath her with both hands as the pleasure from his touch coursed through her, shown by her body tightening as it as she shook beneath him until the waves of her orgasm subsided and he moved his mouth from her.

"Oh, my God," Miranda husked, collapsing back onto the mattress. "I was meant to..." She gasped. "...Get up here."

Andy made his way up between her legs and grinned at her. "You were saying?" He teased lightly.
Miranda flipped them and settled against him, smiling sweetly at him before moving down, her breasts stroking against his warm, bare skin. Andy spent several minutes watching Miranda lovingly licking and sucking the skin of his chest and abdomen. As she caressed him with her tongue, her hand moved gently down to his cock and starting to stroke slowly.

Leaning up on his elbows, Andy watched Miranda as she pumped his cock steadily and wrapped her lips around the head. He groaned as he felt her tongue swirling around the tip. Andy knew he wouldn't last long if Miranda kept that up, but and wanted to make the most of it. He pulled Miranda free with a groan. "It's too much." He admitted. Miranda moved up slightly, her lips trailing over his pelvis and taut stomach until his cock sat between her breasts, using her hands, she pushed them together to wrap around his shaft.

Andy was so ridiculously turned on. He adored Miranda's breasts and couldn't stop himself from thrusting his hips so he slid between them. If he thought he'd been close to coming before, having Miranda let him do this somehow made him ready to explode instantly. Each time that the head of his cock burst out of the top of her breasts, Miranda dipped her head to lick it, and to take it into her mouth entirely. Andy's cock hardened even more and he gave Miranda a breathy warning. "I'm going to cum."

Miranda let go of her breasts and started caressing him with her hand again, her grip firm as she pumped his shaft quickly. After a few seconds of this, Andy climaxed hard, discharging himself across Miranda's breasts. Miranda bent and swirled her tongue around the head once again as her lips enclosed around him, humming as the final streams of cum exited from him with a groan.

All Andy could do was smile as he came down from his orgasm. He glanced at where Miranda was lying against his stomach, and his hand laced into her hair and scratched her scalp. Entwined like that, they soon fell asleep.

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Chapter End Notes

This wasn't meant to finish on such a smuty high, but I wanted to post something before I celebrate my newfound Aussie citizenship and my birthday, tomorrow (31st) I hope you enjoy. Feel free to let me know what you think.
Chapter 20

Chapter Notes

Yay, another fic idea from the lovely celesse201, who for whatever reason, holds the belief I can bring her ideas to life. This is my first major AU. Not giving too much away. Miranda is Miranda but I am making her and the twins slightly younger for the sake of the fic. Andy is not the Andy you expect (Hence the AU)

I do not own the main characters related to The Devil Wears Prada. They are owned by the original author and 20th Century Fox. Some characters will be my own.

The twins had been particularly thrilled to see him back in New York upon their return to the townhouse from their sleepover, and talking quietly as he put them to bed on that first night Caroline admitted she had believed he wouldn't come home to them.

The fact he stayed at the townhouse that first week, helping them pack up items they wanted to take to the apartment, seemed to soothe all three of the Priestley's. He spent hours lugging boxes, suitcases of clothes and toys across town in his truck in preparation for them to move in with him.

Miranda was busier than ever, and on multiple evenings she'd attempted to apologise about returning late only for him to kiss her into silence. He understood her new focus, her need to ensure Emily was ready to hit the ground running as Editor-in-Chief, although he knew the Brit would be a force of nature in her own right.

He reassured Miranda the best he could each night and when they woke up wrapped around each other the following morning. He was often the first out of bed and brought her the rich, dark roast coffee she loved to drink before settling beside her again to enjoy the peaceful moments before their day truly began. It was in these moments Miranda opened up and he learned more about the woman behind the Queen of Fashion.

The nights Miranda spent working late, Andy used wisely. He lined up more work for the run-up towards Christmas and beyond and was busy creating designs for prospective clients. He spent evenings in Miranda's study, talking to the guys in London and arguing with the interior designer to ensure everything went as smoothly as possible. It was his name that would be affected if everything did not go as planned.

Left frustrated by the blatant disregard he was being shown by the team handling the interior design, he placed another call and told the architect he'd been working with that if he couldn't reign his staff in he would send a few of his people to complete the work instead. He stated he would expect them to be paid accordingly. Gerald baulked and agreed to have a word with his designer.

After the call ended, he looked up to see Miranda leaning against the door, smirking at him. Having caught his attention, she stalked forward and sat on his lap. Pulling her close, he inhaled her signature scent and found it soothing.

"You realise, seeing you so firm and commanding, is extraordinarily arousing," Miranda whispered as she nuzzled at his jaw. "Bed?" She queried.
Oh yes, their bed was just the place for them. He carried Miranda through the house, flicking lights off as he went. This would be their last night at the townhouse and he intended to use it to love this woman.

The second week passed quickly with the Priestley's starting the new chapter in their lives as they settled into life at the apartment. Cara still came daily to help with the twins, ensuring they got to school on time and continued to do some housekeeping, but her duties were far lighter and she found Andy home more often than not when she returned from Dalton in the afternoons with dinner already started.

On the third day, Andy caught Cara watching his interactions with the twins and simply offered her a playful wink He was amused when she blushed.

"You're the dad they should have had," Cara told him as he stepped into the kitchen to grab their afternoon snack.

"I wish they were truly mine," Andy admitted.

"Family isn't always biology, Andy. The twins chose you, all those years ago, and they will be better off for having you in their lives." Cara reassured gently, placing a warm hand on his back. "I include Miranda in that."

He smiled happily at the woman and watched as she set a small white paper bag down on the kitchen counter before bidding him goodnight, he waited until he'd heard the elevator and peeked at the contents.

Andy found himself surprised at the small box of contraceptive pills and realised they were for Miranda. She had explained how the doctor's advised her to refrain from getting pregnant for six to twelve months to allow her body to heal and he understood how much she hated condoms. This would be a suitable solution for them both and it showed she expected her period.

He knew, no matter what, he would love the small family he was a part of, more than they could ever possibly imagine.

His cell ringing caught his attention and he frowned at the unknown number. Believing it may be work-related, Andy picked up and listened intently to the person on the other side. He was stunned by the words, but his imagination flared. "Yes, I'll be there. Nigel or Emily have my measurements. See you soon."

He couldn't help but grin at the new development and Andy's smile widened as he heard the elevator land and Miranda's heels on the floor. He disconnected his cell as he moved to greet her with a soft kiss and the promise of a delicious dinner for the four of them.

He would cherish the last few days they had together before they parted ways, albeit temporarily.

Miranda sat at the Versace show, and to say she was displeased was an understatement. It had been an intolerably long week that had seen her struggling to maintain contact with Andrei and her Bobbsey's, and now Emily, Serena and Nigel were missing, apparently stuck in traffic.

She couldn't understand it, they had all left at a similar time, with Jocelyn and Lucia travelling with her.

Gesturing to Jocelyn to sit beside her, the blonde gaped and rushed over, easing her way into the
seat next to her. "Since everyone else has failed to arrive, I will need you to take notes." Miranda issued the demand airily as the lights flashed and the music started.

Frankly, she could not wait to get home and have the three people she loved the most back with her.

An electric guitar solo cut through the air showing that Donatella's choice of music was none other than Queen.

"I want to break free
I want to break free
I want to break free from your lies
You're so self-satisfied I don't need you

I've got to break free
God knows,
God knows I want to break free"

The models moved down the catwalk and Miranda viewed the designs critically. She caught the silhouette of a man in the background and smiled softly. Donatella had unique flights of whimsy but would have the critics falling at her feet.

"I've fallen in love
I've fallen in love for the first time
And this time I know it's for real

I've fallen in love, yeah
God knows,
God knows I've fallen in love."

She realised the shadowed man was singing the song, rather well. She just wished she could see him. She wondered idly why he was shrouded in shadows.

"It's strange but it's true, yeah
I can't get over the way you love me like you do
But I have to be sure
When I walk out that door
Oh, how I want to be free, baby

Oh, how I want to be free
Oh, how I want to break free."

Miranda glanced around and saw people's heads nodding along to the music as they watched the show.

Another guitar solo rent through the air and Miranda was stunned to recognise the three missing Runway acolytes strutting down the catwalk, dressed head to foot in next season's Versace. The sight generated loud whoops of delight and cheers from the audience as they were recognised.

Nigel looked exceedingly dapper in a black Barocco lapel blazer and pants, but the animal print shirt was too much. While both Serena and Nigel broadcast wide smiles, clearly pleased with themselves, Emily looked serious as if daring the fashion world to say their worst,
When the guitar solo ended a spotlight opened up on the shadowed silhouette and her mouth dropped even further at the most unexpected sight.

Andrei walked down the runway as if he had been born to it. His face was serious as cameras flashed and people murmured about the flawless design of the Versace Jaguar Jacquard tuxedo and vest with black trousers he wore. His shirt was unfastened and there was a bow-tie draped elegantly around his neck rather than tied. She found herself smirking, knowing Donatella would have done this after they had laughed good-naturedly together about how Andrei couldn't tie one to save his life.

There was so much clapping by the time he reached the end of the catwalk and threw the audience a wink while offering one of his signature bright smiles. So it was surprising when he schooled his features as his eyes landed on her and offered her a smouldering look that hit straight at the apex of her thighs causing her to clench them together.

Andrei licked his lips as if knowing how her body had reacted before he turned and stalked gracefully back up the runway and took up singing again.

"But life still goes on
I can't get used to living without, living without
Living without you by my side

I don't want to live alone, hey
God knows,
got to make it on my own

So baby can't you see
I've got to break free

I've got to break free
I want to break free, yeah
I want, I want, I want, I want to break free"

The models continued to follow Andrei's lead as a new Queen song started and the opening strains of It's A Kind Of Magic radiated through the speakers.

She was surprised she hadn't recognised Andrei's voice. She had heard him singing along to his favourite music, including Queen, quite often over the past few months. She fiddled impatiently, wishing the show was over so she could find out what everyone thought they were playing at. As if reading her thoughts, the lyrics taunted her.

"The waiting seems eternity
The day will dawn of sanity
It's a kind of magic
(It's a kind of magic)
There can be only one."

The show blessedly came to an end with Andrei leading Donatella down the catwalk.

Miranda realised she had paid no attention to the show after seeing Andrei in the shimmering spotlight.

Donatella spoke of her wish to celebrate the career of one of her dearest friends, with designs made
especially for those closest to her. She gestured for Miranda who stood almost dumbly as she was applauded by the crowd as the reigning Queen of Fashion. Donatella clapped for her and wished her the very best for the future, safe in the knowledge Runway was in good hands.

Shaking her head and offering a small smile, Miranda sat back down and decided to wait for the exodus before moving backstage to find her Andrei.

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Andy knew Miranda would want answers but he had other plans. Told to leave, still wearing the beautiful Tux, Donatella had a car waiting to take him to the Hôtel Plaza Athénée. Nigel had organised his luggage to be delivered to Miranda's suite after his arrival and the concierge knew to expect him.

Moving quickly through the hotel, Andy swiped the key card that would take him up to the suite of rooms allocated to Miranda every year.

Moving through the rooms that, even after all the years that had passed, still held an Art deco glamour, he stalled at the door of the balcony and gazed at the Eiffel Tower in the distance.

Grinning to himself, he stripped free of the specially made Tuxedo until he was wearing nothing but his boxers. He hung the tuxedo up before making his way outside and pulling his boxers down his long legs only to kick them aside.

Sitting on one of the low chairs on the private balcony, he put his feet on the table and sat back, closing his eyes.

He must have sat like that, half dozing, with the cold Parisian wind caressing his skin, for thirty minutes before he heard the door open. When Andy eventually opened his eyes, he found Miranda stood almost uncertainly in front of him. Her eyes devoured him and he found his body reacting to her gaze.

Miranda moved forward quickly and her lips caught him in a punishing kiss. Demanding and fierce, his breath caught at the contact and his hands pulled at her clothes, needing to place his hands on her warm, bare skin.

Finally tearing the blazer Miranda wore down her arms, trapping them against her, Andy pulled her down to straddle his thighs as his lips and tongue set to work against the sensitive skin of her neck and ear, biting and sucking at the willing flesh as she moaned breathlessly.

A loud moan tore from Miranda's throat, firing his desire further. Finally pulling her arms free, her blazer fell to the ground behind them and her fingers made quick work of the buttons of her blouse and her bra while his worked at the zip of the pencil skirt she wore.

Unable to pull the skirt away, Andy pushed it up over her thighs and let his fingers trail over the lace tops of the thigh-high stockings she wore. He loved the way Miranda dressed, knowing she wore lingerie to give herself a confidence boost, having explained how she only felt truly beautiful when her underwear was.

They had not uttered a word in greeting, their need for each other was simply too all-encompassing. Breaching the thin material of Miranda's thong, his swirled his fingers through the pooling wetness causing her to gasp.

He was pressed so close against Miranda and could feel the heat of her against him. Andy's hips thrust incessantly as he finally entered Miranda with two fingers and she clenched around them
with a loud wail of his name and shuddered.

Miranda's orgasm was swift, but Andy was far from finished with her. Lifting her easily as he stood, she kicked her pump off and they fell from her feet as he carried her swiftly inside the suite. He laid her on the wide sofa ready to take her then and there when a noise broke his focus.

Turning, Andy heard Miranda giggle as she rose and pressed herself against his back and looking towards the door he found Nigel gaping at him, a bright flush rising over his cheeks as he mopped his forehead with his handkerchief.

Nigel had drawn a short straw and been sent up to the suite on some errand and finding them in such a predicament had thrown him.

Andy watched as Nigel's eyes lowered and he couldn't help but grin as they landed on his erect penis and widened comically. "Nige, my eyes are up here." He told his old friend lightly, doing his best to hide his laughter. He wasn't ashamed of his body, especially with how hard he had worked to get it the way it was and the pain he had gone through over the years. It was nice to know that it was appreciated.

Miranda chuckled again and he could feel her pulling her skirt down from behind him.

The movement caught Nigel's attention and he looked over Andy's shoulder. "Um...quite... Uh..." He mopped at his forehead again and tore his eyes away. "I'm sorry to interrupt, but there are a few reporters who would like a word, Miranda, about your thoughts on Andy being shown as the primary model at the Versace show."

"Advise them they will hear my thoughts in the upcoming issue of Runway, where Andrei is to be our cover model in his tuxedo," Miranda stated.

"What? Andy found himself stunned.

Miranda's arms wrapped around his waist and her fingers tugged idly at the small trail of pubic hair below his belly button. His eyes fell closed and his breath caught. His hands finally came to cover himself as he reacted to her teasing touch.

"That's all, Nigel," Miranda stated. "Oh, and ensure I am not disturbed any further today. It seems I have my hands full."

The laughter in her dismissal was clear and Nigel turned quickly and trotted to the door. He threw a smile over his shoulder at them as he moved through it, letting it snick shut behind him.

Andy stood there, simply marvelling in the feel of Miranda's breasts warm against his back and her hands against his lower stomach. Spinning in her arms, he looked down and saw the mischief lighting up her eyes. She eventually sniggered before letting out a loud tinkling laugh.

Shaking his head, Andy couldn't stop the answering laughter at the situation and was glad they could laugh together over this. The last thing he ever wanted was for Miranda to be embarrassed.

Leaning in, he caught her lips in a gentle kiss. "Surprise." He whispered against them with a small smile.

"Oh yes, and what a surprise it was. I know how I said I enjoyed your surprise arrivals, but I never expected this. Now, I shall have answers for today's madness, my darling, but first..." Miranda continued to offer teasing kisses and stepping backwards, pulled him towards the large bedroom. "...first, I have other demands that need to be fulfilled immediately."
They finally reached the bed and Miranda fell upon it easily, lifting her ass to allow Andy to pull her skirt and panties away from her body. She settled back against the pillow and crooked her finger at him invitingly.

Without hesitation, Andy crawled up between her parted, stocking-clad thighs and smiled down at her happily. "Immediately?" He queried, teasing her again with the back of his hand.

Miranda reached for him and tugged him down, moaning as their bare skin made contact. "Oh, yes." She whispered in his ear.

Andrei made promises before they left New York that on the first night they were back together he would spend the night making love to her. He vowed that she would have multiple orgasms, as many as she could handle, if not more. He'd smiled as he said it and his tone was teasing.

She had found herself blushing at the time, but the night of passionate love he had promised had arrived and he had been true to his word.

Miranda had showered after their initial gentle lovemaking, with Andrei ensuring she remained comfortable and suffered no pain, and upon leaving the bathroom paraded around in a towel to entice and tease Andrei before dropping the towel and making to shrug on her robe.

She'd not got very far, when unable to feign indifference, Andrei launched himself out of bed and pulled her against him. He was not hard, but the way he kissed her, humming against the taste of her skin and breathing in the scent of her usual body wash, made her feel like the most beautiful woman on the planet.

Andrei had taken her again, ensuring she climaxed twice before they settled against each other.

And now, fully satisfied, for at least the moment, he was reading the menu for room service and offering up options to her.

Positioning the length of her body against Andrei's, she slowly stroked her leg along his, enjoying the sensation of the fine hairs covering his warm skin. She loved the fact he was not overly hairy. He continued to concentrate on the menu and although Miranda was hungry, it was not for food. Her need for her beautiful Andrei had left her insatiable. Leaning up on her elbow, she took the menu from his hands and gave him, what she hoped was a heart-stopping kiss. He groaned into her mouth and broke free, his eyes bright and his breathing rapid.

Tracing her fingers against his jaw, she leaned in until her mouth was on his. Her kiss was hot and demanding and he soon had his tongue in her mouth, teasing her own. All thought of dinner were erased as the relentless pressure of his mouth intoxicated her. She wanted him more than anything, for his cock to be buried deep inside her, pushing her towards another orgasm.

Andrei pulled her tight against him his body, wrapping his arms around her and she could feel his cock growing hard against her. Pushing him onto his back, Miranda sat astride him and leaned down to take charge, her hand wrapping around his cock, stroking him as she kissed him with increasing passion, pushing her pussy into his growing erection. Her desire rose and she felt desperate. Unable to wait, she scooted down the bed, still stroking him firmly and licked her lips. Bending, Miranda took the tip of his penis in her mouth, licking and sucking the head.

"Fuck!." The groan of pleasure after the hissed expletive had Miranda pulling her mouth away and grinning up at him.
She grabbed hold of Andrei's thighs ready to take him into her mouth again, but he had other ideas. He positioned Miranda so she could sink on him, taking him deep into her willing body. Holding her breath, she sank on him, feeling full as her ass touched his thighs. She couldn't stop her moan. She needed him, to feel him moving inside her.

Moving sensuously up and down his length, holding onto his biceps for support, she could feel her orgasm building quickly but she wanted him to come with her. Miranda's moaned as she moved. They were both growing louder as they moved towards their orgasms. She was so sensitive and the deep ache of pleasure was growing unbearable.

Andrei thrust up, not missing a beat, his hips pushing purposefully as if sensing her need. Moving her hands down, their fingers interlocked while Miranda moved faster, still moaning loudly and telling him she wanted him to come with her. The groans coming from Andrei told her he was close, but he was holding back, probably waiting for her to climax before unloading into her again. As the waves crashed over her, she felt him explode inside her, pumping his cock until he whimpered and softened and she collapsed on top of him.

Andrei simply held her, his arms offering comfort as their breathing evened out and they settled into a light slumber, still entangled.

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Andy loved having Miranda lead him through the throngs of people, as she expertly handled her responsibilities at Editor of Runway. She gave air kisses where necessary and spoke her thoughts on the designs she had seen that week, all without letting go of his hand.

People led him into a conversation and there were much laughter and joy expressed over his presence in the fashion world after so long away. Many expressed admiration over him and Miranda and wished them well for the future. Some showed their hope, upon spotting the Tiffany ring on Miranda's finger, to be able to see them married when the time came.

Donatella, Emily, Nigel and Serena were also surrounded by her throng of people, who were expressing their continued amazement over the show that afternoon. It had become the highlight of Fashion Week so far.

Andy had the feeling that people were eyeing him curiously, and it made him a little uncomfortable. Excusing himself quietly, he moved to the bar and leaned in to catch the bartenders' attention. He caught a snippet of conversation between two rail-thin women.

"...as demanding in bed as out of it. I swear, I needed a cigarette afterwards and I wasn't even privy to the act." One of the women said.

The other let out a peal of loud laughter before speaking. "She's a lucky woman. You saw him on that catwalk today. He put the rest of the men to shame and his singing..."

The voices lowered and Andy wished he could hear what was being said. A shuffling beside him caught his attention and he glanced up to see James Holt smirking at him.

James had always been fairly pleasant to him during his time as Miranda's assistant but there was something in his eyes that made him wary. He nodded once to the man in greeting and turned to lean on the bar and watched Miranda do her thing.

"I thought you would have gotten over her by now." James's voice held a note of disdain and it was clear he was not quite sober. "She's nothing special."
Andy glanced at the man and his jaw clenched. "Rumour has it she saved your ass when JHI folded, which incidentally saved your career." Andy shrugged. "I'd say that makes Miranda pretty special." He was furious at the man's words but kept his cool.

"She has too much power and she wields it as she wishes. But the truth is..." James licked his lips. ".the truth is, if she hadn't foisted Jacqueline on me, she wouldn't have needed to save my ass," James muttered bitterly. "We are all beholden to her in some way, for the 'little' favours she performs. Even you, Andy, although the favours she bestows upon you are quite different, if the noises coming from her suite from the open balcony were anything to go by."

Andy felt the blush rising over his neck. "I do not like what you are insinuating, James."

"She'll tire of you once she's had her fill," James stated. "But like a succubus, she will have drained you of all your strength, your creativity and your hope." He sighed dramatically. "Like she has done to me."

Andy couldn't stop the bark of laughter. "So, what you are saying is that Miranda has somehow sapped the creativity from you?" His laughter continued. "Fuck off. You haven't had a single original idea since JHI was announced. You trot the same tired old shit out every season and wonder why you fail to succeed."

James huffed but couldn't come up with a suitable response. "I...She...I..."

"Look at those around you and you will see people with creative flair." He gestured to Donatella, who was holding court happily. "Donatella, for example. She remains true to the roots of the House of Versace, but she puts a unique spin on every collection and she isn't scared to think outside of the box." He gestured to Riccardo Tisci, who was talking quietly to Miranda. "And Riccardo, with his move from Givenchy to the Burberry, only to rebrand. Burberry has been steeped in a 150-year tradition and yet times are changing, and you have to move with them or you flounder." He glanced at the man and saw his shoulders slumped. "It is clear which path you have chosen, James and you can try to blame Miranda for that but you made your own choices, so deal with it."

Turning back towards the bar, he grabbed the drinks he had ordered and moved away from the designer, only to have him call out. "You know we once slept together, right?"

Andy felt a wave of possessiveness sweep through him, and his grip on the drinks tightened. Spinning on his heel and got into James's face. He smirked when the man stepped back quickly and hit the bar. "I don't give a fuck who she may have once slept with because it's me she sleeps with now. If she used you to scratch an itch, good for her. But I shall give you one warning, if you ever say one word against that woman, utter one ungentlemanly comment about your time together, I will break your jaw and make you rethink the words you spew." He watched as James swallowed hard. "Now, I suggest you go back to the hotel and sober up. That's all."

Andy spun back around and marched back towards Miranda, clutching their drinks. It was one of those rare moments she was not deep in conversation with some sycophant and he was relieved.

As he arrived back at her side, she gazed at him warily. "What did James want?"

"Oh, you know, to provide a friendly warning for me to run from New York Fashion's, Queen Succubus before she drains me dry," Andy growled nodding his head in her direction. He could feel his anger growing. "That fucking asshole is lucky I didn't smack him in the mouth."

Miranda's eyes held concern as she took her drink and sipped it. "He told you..."
"That you slept together, yes." Andy downed his drink quickly and winced as the scotch burned its way down his throat. "I told him I didn't care." He looked at Miranda and caught her eyes. His voice lowered. "I wouldn't care if you had fucked your way through the entire Garment district, as long as I know it's me you come home to now."

Miranda's eyes held surprise and a blush rose across her cheeks. "I had a little too much of his punch and..."

"You don't need to explain, Miranda," Andy reassured. "I assume it was before me?"

Miranda nodded quickly. "Last Christmas." She admitted.

"We shall have to label those times, 'Before Andy'." He gave her a lopsided grin. "But I should warn you there will never be a time 'After Andy'." His tone was firm.

"Acceptable." Miranda offered him a small, shy smile. "Are you ready to leave? We've been here a sufficient length of time." She blushed further. "I shall be glad to return home tomorrow." She admitted. "Back to our apartment and the Bobbsey's."

"That will be good." He held his hand out for her. "Come, we'll bid goodbye to Donatella, and then we'll head on out."

"Thank you, Andrei." Miranda's whisper could barely be heard over the music and chatter as she led them to say their goodbyes.

Returning to the hotel, Miranda was wary that she would face Andrei's displeasure over her past behaviour. She had sensed his jealousy, briefly, before he dampened it down.

The night with James Holt had been a mix of loneliness and far too much punch, and it had been a moment she regretted instantaneously. It was not full-blown sexual intercourse, but they had shared brief kisses that did nothing for her and he had fondled her breasts quite roughly before they had both passed out. He had sworn he would not breathe a word about it, and yet faced with Andrei, it was something he seemingly couldn't hold back from providing him with a half-truth.

As they entered the suite, Miranda knew she had to be honest with Andrei. She understood he now had a certain impression of her. Moving to the mini-bar, she poured herself a scotch and gulped it down quickly before pouring another, she kept her back to Andrei, in the hope she would have time to formulate an explanation.

She felt Andrei press against her back and sighed. "I owe you an explanation," Miranda muttered.

"Nope. As I said, it was before Andy. Whatever happened, happened. I just don't know why he felt the need to slap me with it tonight." Andrei leaned around her and taking a glass, poured himself a scotch. "No, actually I do know. He's pissed off because his collection was a flop, while Donatella's was a success. He took his professional jealousy out on the one person he, in his drunken mind, believed was an easy target. He learned otherwise when I said I'd break his jaw."

"You threatened him." Miranda was shocked.

"Only after he disrespected you," Andrei whispered. "He had no right to mention such personal things."

"I did fall asleep with him, but other than him sloppily kissing me and playing with my breasts,
nothing happened. "Miranda could feel her face flaming. "He ejaculated without me even touching him."

Andrei couldn't stop his laughter from bubbling up and she felt his whole body shaking where he stood behind her. "He...Oh, fuck! He..."

"Yes, yes, laugh it up." Miranda was embarrassed.

Andrei was almost wheezing, from his explosion of riotous laughter. "...He...He..." Miranda turned and saw his eyes were shining with tears. "...Oh, God. He felt you up like a horny schoolboy and jizzed his pants. A one-second stand."

Andrei's laughter continued and Miranda couldn't help but chuckle herself. It was absurd when you put it like that. James Holt had climaxed without any encouragement, without her even having gotten into his pants.

Shaking her head, her arms wrapped around Andrei's neck. "It was not so funny at the time," Miranda stated, her hands moving against the base of his skull.

"Oh, boy. You realise I'm not going to ever be able to look him in the eye without thinking of this, right?" Andrei turned serious suddenly. "I shouldn't make fun of him. I mean, I understand how difficult these things can be." He grinned. "But what a jizztake. A total spurtprise." His laughter started in earnest again.

"Are you quite finished?" Miranda asked.

"If I must." Andrei's smile was wide.

"I seem to remember a night, not too long ago, when you came without much assistance." Miranda reminded him.

"Oh, but I had my tongue buried in your glorious honey-pot," Andrei smirked down at her. "You wanna go to bed and see if we can make it happen again?"

"Really?" Miranda queried, arching an eyebrow. "I believe I forbade you from using that term to describe my vagina."

"Aww, but it's still so utterly fitting," Andrei grinned goofily and started ticking off items on his fingers. "It's sweet, tastes good, brings me joy and gives me the greatest high."

Rolling her eyes, Miranda spoke. "You are ridiculous, my darling. Now are you going to stand there listing my vagina's many attributes, or will you show me your appreciation?" Her hand twined in Andrei's and as she stepped back, she tugged him to follow her, a small smile playing on her lips.

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Their return to New York had them settling beside each other in the plane and watching movies and luckily the time passed quickly enough.

Once they were back at the apartment, Miranda took the time to go through, not only her luggage but his too, while he prepared lunch, knowing the twins would be home soon. As Andy concentrated on making soup and baking fresh rolls, he smiled to hear the elevator.

They both moved into the living room and smiled happily as the twins barrelled into the room,
squealing in delight to find them both there.

As Cassidy launched herself at Andy, Caroline was pulled into a hug off Miranda. They switched places as James entered the apartment with the puppy and glanced around curiously.

Andy offered a warm smile as he extracted himself from Caroline and took three steps to the man and held his hand out to him. James shook it and offered him a small smile as Andy fell to his knees and let the puppy jump all over him, her tail wagging in excitement.

After a few minutes, he stood and looked at James. "Would you like a coffee, or perhaps a beer?"

"A coffee would be good. It's pretty cold out." James followed him towards the kitchen as Nalo jumped on the sofa with Miranda and the twins.

Moving to the kitchen, Andy set up the coffee matching and grabbed three mugs. He prepared coffee efficiently before grabbing milk and some bananas and blending them for a thick shake for the twins. "Pouring two glasses and preparing Miranda's coffee. He gestured to the two other mugs. "Help yourself to cream and sugar, I'll be right back."

Andy rushed away and placed the drinks in front of where the Priestly's sat discussing their week apart. Unable to resist, he bent and placed a kiss on each of their heads. The gesture was greeted with bright smiles and Miranda raised her lips and pouted. He grinned and brushed a light kiss against her lips before moving back towards the kitchen.

Seeing James at the small table, he sat opposite and stretched out, waiting for the man to speak. When the words came, they were unexpected. "Why did you tell Cassidy and Caroline they couldn't call you daddy?" He asked.

"They have a dad," Andy stated. "I didn't want you to believe they wanted to replace you."

"Bullshit." James grinned as Andy's jaw dropped. "We've spent some time talking this last week and the twins made me see that they asked you because they want you in their lives. They've always wanted you because they trust you to do right by them." James licked his lips. "Where I don't. We are all aware of my faults, Cassidy and Caroline most of all."

"I'm not disputing that." Andy bit his lip and leaned on the table with his elbows. "I am committed to them, to be whatever they need me to be."

"And when you have children with Miranda, will you then differentiate between them?" James queried.

The words stung and Andy thumped his fist on the table making it shake. "No! I would never...no...they belong to me, regardless of blood. They are embedded in my heart."

"I read about what happened to Miranda and Cassidy and Caroline spoke of it too." James frowned. "I know you left them, and that Miranda travelled to London for you. And now you are all settling here before looking for a family home. So, tell me, why won't you let my daughters call you daddy?" James asked again.

Andy frowned. He didn't know what to tell the man. He hadn't even been able to tell Miranda when she queried his hesitancy.

"Do you know what I think?" James asked. Andy nodded dumbly. "I think you are scared."

"How...what...no, I'm not." Andy sputtered.
"I think you are scared one day, they will throw it back at you that you aren't really their father," James stated.

Andy felt as if his every fear was being thrown in his face. It was exactly what he didn't want. To love the little girls and to realise it all meant nothing. Or for Miranda to realise he wasn't what she wanted and to leave him, taking the twins with her. He wouldn't recover from the loss, he knew it.

"What you have to understand though, Andy is that all children state they hate their parents at one stage or another," James added. "I know I certainly expressed it, pretty emphatically I might add, to my mom and dad on multiple occasions as a teenager."

Andy sighed. "I never did. My parents were good, but when it came down to it, it was me that wasn't good enough, simply because I wanted a life of my choosing." He muttered looking down. "I became their greatest disappointment." He raised his eyes and knew James would see his tears. "What if I disappoint them all? What if I can't be what they need."

"Andy, you can't put your life on hold over what-ifs. Ask yourself one thing, if the world was to end tomorrow, what would you want the twins and Miranda to know above anything else?" James asked.

"That they are loved, and that they make my life brighter, simply by being a part of it." The tears streamed down his face as he admitted his deepest wish for their family.

"I wouldn't want anything else for Miranda and our daughter's, Andy. They have chosen this label for you based on their emotional connection to you and loyalty. They have a relationship with you, that they wish to be permanent. I have told the twins I will never scold them or make them feel guilty for calling you, dad or daddy. As long as they are happy." James finished his coffee. "I'll leave you to think about it, but know this, I couldn't ask for a better person to help raise my girl's."

James stood and made his way to the living room, calling for Nalo, and hugging the twin's goodbye.

When Andy eventually looked up, he found Miranda stood hesitantly in the doorway and gestured for her. As she stepped closer, he stood and pulled her into his arms, basking in the warmth and comfort they provided.

It was like that, that the twins found them a few minutes later, and wrapping themselves against them, they settled into a four-way hug.

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Chapter 21

Chapter Notes

Yay, another fic idea from the lovely celesse201, who for whatever reason, holds the belief I can bring her ideas to life. This is my first major AU. Not giving too much away. Miranda is Miranda but I am making her and the twins slightly younger for the sake of the fic. Andy is not the Andy you expect (Hence the AU)

I do not own the main characters related to The Devil Wears Prada. They are owned by the original author and 20th Century Fox. Some characters will be my own.

The week following Paris Fashion Week saw Andy being teased mercilessly by his staff about his impromptu foray on the catwalks as a Versace model. Every so often someone would shout strike a pose, and everyone would down their tools and do one of the ridiculous dance moves.

Andy initially found it funny, but by the second week, it had started to wear thin. What made it worse was that Miranda was proceeding to carry out her plan to have him as the cover model for her final issue of Runway. She had booked Demarchelier to complete the shoot the following day, despite his protestations he was not a model.

Despite everything, he was happy. The twins had made themselves perfectly at home, taking delight in the dinners he prepared for them, the time spent watching TV together or with him helping them with their homework.

He and Miranda had also taken the time to have dinner, he had been her plus one to some dull publishing event and their presence had been reported on Page Six.

They made new memories together and his apartment was filled with candid photos of him with the three Priestly's from their months together. To make it a home, he had placed Cassidy and Caroline's baby pictures on the wall, professional photos that were separated by one of Miranda holding her newborns with a proud smile lighting up her face.

That fortnight after Paris brought much laughter. Even listening to the twins bicker brought its happiness. They were so wonderfully boisterous in all ways. He often found himself playing peacemaker between them, in their small differences, smoothing things over with ease.

That afternoon, saw him waiting for the twins. As the elevator landed, he heard the twins bickering again and sighed. He knew they adored each other and their bond was like nothing he had ever witnessed before, but they could not seem to help themselves.

They broke free from Cara and squealed as they ran to him and he scooped them up into his arms. He loved the way they greeted him with loud yells, talking over each other in their haste to fill him in about their day at Dalton.

After their return from Paris, and his conversation with James, he had spoken to the twins quietly and told them he would be happy for them to call him whatever they wished.

If it was Andy, Dandy, Dad or Daddy they chose, he knew it would be something they had to be
comfortable with. He understood, if it changed, it would not mean their feelings for him had changed, simply their comfort levels.

Things hadn't changed though. Most of the time they still addressed him as Dandy, although one night Caroline had come to wake him, shaking his arm as she called him daddy and cried about the monster that had woken her. He had chased the small monster away easily and had settled her back into bed, lying beside her as she eventually fell back into a peaceful slumber. When he returned to Miranda's side, she turned and kissed him, murmuring how he was truly a beautiful man.

Unable to resist spoiling his little one's, he spent a few days trawling the local animal rescue centres and had been approved to take a small pure white kitten. He couldn't wait to watch his little love's eyes light up in pleasure.

He had spent the morning preparing the apartment, buying cat litter, a litter tray, toys and a high scratching post that held a little enclosure for the kitten to sleep. He had left the kitten sleeping peacefully on the bed he shared with Miranda until he was ready to surprise the twins and Miranda, who should be home anytime.

The elevator moved down again, showing them that Miranda was home, as she had promised.

He could hear Cara moving about the kitchen, preparing dinner, something she would do a few afternoons in the week after explaining to him that she missed the chore.

Glancing up, from his place on the couch between the twins, he smiled as Miranda stalled at the sight of them cuddled together. She marched across the living room quickly, wearing a wide smile.

"Hi, sweetheart." Andy greeted. He extracted himself from the twins and stood up. "Come, sit down. I have a surprise for you."

Miranda took his place between the twins and he moved quickly towards the master suite. As he opened the door, a low meow greeted him and he glanced over his shoulder. He saw the twins were still oblivious, but Miranda's eyebrow raised although her eyes shone with pleasure.

Giving her a small grin, he moved into the bedroom and scooped the small bundle of white fur into his large hands. The kitten's eyes blazed open, and he was pierced by her bright blue eyes. The kitten rubbed her face against his palm and yawned lazily.

Holding the kitten cupped in one hand, against his heart, he moved back out to the living room and caught Cassidy and Caroline's eyes. He watched as they noticed what he was holding and their own blue-green eyes widened. It was only Miranda's steadying touch that stopped them rushing towards him.

Kneeling in front of Miranda, he placed the kitten on her lap and watched as her fingers scratched softly behind her ear. The kitten let out a loud purr and curled up happily on the Bill Blass covered thighs.

Cassidy's eyes expressed amazement as the looked at the kitten and Caroline had tears sparkling in hers. They threw themselves at him in near-perfect synchronisation and he landed on his butt laughing as he caught them easily.

Miranda simply shook her head at the antics and smiled softly. "What's her name?" She asked.

"Isolde." Andy grinned. "Meaning ice ruler."

"She's so pretty, Daddy." Cassidy chirped happily, moving back towards Miranda and the kitten.
Caroline squeezed him tighter and he felt the damp tears against his neck. "You okay, Caro?" Andy asked gently.

"I always wanted a kitty, and now we have one. Thank you, Daddy." Caroline whispered.

Andy felt a burst of joy unfurl in his chest. Somehow, them both calling him daddy now was different from the nights they woke him with their nightmares calling him the same.

Unable to stop it, he pulled back and offered Caroline one of his brightest smiles. "I love you, Caro." He stood, pulling her into his arms and sat beside Miranda with her on his lap. Turning his head, he grinned at Miranda and his breath caught at her answering smile. He bent and kissed her head, and then Caroline's. "I love you all, more than the whole world."

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Miranda woke up on her back to the sensation of her breasts being kneaded gently. Unwilling to open her eyes, she spoke quietly. "My darling, I am trying to sleep." She muttered sleepily.

Her eyes blazed open as Andrei's soft snoring caught her attention. Moving her hand, she reached out and realised he was on his side with his back to her. Glancing down, she spotted the ball of white fur, with its paws flexing against her breasts as it purred happily. Sighing, she tried to brush the kitten away only to be met with a yowl of displeasure.

The loud meow had Andrei turning on his back and muttering darkly. "Get a cat, they say, such an independent creature." His sleepy eyes opened and he scooped the kitten off her chest before sliding from the bed and padding towards the living room.

Within thirty seconds Andrei was sliding back into the bed beside her and sighing. His eyes fell closed and pulled her close to lie against his chest ready to settle back into what would hopefully be a night of uninterrupted sleep. They had a busy day ahead.

Just as they settled, the cat started at cry loudly. Miranda whimpered at the noise. "Don't get up, she needs to settle." She told Andrei.

"I can't just leave her crying. What if she wakes my little ones?" Andrei whispered.

Miranda smiled at the terms. She had loved how they called him daddy, and his happiness was clear in his beautiful smile. "Go on then, bring her back, but be warned, she will not be sleeping on my breasts every night."

"Hell no, that's my spot and I'm not sharing." Andrei's voice held a hint of laughter.

Miranda hummed as she settled back against her pillows. She caught the slight whisper of the door opening again and opened her eyes once again as little paws ran over her to settle, flexing again on her breasts. She picked the kitten up and stared into her bright blue eyes. "Listen here, Isolde, I am not here to be your cushion. I am a dog person, simply because they do not use me for their comfort, now scram." She placed the kitten on Andrei's lap as he lay beside her and turned onto her side, pulling the comforter around her shoulder.

She caught Andrei's snigger as the kitten once again pounced on her, settling on her hip in a ball. Huffing, she turned onto her back, hoping to dislodge the beast. Realising she may perhaps be fighting a losing battle when it bounded on her chest, she sighed. It nuzzled at the t-shirt she wore and purred.

"It's my t-shirt," Andrei whispered. He was currently bare-chested while she had put on one of the
old t-shirts she had claimed as her own since the first night she had stayed over. He once again
moved from the bed and rooted around in his drawer. Pulling out one of his older t-shirts, a
burgundy one displaying his Alma Mater, Harvard, he folded it and placed it at the foot of the
mattress. The kitten stepped over her until she reached the new bed and turned three times before
curling up against the well-worn material. He smiled happily and crawled back under the covers
next to her, careful not to kick the small bundle of fur by his feet.

"Tomorrow, that t-shirt is going in her bed," Miranda stated. "You will also play with her and tire
her out before we retire."

"Yes, Miranda." Andrei agreed.

Miranda heard the smile in his voice and curled up against him. "She's going to be a daddy's girl,
like our other girls." Her arm wrapped around his middle and offered him a squeeze. "Now,
hopefully, we can sleep." She muttered.

They settled in, wrapped together, their breathing deepening as they fell into a peaceful sleep. So
deeply they slept, neither felt the bed dip when Cassidy crawled beside Andy, followed by
Caroline beside Miranda.

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If Andy knew anything, it was that the music choices Patrick would provide would be exemplary.
As he navigated the halls of Runway, he could already hear the thrum of music from the space
being used for his cover shoot.

Entering the room, he found Patrick and Nigel with their heads together. Emily and Serena stood
off to the side fiddling with a small iPod docking station while Miranda was watching as a
backdrop was hung against the white wall and the lighting was rigged.

Andy carried the Versace tuxedo in a garment bag over his arm and Jocelyn rushed over to take it
from him with a shy smile. He gave her a bright smile, which widened at her blush and stuttered
greeting. He was seriously amused over the reaction. When he worked at Runway most of the
women had dismissed him entirely. Lucia took his coat and the two women rushed to hang the
items on a waiting rail.

As if sensing his presence, Miranda spun around and arched her eyebrow. Her smile was small, yet
her eyes held warmth as she looked him over and nodded once.

He was wearing a patterned Paul Smith shirt and a pair of slim-fit tailored black trousers from
Givenchy. He'd spent his morning meeting a new client, and it had been a success.

Miranda stalked over and brushed a light kiss on his cheek before brushing his hair from his face.
"You trimmed your beard?" She husked.

"I didn't think you'd want a bearded caveman gracing your cover. Sorry about my hair, I couldn't
get in at my barber's."

"Its longer than usual, but I like it. The growth suits you." Miranda whispered, teasing the slight
curls back off his forehead. "Nigel has requested for a small interview for Men's Runway,
something to do with wearing a beard with confidence, or some such nonsense." She waved her
hand airily. Calvin Klein has also made a request..." She stalled and licked her lips. "...for you to
model their newest range of underwear."

"Sweetheart, how many times do I have to say, I am not a model." Andy blushed.
"You could be," Miranda stated. "Will you allow Patrick to take some photos? You would get final say if they were to be released."

Her tone was beseeching and he couldn't resist. "Okay. But if they're hideous, then no one sees them." Andy whispered.

"Acceptable." Miranda stepped back and clapped her hands together. "Now, are you ready to begin?"

"I suppose. Where do you want me?" Andy asked.

Miranda's smirk was almost devilish. "What a question, my darling." She smiled in earnest and he couldn't help but grin back at her. "I suppose we should start with the underwear portion of things. Now strip."

"Here?" Andy squeaked the question and all eyes landed on him.

Miranda shrugged. "Nigel has already seen all there is to see, Andrei. There's simply nothing to be embarrassed about."

"Jocelyn and Lucia too?" He swallowed audibly. "Seriously?" Andy queried.

Miranda nodded and turned to them. "Out." She declared firmly. "I will call when you are required."

"Yes, Miranda," Lucia stated, pulling Jocelyn away.

Andy watched as the two women scurried from the scene quickly.

Miranda watched as Andrei stripped down to his tight black Armani boxers while Patrick unobtrusively took photos of him in various stages of undress. She smirked as Patrick's eyes landed on Nigel, his widening in surprise at the new editor's focussed gaze on her Andrei.

Nigel was flushed and he was mopping his face with the handkerchief he always carried. The way he was behaving was like he had never seen a man removing his clothes before, although once again she had to admit that Andrei had an unselfconsciousness and gracefulness that was captivating. Nigel tore his eyes away before turning and pulling his focus onto the notebook he held in his hands.

Miranda, however, couldn't tear her eyes away. It was as if she was seeing Andrei undress for the first time. She had spent hours touching every part of him, with her hands and mouth, tasting his skin and taking delight in his body.

Her eyes roamed over his broad shoulders, down over his well-defined, chest and washboard abs that tapered down into a V to slim hips. The thighs and calved showing from his tight shorts were muscled from his running, surfing and martial arts. He was in no way Hulk-like, but his body was toned and fit.

When Andrei turned around, keeping his back to those in the room and bent to remove his pants, leaving his ass bare, his back muscles were visible under his tattoo. She heard the shutter on Patrick's camera clicking away as he continued to capture photos.

Miranda had her bottom lip between her teeth. She wanted everyone out of the room so she could
take advantage of Andrei's nakedness. The music switched and Bad Company's Feel Like Making Love played. As if reading her mind, his head turned and he offered her a playful wink and a wide smile. She schooled her features into a mask of indifference.

"Superb," Patrick whispered as if to himself.

She had to agree. Her Andrei was magnificent. She gestured for Serena. "I do not believe your skills will be needed. Andrei doesn't need any additional enhancement."

Serena smiled happily. "You are right, of course." She exhaled as Andrei straightened, pulling some tight white boxers up his legs. "He is gorgeous."

"Mm, if I didn't know better I would be jealous." Miranda half-teased as her eyes fluttered over the tight-fitting white cotton covering his ass. The boxers had a pale grey band at the waist with Clavin Klein emblazoned in black block letters.

"Oh, you seriously have nothing to worry about on that score. For Andy, it has always been you, and for me, it has always been Emily." Serena told her.

Miranda was stunned by the honesty in the Brazillian's hazel eyes. Nodding her acceptance, she turned away and grabbed a hardback chair. She set it in the middle of the room and gestured for Andrei. She pushed him down into it and smirked. She stood beside Nigel, who was still staring down at the notepad. "I think we need a black backdrop." She stated.

Nigel glanced up and gasped before squeezing his eyes shut. "I think you are right. I'll run and get one." He spun on his heel and trotted from the room as if the hounds of hell were snapping at his heels.

"Is Nige okay?" Andy asked Emily softly as she brushed lint from the shoulders of his tuxedo jacket. Nigel had disappeared again after helping to rig the black backdrop and now they were taking a small break from the shoot as Patrick and Miranda viewed the photos he'd captured. Miranda was wearing a small pleased smile as she flicked through them which left him relieved. Miranda had been quite demanding when he was modelling the underwear. He'd started slouched in the hardbacked chair, and then moved to cross his legs. He'd spent time leaning against the backdrop in various poses, the last one with his arm raised above his head. And then she made a call, whispering her demands. Not fifteen minutes later there was a knock on the door and four of the Elias Clarke security personnel were in the room carrying a set of weights and leather combat bag. They hung the bag up and departed. Some shots were then done with him lifting weights and kicking at the leather bag.

"The bloody silly man has developed quite the crush on you," Emily muttered shaking her head in disbelief.

"No?" Andy was stunned. "I mean, he knows I'm straight and..."

"The heart wants what it wants, Andy." Emily interrupted him. "He knows its an impossibility, but..."

Andy was devastated. The last thing he wanted was to cause his friend any pain. "Oh shit." He breathed.

"He'll get over it. He's been so busy trying to ensure Men's Runway is a success that he hasn't had
time to breathe, nevermind date." Serena stated softly. "We hoped he and Seb would..." She hesitated. "...well, you know."

"Nige and Seb?" Andy smiled at the thought. "I had no idea."

"It was just a snog," Emily stated.

"Still..." Andy frowned. "...can't we try to get them together? I'm sure if I spoke to Mich and Amy, they'd help. Seb's one of the best people I know and I think they'd be good together."

"That's what Seb's been telling him." Serena breathed. "Nigel keeps making excuses about being busy."

"I'll talk to him," Andy whispered as Miranda stepped towards them.

"Just be gentle with him." Emily shrugged. "I've become quite fond of the man over the years."

"Me too," Andy admitted softly. Turning he smiled at Miranda. "Are we ready?"

Miranda's head tilted slightly, and she offered him an appraising look before nodding. "Yes, darling. I have to leave for a few minutes, but I trust Emily and Patrick to do what's required. I shan't be too long."

"Okay." Andy gave her an appreciative look and smirked as she blushed slightly.

Miranda spun on her heel and made her way across the room and he was unable to take his eyes off her ass as it swayed almost provocatively.

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Miranda was concerned about Nigel but did not know how to raise it with him. Moving sedately towards the closet, she tried to think of a way of broaching the subject of Andrei with him. Initially, she had believed it was something and nothing, a small appreciation for the man she loved, but his behaviour that day had shown her it was far more.

Entering the closet, she almost tripped over the man. Nigel was sat, with his back to the wall, glancing once again at the notepad in his hands.

"I'm trying to think of suitable questions to ask Andy," Nigel stated self consciously.

Miranda sat beside him and crossed one leg over the other. "I suppose it must be hard, you know him, but at the same time you do not."

Nigel glanced at her, his shock was evident. "I do not know what you mean."

Miranda found herself sighing. "Do you know what his dream is? Or what his favourite meal is? Do you know how he takes his tea?" Miranda looked at him and offered a small smile. "His dream is to build a large house or better yet, to renovate an old colonial farmhouse. His favourite meal is Chicken Alfredo with fresh Fettucine and he takes his tea with milk and no sugar."

"Why are you telling me this?" Nigel whispered entreatingly

"There was a time I didn't know those things. I did not know that his hair curled when it grew long, that he as a beard or must shave multiple times a day. I did not know how much he loved musical theatre and art. I did not realise that although he still doesn't quite understand fashion, he appreciates the role it holds in the world. I didn't know that Queen was his favourite musical artist,
followed closely by U2, or that his favourite movie is not Rocky as he claims but Death Becomes Her." Nigel's lips twitched at that admission. "I did not know he had my likeness tattooed into his skin, nor that of my daughters, although I learned of it very quickly." Miranda licked her lips. "I know he would hate that these feelings you hold for him cause you pain. At first, I thought it was nothing, but then you disappeared today. I did not tell you of the Calvin Klein request because I did not think the sight of Andrei in nothing but pants would hurt you, after all, you have seen him in all his glory."

"You speak of him so reverently." Nigel glanced at her. "After the benefit, when he left the hospital, I was there waiting for him. I hugged him for the first time in years. I have been hugged by Andy, when we first saw each other again, he was so happy to see me and he almost pulled me off my feet, but that day was the first time I initiated contact. He looked so broken, Miranda and he curled up and sobbed all the way back to the house. When we arrived, he hid away from us, and then there was this cry, like a wounded animal, a roar of pure pain and despair, and my heart broke for him and you. I was happy when you went to London for those few days, I knew you needed to work through the loss together. I helped Donatella formulate her plan to surprise you in Paris, but then..." Nigel stalled.

"But then you saw us together, or you saw him naked and protecting my modesty," Miranda stated.

"Exactly. He seemed so confident, and his unconscious beauty just fired something in my soul." Nigel admitted. "And although I keep telling myself that it is wrong, that he is my friend, I can't seem to forget the sight of him standing there, confident in his nakedness."

"I love him, Nigel. I pushed him away after we lost..." Miranda closed her eyes and took a deep breath "...he was so angry at me but he still told me he would give me a month and then he left for London." Miranda glanced to her side briefly. "Everybody assumed I was an even bigger devil after that horrendous Paris Fashion Week years ago because of Irv and then Stephen, but it was Andrei, I..." She couldn't find the words to explain. "...once I realised what I had lost, what he had offered me, so genuinely hopeful, and which I spurned, it was as if something just broke free inside me. So when he returned, I had to make it right, and I am still trying to rebuild the bridges I burned when I...what if I do it again?"

"You've had two chances, don't you think there'll be a third?" Nigel asked. "And a fourth, a fifth, a tenth even." He smiled sadly. "Andy isn't the same person I once knew, he may go off and do his thing, but he will always give you the chances you need as long as you are willing to admit your wrongs. He will build those bridges with you, and will continue to carry you to safety." Nigel sighed. "If I had someone who looks at me the way he looks at you, I would give all this up."

"I did. I called a meeting with the board and quit, telling them I had given them years and had frankly lost too much from it." Miranda admitted. "Just as I was leaving, they called me back and offered me the job as CEO. They gave me a week to think about it."

"What made you take it," Nigel asked. "It's such a leap."

"When I told Andrei I'd quit, yelled at me rather loudly," Miranda smirked. "I told him I had taken the job, even though I hadn't. When I eventually told him the truth the following day, he urged me to take it, only if I believed it would be a positive step." She sighed. "He was, as he has always been, so supportive. He seems to understand when I have to work late and is happy to be my plus one at events I know he can barely tolerate attending."

Nigel smiled softly. "You are making him sound more and more irresistible."

"Oh well, I should also advise he snores like a mountain troll, breaks wind and belches without
apology and his breath stinks in the mornings. He is also inordinately messy and sometimes even wears his underwear over two days." Miranda smirked. The words were lies, but it wouldn't do to have Nigel know that.

The words had Nigel smiling before he broke into joyful laughter. "Oh God, I'll never look at him the same way again."

They continued to laugh together for a few more minutes before Nigel eased himself to his feet and held a hand out to her. She grasped his hand and stood gracefully.

"So why did you come in here," Nigel smirked.

"I thought I would have Patrick take one last photo," Miranda explained. "For my final editor's letter."

"You haven't changed your photo in years." Nigel was stunned.

Miranda worried her lip between her lip before sighing. "I perhaps thought I should go out with a bang."

Nigel's smile was wicked. "I know just the outfit. Come along." He waved her further into the closet.

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Andy was arguing with Emily, wanting to go looking for Miranda, she had been gone almost 45 minutes and his shoot was done, or so he thought.

He felt the air crackle and spun around to see Miranda and Nigel stepping into the room, and the sight of the editor made his jaw drop.

She was now dressed in a crew neck satin dress with long-sleeves that ended just above her knee and wearing strappy heels. Her hair had been swept back off her forehead and her makeup had been reapplied.

"Wow." He whispered breathlessly as he gazed at her wonderingly. He was surprised to notice the same Barocco motifs displayed on his blazer at the hem and cuffs of the dress.

He couldn't stop his wide smile as she stepped closer and offered him a shy smile.

Serena and Emily stepped from the room, dragging Nigel along with them, leaving him with Miranda and Patrick.

"Do you like?" Miranda's question was asked hesitantly. She looked so serious, he wanted to offer her a world of reassurances.

He placed his hands on her hips and leaned closer to breathe his answer in her ear. "You look beautiful. You take my breath away." Andy stated.

The click of the camera shutter caught Andy's attention and he looked towards Patrick and smiled warmly.

Patrick said nothing and continued to snap photos of them as they stood together.

Andy knew the initial photographs would show the intensity of their love. Instead of his usual warm smile, it would have shown him devouring the sight of this woman. The light touch of his
hands on her waist would come across as sensuous.

Andy figured he would just do what was comfortable as if Patrick was not in the room with them. He smiled down at Miranda before whispering, "I am looking forward to finding out what you are wearing underneath all that satin. Will it be lace or more satin?" He teased lightly, taking delight in the blush that rose over Miranda's pale cheeks.

"If you have been good, you may find out." Miranda's tone was also teasing but held a breathy quality that had him smiling again.

She took his hand and led him to the chair where she pushed him down onto it with her hand in the centre of his chest as the camera continued to click. She smirked down at him from between his parted thighs before moving around him, her hand running over his chest until it landed on his shoulder.

Andy could feel the heat of her behind him as her other hand found its place on his shoulder and she leaned to whisper, her breath tickling his ear. "Oh yes. I believe we should make use of my office before I leave it behind for my new one." The words had him clenching his thighs, and his eyes fell closed. It was one of the little fragments of fantasy from his time as her assistant.

"Switch places," Patrick stated, breaking the focus they had on one another.

They moved around each other and Miranda sat primly in the chair. Her legs crossed and hand clasped in her lap. She looked at Patrick challengingly as Andy placed his hands on her shoulders lightly. "You know, I like the idea of recreating the memory from my office. I like the idea, very much." He heard Miranda inhale sharply and couldn't hold back his laughter.

They did spend time in her office, with her straddling his lap in her desk chair as they made out, but they didn't get the chance to take things any further when Emily knocked on the door and advised them nervously that the Head of Dalton was on the phone.

Miranda turned around, keeping her place on Andrei's lap and answered, pressing the button to put the principle on the loudspeaker. "Miranda, speaking. How can I help today, Ms Stein."

"Miranda, sorry to disturb you, but I need you to come to the school." The principle stated quietly

"Can you advise me why?" Miranda stated, rolling her eyes. "Has Cassidy used a permanent marker to draw a beard on Caroline's face again?" Her lips twitched as Andrei's shoulder shook. "Or perhaps she has drawn moustaches on her classmates?"

"No. Please, Miranda. You realise I would not call you in unless necessary. We tried Andrei first, at Caroline's insistence, but his cell is off." Ms Stein advised seriously.

"Andrei is here with me now. If you deem it necessary, we will be there in twenty minutes." Miranda disconnected the call with a sigh. "We need to go. Is your truck downstairs?"

"I have the SUV," Andrei admitted.

"Oh good. Now, I believe it is time you saw first hand as a new father how issues are dealt with at these educational institutions, even one as progressive and elite as Dalton. We shall face these tiny-minded little people, who simply wish to curb our daughter's enthusiasm, and we will show them we are a united front."
"Umm… Yes." Andrei frowned as she slid off his knee and opened the door demanding her bag and coat. As they entered the elevator together he spoke. "What do you think they have done?"

"I have no idea. But knowing my Bobbsey’s it is something hilarious or deeply embarrassing." Miranda stated airily. "Caroline once sat on a classmate and broke wind on him."

Andrei’s laughter was loud and she marvelled at the ease in which he displayed his joy.

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They made good time crossing town to get to Dalton. Fifteen minutes after leaving Runway they were walking hand-in-hand down the corridors at Dalton, making their way to the principle’s office. Andy had only been to the school a handful of times and he looked around curiously. At every turn, there were displays of artwork, trophies and other achievements.

Entering the outer office, he glanced at the side of the room and saw Cassidy and Caroline sitting straight-backed in their chairs, their eyes lit up with a fire of defiance. Andy untangled his hand from Miranda’s and moved towards them as Miranda caught the attention of the school’s receptionist.

"I believe I am expected," Miranda stated coldly.

The receptionist squeaked and shot out of her seat to head to the inner offices, Andy smirked and knelt before the girls. "What's going on, my little ones?" He asked gently.

"It was just a joke, and I don't know, but we were dragged in here and..." Cassidy's eyes filled with tears.

"...This is so unfair." Caroline growled. "We were just playing."

A shadow appeared in the doorway of the inner offices and spoke. "Miranda, Andrei, please come on in."

Andy stood and ruffled the twin’s hair. "Be right back, my little loves. We’ll sort this out." He offered them a reassuring smile before moving back to Miranda and holding his hand out to her. He gave her a small wink and she laced their fingers, offering his hand a light squeeze. Squaring their shoulders they followed the principle into her office and the door shut behind them.

Ms Stein stepped behind her desk and leaned on her hands. She glanced up at Andy and smirked. "Is this yours?" She pulled an old wooden slingshot from her drawer, it was something his gramps had made him as a boy.

"My slingshot?" He wondered where the twins had gotten their hands on it. "Um yeah." He was relieved. "I assume Caroline and Cassidy have been having a touch of harmless fun flicking things at their classmates?"

Ms Stein reached in the drawer again and pulled out a stream of silver foiled condoms. His eyes closed and he heard Miranda gasp. His eyes blazed open and he knew he was blushing. When Ms Stein laid a water-filled condom on her desk he wished the ground would open and swallow him whole.

"I assume these belong to you too?" Ms Stein murmured.

Andy couldn't breathe. He just sat there staring at the items on the desk and tried to convince himself that what he saw was just a figment of his imagination. He was not seeing a water-filled
condom. He started stammering. "Uh… well… yes… we practice… you know… and…"

Ellen Stein was smirking at him. "It's been a long time since we've seen you here, Andrei. I understand the twins are extraordinarily happy to have you back." She grinned as she looked at Miranda. "It seems your daughters found these items, they filled the 'balloons' at lunch and started using the slingshot to fire them at two boys in their class who have been teasing them quite mercilessly about their 'dandy'. I must admit, I had to hide my laughter. I believe they should go home for the day, but they are welcome back at the usual time tomorrow, minus the condoms."

Andy did not respond and Miranda, blushing bright red, simply stood, swept the slingshot and condoms into her bag and burst the one filled with water, leaving a puddle of water behind, before walking out of the office.

He stuttered an apology and advised the principle they would speak to the girls before following Miranda quickly and watching her gesture to the twins before sweeping them out of the school.

When he finally caught up, she was tapping her foot impatiently. "Talk about moving at a glacial pace, my darling," Miranda stated as he unlocked the car, ensuring that Cassidy and Caroline were secure before sliding into the driver's seat.

They drove in tense silence for five minutes before Cassidy broke it. "Mommy, why do you and Daddy have water balloons?"

"Ask your Daddy?" Miranda wore a small smirk

"Daddy?" Caroline asked. "Why?"

Andy took a deep breath, wondering what the hell he could say.

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Chapter 22

Chapter Notes

Yay, another fic idea from the lovely celesse201, who for whatever reason, holds the belief I can bring her ideas to life. This is my first major AU. Not giving too much away. Miranda is Miranda but I am making her and the twins slightly younger for the sake of the fic. Andy is not the Andy you expect (Hence the AU)

I do not own the main characters related to The Devil Wears Prada. They are owned by the original author and 20th Century Fox. Some characters will be my own.

The afternoon of the balloon incident, after they had sat the twins down in the kitchen for lunch, they provided the basics of how babies were made and how various contraceptives worked, including condoms. It was an age-appropriate conversation and embarrassing for all concerned, especially Andy, who had never thought he would be in a position to explain such things.

Miranda had always been fairly open with Cassidy and Caroline about certain things, establishing rules around talking to strangers and being safe online and how no one should be touching them without their permission. They had previously discussed how the twin's bodies would change as they grew older and yet they had not been told how babies were made and to say they were appalled was an understatement.

"But I thought you wanted a baby?" Caroline breathed in disbelief.

"We do, but the doctors told us to wait for a little while." Miranda smiled softly.

"Does us using your balloons mean you'll get pregnant?" Caroline asked hopefully.

"No, my little one." Andy smiled softly before leaning to ruffle her hair. "And I can always buy some more should I need to."

The twins had been embarrassed by their behaviour with the "water balloons" and had sworn that they would never do anything like that again.

The months after that incident had passed quickly, and the twins behaved as well as could be expected, and yet one of them ended up at Dalton at least once a month for some reason or another.

Miranda's final issue of Runway had gone to print in at the end of October and had become the highest-grossing edition to date. The photo used for the cover was one of the ones taken of them both and the rest of the photos had been dispersed throughout the magazine as part of the feature on Versace's upcoming season. Men's Runway took photographs of him for their feature on grooming. His underwear modelling for Calvin Klein was something he had dug his heels in about, unsure of being seen in nothing but a pair of boxers on the side of buses or on a large billboard in Times Square. A final decision had to be made though and discussions were pencilled in for the second week of January.

Entering the apartment just before midnight, Andy grinned at the sight of the large Christmas tree twinkling in the corner of the room. Isolde peeked at him from her bed and meowed softly. He
padded over to her and bent to stroke his fingers behind her ear causing her to purr.

Straightening, he stepped quietly to enter the master bedroom and stripped down to his boxers quickly., leaving the pile of clothes on the floor. Although the apartment was warm, he still felt the chill of the night air. He settled into the large California King bed Miranda had insisted on bringing from the townhouse and sighed happily. The weeks had been busy and it was a relief to finally lie beside the woman he loved.

Miranda shifted and curling up into him, shivered. "You're icy cold." Her voice was thick with sleep.

"Sorry, sweetheart. It's freezing out there." Andy spoke softly.

"Well, you're here now. That's all that matters. I've missed you." Miranda muttered. Her eyes opened as she nuzzled against him, trying to warm him up.

Andy smiled as Miranda's hot breath ghosted against his neck. "I've missed you too."

He'd been working out in Buffalo for the past three weeks, which had kept him from home during the week. It had taken him longer than normal to get home that day, due to a smattering of snow on the roads.

"Did you manage to finish your work?" Miranda asked hopefully.

"Yes, we finished up just after 4 pm." Andy sighed. "I wish I hadn't had to be away so much over the last month. Did the twins get off to their grandparents okay?"

"Mm, yes. They will be back on Sunday and we'll have Christmas and New Year together." Miranda hummed. "And luckily for us all, your work will keep you in the city after the New Year."

Andy settled down under the thick duvet and pulled Miranda closer. "I'm happy about that. Why don't you try to sleep, my love."

"Oh no. Sleep is the last thing on my mind now." Miranda's warm hands teased down under the band of his shorts and cupped his balls gently as she raised her face to his and snared his lips in a searing kiss.

Miranda woke up refreshed and took her time to watch the man lying beside her, snuffling softly in his sleep.

She loved these uninterrupted moments, having hated being at the apartment without him. Although it was home for them all and they had settled in easily over the months since Paris, the easy laughter that was prevalent when Andrei was around was missed when he had to depart.

Miranda hadn't realised what it was to be truly happy. Although she loved the townhouse, it had not held the same joyful atmosphere and she knew it was Andrei that had changed things so drastically.

James was around for the twins more often now and mutual respect had grown between him and Andrei after the incident with the paint stripper and their following conversations.

Michelle, Amy, Seb and Nigel also made their presence felt too and they often found themselves enjoying brunch together on a Sunday. They were creating a multitude of memories which she
cherished above all else.

Amy was in the early stages of pregnancy, with the IVF having worked on their first attempt, and she found herself wishing it could be her that almost glowed from a new life growing within her.

Despite her wishful thinking, Miranda knew she still needed time to heal. She still felt the emptiness and despair of her loss acutely, but she was able to get through most of her days without growing too despondent. Over the months since becoming CEO, there had only been a handful of days she woke up feeling the crippling despair that had initially kept her in bed and deciding it wasn't worth her time to get out of bed. On those days Andrei often curled up beside her, forgoing his work and they spoke quietly about their future.

They planned for a May wedding, and Miranda initially mentioned the Bahamas, Antigua or the Maldives but after reading an article on one of the days spent in bed, she advised him she had found the perfect location for them, in Bora Bora, at a chapel built on stilts at La Meridien.

Andrei seemed happy to agree to whatever she wanted and she sensed he was still rather surprised she wished to marry him. In the spirit of showing him how serious she was, she told their closest friends and family to keep the week of Memorial Day free.

Things had certainly changed. Men's Runway had taken off and Nigel was giving Seb a chance. They had been dating since shortly after their chat in the closet. There were times he still gazed at Andrei wistfully, but he seemed to have come to the realisation Andrei would never make him truly happy. It was the idea of Andrei, as he was with her, that appealed to Nigel, but that did not necessarily mean he would be the same with someone else.

Andrei was made for her, as surely as the sun rose and set each day, as surely as Amy was made for Michelle and she could see, even if Nigel hadn't yet to do so that Seb was the one for him.

Stretching out her hand trailed almost unconsciously over Andrei's shoulders. She snatched her hand away as he stirred, but noticed his smile was soft.

Without even opening his eyes, he spoke. "Your brain is going ten to a dozen. I can feel it."

Andrei's voice was husky but held a smile.

"I was just admiring you as you caught flies and drooled," Miranda smirked as Andrei wiped his chin self-consciously before grinning up at her upon realising she was teasing him.

The bright megawatt smile he gave her was her undoing, as it always was. Leaning in, she kissed his closed eyelids and followed it with a chaste peck on his lips. "Coffee?" Miranda asked hopefully as she pulled away.

Andrei's laughter was loud and his eyes blazed open. "That's the only reason you miss me when I'm gone, admit it."

"I shall do no such thing," Miranda was happier than she had ever been and it was thanks to this person lying beside her. The sheer strength of her delight at that moment made her feel as if she could take on the world.

She watched as Andrei slipped from under the covers and shivered. He moved quickly to his closet and pulled on a pair of sweatpants and a hooded sweater. "I wish I'd gone for underfloor heating." He muttered, grabbing a pair of socks. "My feet are freezing."

Miranda watched as he hopped on one barefoot and tried to put a sock on clumsily. His antics made her smile widen. She couldn't stop her laughter as he tumbled onto his backside with an oomph.
Andrei was simply adorable.

Easing herself from the warmth of the bed, she stepped to Andrei quickly and held her hand out. As he took it, he used it to pull her closer and his head rested against her stomach and he sighed happily.

They remained like that for a few moments until she grew cold and started to shiver. Looking down into his upturned face, she stroked his bearded jaw lightly with the tips of her fingers. "I love you, my darling," Miranda hoped he could see the truth of her words.

He eased himself back onto his feet and picked her up easily. Stepping towards the bed, Andrei placed her down gently on the mattress and pulled the duvet over her, tucking it around her to ensure she was warm.

He grinned as he sat down beside her and his foot crossed over his knee to put the other sock on. "I know. And to show you how much I love you, I'll get you that coffee you asked for."

"Acceptable," Miranda whispered, watching as he stood and stalked from the room.

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Andy moved around the kitchen easily, arranging their coffee and preparing a small bowl of food for Isolde. They had learnt the hard way that she would not leave them alone if she knew they were awake and was not fed promptly. She climbed on their chests and flexed her paws as she yowled in their faces.

Smiling, Andy set the bowl down and the little ball of white fur bounded into the kitchen, purring happily as she wound around his legs, rubbing against his ankles.

Moving slowly he poured two mugs of steaming coffee and inhaled the rich scent as he thought of the previous night.

Miranda had been relentless in her attempts to please him, removing his boxers and taking him in her warm hand to coax him towards his climax while her lips stole his breath away with demanding and passionate kisses.

After he'd orgasmed, he'd turned Miranda onto her back, ready to return the favour, only for her to place a hand on his wrist as he was about to press his palm against her and tell him she had her period.

He'd pulled back, and had told her he didn't mind it, but she'd blushed and shaken her head. Andy had taken her at her word and they had settled beside each other, he as naked as the day he was born and she encased in warm flannelette.

It had stunned him, upon first sleeping with Miranda, to realise she preferred to be comfortable for bed. Years ago he would have assumed she slept encased in silk and satin but he would have been so very wrong. He knew because the twins still enjoyed early morning cuddles, she always changed into suitable sleepwear. If she was cold she wore flannelette pyjamas and fluffy bed socks, if it was warm she wore one of his old t-shirts.

Miranda had a dresser full of beautiful peignoir's and she occasionally wore one, but they didn't stay on her for long, his desire causing him to pull the sheer material from her to discover and delight in the beauty underneath it. Because although he adored it when she dressed sexily for him, nothing enticed him more than her naked form. It was unlike anything he had ever experienced before she had come into his life.
Walking back into the bedroom, Andy found the bed empty. There was a trail of clothes leading towards the ensuite and he could hear water running from where the door was slightly ajar. He peeked around the door and through the steam and condensation made out a hazy vision of Miranda in the shower. She was facing the wall letting the water run over her hair and down her back.

He caught the soft moan and his eyes widened. Surely she wasn't doing what he thought she was? He moved further into the bathroom and saw Miranda was steadying herself with one hand on the wall while the other moved slowly between her legs.

His own body reacted and he removed his clothes quickly. His cock was already hard when he stepped behind Miranda, wrapping his arm around her as his lips locked on her neck, it pressed against her back and she pushed into him.

"You took your sweet time." Miranda groaned.

"I didn't know you expected me," Andy whispered against her ear.

"Always." Miranda hissed when his fingers entwined with hers to add extra pressure against her clit. His other hand moved up to cup her breast.

Miranda's hand untangled from his and moved back to grab his cock and standing on her tiptoes, she pushed back, allowing it to brush between her ass cheeks.

His fingers continued to stroke and Miranda's clit strained from its hood. Her little whimpering moans spurred him on and he flexed his hips as he rained soft kisses across her neck and shoulders.

"Oh God, inside," Miranda demanded, spinning in his arms and letting him slip between her folds.

Lifting her, Andy pressed her against the wall and pushed his full length deep inside. His arm was still around her waist and he used the other to keep them upright, his hand splayed against the tiles. He could feel himself growing even harder as he moved back and forth inside her.

Miranda's hand teased her clit and he could feel her tightening around him in preparation of her orgasm. He sped up. "God, I love the way I feel inside you." The words were hushed as Miranda's lips caught his in a searing caress and she moaned as her orgasm engulfed her.

Andy stopped moving as Miranda spasmed around him, her inner walls clenching around his cock almost desperately.

The seconds turned into minutes and unable to resist, he moved again slowly, looking down into her eyes as water rushed over them. He felt the tell-tale tightening of his balls that indicated his climax was approaching fast.

Miranda's hands rested on his shoulders and she used them to move up and down in time with the canting of his hips.

Andy lifted her before pulling her down on his cock, thrusting hard on the downward movement, wanting her to feel him, even once they were finished.

Miranda kissed him passionately as he started to come. She tightened around him again and he came hot and hard. The water continued to cascade over them, warm and soothing as he whimpered against her lips, his hips thrusting insistently. Miranda bit his lip and moaned before climaxing again. He could feel her juices flooding his cock as she collapsed against him.

Finally sated, Miranda kiss and they basked in their post-coital glow, holding each other's gaze.
She kissed him once more before grasping the tap and switching the water off.

Andy hated the idea of pulling away, although he was softening quickly. He glanced at Miranda and smiled. "Your coffee will be cold."

Miranda hummed and nuzzled the spot behind his ear, her warm breath coasting over the sensitive skin. "A mere inconvenience." She husked. "It seems this is worth letting my coffee grow cold over."

"I'll just finish showering and pop it into the microwave." He knew that would cause a reaction and tried to hide his amusement.

"Sacrilege." The word hissed in his ear caused Andy to laugh loudly. "You shall simply have to make a fresh cup." Miranda pushed him away and smirked up at him as he set her back on her feet. "Now if you scrub my back, I shall scrub yours." She turned her back on him and switched the water back on.

Their morning had been spent curled up on the couch as snow covered the streets below. They sat under the cover of a fleece throw and music softly played in the background speaking of Andrei's work. He had shown her the before and after photos, he'd taken on his cell, and she had loved what he had achieved and had told him so.

They had fallen silent only fifteen minutes before and were comfortable. The fingers on one of Andrei's hands caressed hers while the other arm held her close.

"I want to come off the pill," Miranda stated. The admission came out of the blue, it had been a fleeting thought the week before and it was only now she realised she had come to that decision.

"I'll get some condoms. Hopefully, after our little conversation with my little ones, they wouldn't dream of using them as water balloons." Andrei grinned until he saw her shake her head.

"No, I mean..." Miranda blew out a flustered breath. "I want us to try for a baby."

Miranda could see Andrei was stunned. She knew his thoughts would have flown to the warnings the doctor had initially given him. That another pregnancy was not ideal, and that she would have to be monitored closely and have a c-section when the time came to ensure her uterus did not rupture again.

"I know this is probably scary after all the information you were given after..." Miranda struggled to even say it, even now. "...but you are an amazing father figure to our girls and I wish to extend our family."

"What about the wedding and house hunting?" Andrei asked.

"We could continue with the plans we have made or we could wait. We could head off to city hall at any time." Miranda glanced up at him. "I could have my lawyers look into fast-tracking a marriage licence. I'm sure we could arrange for something small at Central Park or perhaps the Tribeca Rooftop. If you were happy to oblige, we could have a winter wedding here in the city. As for living arrangements, there's still the townhouse as a temporary measure, if you deemed there was not enough space here. I would let you gut the place should you wish, put your mark on it so it is yours as well as mine."

"God, I can just imagine the headlines on Page Six," Andrei stated. "Snow Queen in winter
wonderland wedding." He turned her face to catch her eyes. "I always loved the townhouse, but I love the family life we have created here. We could maybe look at moving the twins downstairs, or I could arrange it so we could. There's enough space for a large closet, as well as your office space."

Happiness unfurled in Miranda's chest at Andrei's easy acceptance but his words over the headlines concerned her. "Do you truly care what the press says." She asked hesitantly.

Andrei turned and placed a reassuring kiss on her forehead. "Nope, not really." His smile was bright. "I suppose, even if we continued with the existing plans for the beach wedding in Bora Bora, you'd be no more than six months pregnant." He sighed. "And we would be celebrating our first year together as a newly married couple."

Miranda kissed him and when he returned the kiss she deepened their contact. The buzzer going on the door broke them apart and Andrei groaned. Taking a deep breath he eased himself to his feet and moved nimbly towards the elevator. Pressing the button for intercom, he growled. "What?"

"Hi, I have a delivery for Miranda Priestly." The voice echoed over the intercom.

Andrei glanced at her and she shrugged. "I'll be down for it momentarily." He entered the elevator and she heard it move down.

Closing her eyes, Miranda sighed. It would no doubt be another unwanted gift from someone wishing to gain favour. Most of the time things were delivered to Elias Clarke and dealt with by her assistants but occasionally one was sent to her home.

The minutes bled into one another and she wondered idly what was taking Andrei so long but dismissed the thought. He'd no doubt been cornered again by the owner of the Italian restaurant that was about to open on the ground floor. A loud woman, who often gestured frantically with her hands, and could be heard screaming at her sister.

Her eyes blazed open as Andrei returned ten minutes later, struggling with a large box. He set the box down in front of her and frowned as he gazed down at her. "It's from James." He licked his lips. "If it's what I think it is, I believe we may have to head out this afternoon."

He sat beside her as she leaned forward and tugged at the wide red ribbon, pulling it away from the box. The lid toppled slightly and a small whimper came from inside the box. Miranda gasped, her hand coming to rest against her chest. Cutting her eyes to the side, she saw Andrei's small smile. Squaring her shoulders, she lifted the lid and two large paws came up to rest on the rim as warm dark eyes gazed up at them. The sight of the fluffy Saint Bernard Puppy was a surprise.

Andrei lifted the large puppy from the box and nuzzled his jaw against the puppy's cheek. "So what are we gonna call you..." He lifted it away and scanned its stomach. "...girl?"

"We can't keep her," Miranda stated. "An apartment is no place for a 180lb dog."

"We can't just get rid of her, Miranda. I mean, just look at that face." Andrei continued to hold the puppy close and whisper sweet nothing's into her ear. "You gorgeous beast. We have to come up with a name for you, beautiful girl." After a few moments, where she sat dumbfounded, he spoke. "If the size of this very large apartment is the issue, I will pack up all of our things and we'll move back into the townhouse. You can take it off the market and we'll make it home."

Miranda pinched the bridge of her nose. The puppy was so much like her darling Patricia, it hurt. "Fine, Gertrude can stay."
"Hear that, Gertie?" Andrei held the puppy out and grinned as she groaned at the nickname. "You're staying here with us."

"Gertrude," Miranda advised him softly.

Andrei stood and looked down at her. "Well, there's my Christmas present to my little loves annihilated. I was gonna take them to the animal shelter where I got Isolde." He shrugged but she could see him wracking his brains for a new idea. "Come on Trudy, let's get you some water."

Having two dogs simply wasn't suitable, the one very large beast Gertrude would grow into was more than adequate. "I'm sure we'll think of something." Miranda tried to reassure him. "No matter what you come up with, I'm sure they will adore it." As he walked away, carrying the puppy under his arm, she called out. "And her name is Gertrude."

James had included everything Gertrude would initially need in the delivery. She had a crate to sleep in, food to eat, bowls for her meals and a matching leather diamante collar, harness and lead. He'd even included items for grooming. What he hadn't thought of was things like puppy pads or toys and Heaven forbid if the pup used Miranda's Prada pumps as her chew toy or peed on the floor.

Andy needed to go out for grocery's anyway, having invited Nigel, Seb, Michelle and Amy over for an impromptu dinner. While he was out he went into the pet superstore and bought the extra's to make the little puppy feel at home. He knew he'd probably gone way overboard, he thought, as he trudged to his truck with an oversupply of puppy pads, some puppy treats and multiple toys, including a large soft bear that had squeakers in each paw, as well as the nose and belly and an Elk Antler to keep her amused and hopefully away from Miranda's shoes.

The thought of the puppy made him smile, but he was also slightly annoyed at James. He had wanted to see the twins face when he took them to the shelter and hopefully found the puppy they wanted. As a backup, he had been scouring websites looking for reputable breeders for Saint Bernard and Border Collie pups.

Spotting a toy store on his way to the grocery store, he glanced at the window display and stalled at the sight of the electric scooters in various colours and a Nerf Rebelle Agent Bow Blaster which came in both pink or purple. He wondered if they had something in green for his Caroline, although a pink one would be suitable, especially since the crossbows claimed to fire arrows 85 feet away. His smile widened as he allowed his thoughts to roam to the days he had super soaker and Nerf Guns and chased Doug around his back garden.

Entering the busy store, Andy made his way through the throng of people quickly and grabbed what he wanted, a scooter in green and one in purple as well as the two crossbows. As he queued up, he saw the Echolife Mermaid Tail Blankets, there was just two left. He grabbed those as well, much to the displeasure of the woman behind him, before making his way back to his truck.

Even if his gifts for the twins wasn't the puppy they had requested, he knew the twins would love them, especially the Nerf crossbows, although he made a mental note to tell them they were not to be used inside the apartment.

Finally heading to the grocery store, he moved up the isles quickly, grabbing the items he needed for their dinner. As he reached the checkout he stalled at the sight of Doug in front of him. It was as if thinking of his childhood had summoned his old friend.
Doug looked tired with bloodshot eyes and at least three days of beard growth. His shoulders were stopped as the cashier scanned the microwavable meals for one in the belt. About to turn and head to another checkout, Doug's voice accosted him. "Andy?"

He couldn't resist the hint of pleasure held in the soft voice. Turning to face his old friend, he knew his face held a small frown. "Hi, Dougie."

Doug's smile was bright. "My God, you look wonderful." It faltered as Andy's frown deepened. "Um...things going well for you?"

Andy placed his items on the conveyer as the cashier continued to scan and pack Doug's groceries. He shrugged. "Yeah, you know, life's good."

"I'm glad, for your sake." Doug seemed genuine, but his eyes held sadness. "I heard about what happened in August. Nate lost his job at Glorious Foods and no one would touch him afterwards..."

He shrugged. "...well, he fucked off back to Boston, taking half of my stuff and now has a new boyfriend."

"I'm sorry, Doug." Andy was truly sorry for his old friend but was unsure of what else he could say. It had been years since they had spoken and he doubted they had anything in common anymore.

If truth be told, Andy had sometimes wondered if the stress of the events of the benefit had added to things after the loss of the baby. It was a hopeless thought though. He couldn't start assigning blame, it would drive him slowly crazy.

Doug shrugged. "Shit happens." Andy saw he was trying to act flippant, but he was hurting. "Anyway, I saw the October issue of Runway. It was a triumph." He declared as the cashier caught his attention and named the total. Doug winced and rummaged through his wallet, counting out the money carefully. He was short, but before he could apologise and ask for items to be voided, Andy gave the cashier a $100 bill. Doug gazed at him gratefully. "I lost my job after Nate..." Doug explained. "I was on the fast track for a promotion, but then..." He licked his lips. "...I took too much time off, in the hopes we could salvage things. My savings are gone and my parents help but..."

"Things get hard in the city when you're alone." Andy shrugged as the cashier handed him the change. "I understand that. So have you got anything lined up?"

"No," Doug admitted, shuffling from foot to foot. He eventually stood to the side as the cashier placed items into a bag efficiently. "I'd take just about anything right now. The alternative to that is I will have to head back to Ohio in the New Year."

Andy had an inkling of an idea. "How about an office manager position? It would include accounts and payroll."

"Where?" Doug was curious.

"ABS Remodelling Architects." Andy named his own company. "I've been after someone for months, but the vapid women that apply are sub-standard at best."

"I bet they're just hoping to get into those gorgeous pants." Doug grinned eyeing him up and down.

"That too. My Miranda would bare her claws and my little ones would have them running in the opposite direction though, so there are no worries on that score." Andy grinned happily. "I need someone I can trust. I used to be able to trust you, and hope I could again."
"I could start right away, I mean..." Doug seemed euphoric.

"Whoa, calm down." Andy was surprised by the enthusiasm. Paying for the groceries on his card, he nudged Doug and they walked side by side out of the store. "We're closed until the first week of January."

"Oh," Doug seemed to deflate.

"How bad are things?" He asked gently.

"I owe two months rent and the heating..." Doug blushed as Andy pulled him towards his truck and opened the passenger door.

"Get in," Andy stated. "If we are going to do this, I need to interview you properly."

"Andy, I can't..." Doug looked close to tears.

"You're coming home with me, Doug," Andy stated. "I'm not having you go back to a cold, empty apartment. I won't ask again." His tone was firm.

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Miranda was stunned when Andrei dragged a scruffy young man into the apartment behind him and headed towards the kitchen. The elevator was filled with boxes and more grocery bags and Gertrude ran to sniff everything. Moving towards the elevator she saw half the bags held microwave meals and scrunched her nose up. She wouldn't even feed that processed tripe to Irv Ravitz.

Picking the bags up, she stepped towards the kitchen and frowned at the sound of Andrei's questions to the young man. If it wasn't so absurd an idea she would think he was interviewing him. "So, Doug, what experience do you have?"

Andrei's question was answered nervously. "Well, I have various experience. I have spent the last three years working for Miller and Company. I have experience in SAP, MYOB, Xero, Sage and Netsuite. I am willing to learn other software, depending on what is required of me." The young man squeaked.

"Your job will also include taking calls regarding jobs, generating quotes and invoicing as well as payroll," Andrei stated. "I assume that will not be an issue?" He queried.

"No, I'll do whatever is required." The man answered.

Miranda entered the kitchen and smirked. Andrei was fixing three mugs of coffee, his back to the man who was perched at the breakfast bar. Moving to the large deep freeze, she put the frozen meals away and leaned against the freezer door.

"You will be dealing with clients that have specific design requirements that may be beyond your scope," Andrei stated. "How will you deal with such things?"

"With politeness, advising that the query will be handed off to the relevant department and their query will be answered in due course." The man answered.

It was certainly a smooth answer and she could see Andrei's small smile. "Fine. The jobs yours. And as an FYI, most design queries are provided in 48 to 72 hours." Andrei turned and spotted her. Holding his hand out to her, his smile widened as she stepped beside him and entwined their
"fingers. "Miranda, this is my new office manager, Doug Campbell. He's always been a big fan. Dougie, this is Miranda, my fiancée."

"Douglas." Miranda nodded her head at him. "A pleasure, I'm sure."

Douglas stood and made her a small bow. "The pleasure is, most certainly, all mine, Miranda."

The blush gracing the man's face was delightful, and she couldn't help her small laugh. "Oh, dear boy, there aren't many who would agree with that summation."

"Then the world is full of fools. Myself included." Douglas replied gallantly.

Miranda decided she liked the young man and was curious where Andrei found him. The answer came almost immediately from Andrei himself.

"Doug's an old school friend, you remember, the one I told you about, from Glee club?" Andrei told her.

She knew her eyes would be showing their disbelief. Miranda wanted to know where Andrei's head was at. "May I have a word, my darling." She urged.

"Sure thing, sweetheart." Andrei grinned. "I'll right back Doug. Feel free to head on out into the living room and make yourself at home. There's some interesting art of my Grandpa's and tons of photos." He called out as Miranda tugged him through the kitchen and towards the stairs to the lower level.

As they reached her study, she let go of his hand and ran her fingers through her hair. "Andrei, what on Earth..."

"He's lost everything, Miranda." Andrei interrupted her. "Nate left him, he lost his job and he's this close to losing his apartment." She glanced at him to see him squeeze his thumb and forefinger together. "I knew him, once upon a time. He was a good man and deserved better than Nate. He never said a word against you, he just didn't understand what he thought were one-sided feelings or me seemingly disappearing from his life because of a job that would not get me any closer towards my dream."

"Your feelings were never truly one-sided," Miranda stated quietly.

Andrei's lips twitched in the ghost of a smile. "You could have fooled me."

"I did fool you, I'm ashamed to say." Miranda ducked her head.

Andrei was quick to tilt it up towards his, to catch her eyes. "That's all in the past now, sweetheart." He assured her. "As is the thing with Doug. I will never forgive Nate, but I found I can forgive Doug. We can all be blind at times, Miranda and I just can't stand by, knowing he is struggling."

"You are far too nice for your own good, my darling." She looked at him and knew he would see the fierce determination behind her words. "If he hurts you again, he will regret it. That I can promise you."

Andrei nodded. "Let's hope it doesn't come to that?" He took a deep breath. "Would you mind if I invited him for dinner?"

"Fine." Miranda shook her head.
"What's one more person in the grand scheme of things?" Andrei smiled. "I think you'll come to like him. He has a better taste in fashion than I."

"That would not be hard, my darling," Miranda stated teasingly. "Although he'll never be quite as pretty." Andrei's blush at her words was fierce and she couldn't stop her smile. "Come along, my coffee is growing cold while we dally down here and I wish to know more about a Young Andy Sachs from the man who has known him far longer than I."

"Oh God, this is going to be so embarrassing," Andrei muttered.
Chapter 23

Chapter Notes

Another fic idea from the lovely celesse201, who for whatever reason, holds the belief I can bring her ideas to life. This is my first major AU. Not giving too much away. Miranda is Miranda but I am making her and the twins slightly younger for the sake of the fic. Andy is not the Andy you expect (Hence the AU)

I do not own the main characters related to The Devil Wears Prada. They are owned by the original author and 20th Century Fox. Some characters will be my own.

Miranda was delighted by tales of her Andrei as a young boy and Doug spoke happily of the time they shared, chasing each other around their front yards playing Cowboys and Indians and blasting each other with a super soaker. He then spoke of their time in high school, travelling to sectional's and regional's as part of their Glee club. He spoke of Andrei's success in the wrestling ring and his popularity.

Andrei had been a social butterfly. He had moved with ease through the hierarchy of the school, friendly with the jocks, artists, science geeks and those like Douglas who hadn't quite been a part of any specific group.

Douglas had been a mathematical whizz and he'd been part of the chess club too, but it was Glee that made him shine. He loved Broadway shows, had dressed quite flamboyantly and was often teased quite mercilessly as one of the very few openly gay teenagers in the school. There had been many a fight as Andrei stood up to people for his sake.

It was Andrei's friendship that had made life bearable, and then that of Lily and Nate in the final years of Senior High.

Douglas was saddened by the end of his relationship with the fry-cook, having genuinely cared for him. But as they sat in the kitchen, drinking coffee while Andrei started preparations for dinner, they found there were other reasons for his sadness.

"Lily spoke of you frequently after you left New York," Douglas stated at Andrei's back. "She wondered where you had gone and what you were doing."

Andrei turned. "How is she?"

Doug looked down at his empty mug. "She died at the beginning of last year. She was diagnosed with breast cancer but it had spread to her bones."

A minute passed before Andrei spoke. "Shit, I'm so sorry. I had no idea"

Miranda heard the tears in Andrei's voice. As much as he had tried to dismiss thoughts of his old friends, believing they had found him lacking, it was clear he still cared deeply for them.

"It's not like we ever tried to contact you, Andy. Nate said..." Douglas inhaled deeply. "...well, I found out he'd been feeding us bullshit all along, starting with the night of his party and the tussle in Central Park. He was quite vocal when he saw the article about your work and relationship with
Miranda, and he was vicious after..." He seemed unsure of how to phrase his words. "...the job at the Hamptons and being fired by Glorious Foods."

Andrei's back was stiff and he sniffed. She could feel the waves of hurt rolling off him. Easing herself to her feet, she moved quickly to him. "Are you okay, my darling."

"The onions get me every time." Andrei tried to smile and continued to finely chop the onion. The tears in his eyes made them glisten, and she understood the words were meant for Douglas's benefit.

"Pop a teaspoon in your mouth," Miranda advised, brushing a stray tear away.

Andrei laughed. "That's a silly old wives tale."

"Are you doubting me as well as calling me an old wife?" She teased. "I shall have you know, that particular epitaph cannot be given to me until the end of May." Miranda leaned against the counter and smirked. "And then you'll be him indoors or my pot and pan while I will become her indoors or your trouble and strife."

"Do people in London speak like that?" Douglas asked. "It's not just one of those things they do on British TV shows?"

The question had Miranda letting out a tinkling laugh. "You can Adam and Eve it." She stated reverting to her original accent. Miranda winked at Andrei and saw him fighting his laughter.

"Now, how about I put the kettle on the Arthur?"

"Arthur?" Douglas was confused, his forehead crinkling as he attempted to translate. Andrei let out a loud guffaw, the days in London had seen her giving him a crash course in rhyming slang.

"Yes, Arthur Conan Doyle, meaning boil. What I am trying to ask is if you would like a cup of tea, Douglas." Miranda rolled her eyes as the man gaped at her as if he had never experienced anyone like her before.

Turning to put the kettle on, she reflected on this. Perhaps he hadn't. She had, after all, always been told she was one of a kind.

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Miranda continued to tease Doug, who seemed powerless to resist her good mood and often fed directly into her hands. There had been some loud laughter as Gertrude made his lap her bed and chewed and sucked on his fingers.

The only dark spot, after finding out about Lily, was when Michelle and Amy arrived. When Michelle saw Doug, she launched into a tirade about a lack of loyalty and they stood in shocked silence as tears welled up in his eyes.

Miranda moved first, standing between them and pursing her lips. Andy decided enough was enough. Grabbing Michelle by the waist, he lifted her off her feet and carried her away to stop her yelling. Amy continued to stand there frozen in uncertainty.

Andy sat Michelle down in the kitchen and handing her a cold beer, explained all that had occurred that day and what they had found out.

Seeing his acceptance of Doug and feeling somewhat shamefaced for her angry words, Michelle was quick to apologise to him. "I'm sorry, Andy."
"Mich, you're so hotheaded," He shook his head. "Seriously, you need to think before you react. But right now, it's not me you should be apologising to." Andy explained softly. "Nate poisoned both Lily and Doug against me and I wasn't there to stand up for myself. I just disappeared from their lives. I lost my chance to make things right with Lily but Doug’s still here, and he deserves another chance."

"From what I understood, they didn't give you many chances while you worked for Miranda." Michelle tried to argue.

"True, but we were young and stupid." Andy licked his lips and sipped his beer before glancing at the doorway to see Doug and Miranda hovering awkwardly. "I changed when I worked for Runway, you have said so yourself. To those that knew me, those changes would have seemed incomprehensible." He smiled softly. "Gone was the young man who set whoopie cushions under seats before someone sat down and then laughed uproariously at the fart noise. I couldn't just think of myself or drink so much I could be arrested for disturbing the peace as I pole-danced around a lamppost and sang Like A Virgin at the top of my voice."

"That was just one night and Uncle John never minded your fart jokes." Michelle laughed.

"My Grandpa was a good egg. The point is, I grew up, and it wasn't appreciated, and not just because of the changes, but because I couldn't just drop everything. I wasn't available to my friends when they needed me." Andy decided to give her a small reminder that he remembered not being there for her when things turned ugly with their family. "If you look back to that time, I wasn't there for my family much either."

Michelle nodded. "That's a fair enough point. I'll apologise."

"No time like the present." Andy nodded over her shoulder and she spun in her seat.

Seeing Miranda and Doug, Michelle slid off the stool and moved towards them. She greeted Miranda with a light kiss on the cheek and muttered something in her ear before turning to Doug. "I'm sorry, Dougie."

"No, don't apologise," Doug stated. "You were right. Andy and I were friends for far longer than I was with Nate but I can safely say I was blinded by him. I should have tried more to be the friend Andy deserved, to remember the fact he was always the one to have my back when it was against a wall."

"Like now?" Michelle asked.

"Yeah, exactly." Doug looked away. "I should just go home and let you guys..."

Miranda interrupted. "No, Douglas, you will stay for dinner at least, but be warned, I wish to keep you here, if only until the small issue of your heating is resolved tomorrow." Her tone was pure Runway and Andy knew she would not be refused.

Doug’s head snapped up and his jaw dropped before snapping shut. He couldn't seem to formulate an answer.

"Just nod, smile and say, yes Miranda," Andy urged him gently.

"Yes, Miranda." The words were muttered hesitantly as Doug blushed.

"You are welcome here, Douglas, for as long as you need." Miranda squeezed his forearm. "Now, I hope there's some wine breathing? Not all of us drink beer."
The rest of the evening had turned out well. Dinner had gone down well with the bowls of pasta covered with a thick beef ragu eaten with gusto until they were full and pushing their plates away, stating they'd eaten enough for a week.

Doug and Nigel hit it off over dinner about fashion after Doug admired his blazer and after dinner was eaten, they all moved to the living room, chatting lightly.

Miranda sat with her head on his shoulder with Isolde curled up on her lap. Gertrude was beside him, her head on his knee.

She wore a soft smile as she watched both Seb and Michelle fawn over Amy, ensuring she was warm enough, had plenty to drink and had eaten plenty. It was a heart-warming sight to see the woman blush and shoo them away while chastising them gently about fussing.

Seb and Doug spoke of art and found they each held a fondness for Jazz Music. Plans were made to have an evening at one of the jazz clubs.

After everyone had left, Andy led Doug downstairs to the guest room and apologised that it wasn't ready. He pulled fresh bedding from the linen closet and they worked quietly together to make the bed up.

Miranda came down with a spare toothbrush and other toiletries and placed them in the bathroom, ready for Doug. When he'd expressed his thanks Miranda simply smiled and waved her goodnight as she moved back up the stairs, leaving them together.

Doug was overwhelmed by the day and it showed. Andy surprised himself by pulling the other man into his arms and giving him a tight hug as he brushed a kiss against his stubbled cheek. He pulled back and grinned shyly. "G'night Dougie, sleep well."

Lying in bed, Andy thought of the late afternoon and evening that had passed. He decided it had been a lovely way to spend the night and he was lucky to have such wonderful people in his life. The only thing missing had been the twins. He couldn't wait to have them home and smother them with hugs and kisses until they squealed.

Snuggling down under the blankets, Miranda gravitated towards him and he held her close against his chest.

Almost unconsciously his breathing changed to sync with that of the woman held in his arms and his eyes finally fell closed.

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Miranda woke up late and moving her hand beside her found the sheets at her side cold. To say she was unhappy by this was an understatement and she felt her lips purse.

She had simply wanted to spend the morning in bed with Andrei, loving him in the quiet solitude they shared when the twins were away.

Inhaling deeply she caught the smell of bacon cooking and her stomach growled. She caught the sound of Andrei and Douglas's quiet voices and finally understood why Andrei was absent from her side.

Pushing herself from the warmth of the blankets, she moved to the bathroom and did what was required to make herself presentable. Spotting her period was coming to an end, she smiled as she imagined what she would do with Andrei once she felt more like herself and she hoped they would
be lucky to fall pregnant as quickly as she had before.

She had the next two weeks free with her family and would make the most of it. She planned day trips with ease, they would see a show, visit the observation deck at Top of The Rock or perhaps the Empire State building and they could go ice skating in Central Park or at the Rockefeller Centre. She would do all the things she had struggled to find the time for while she was Editor-in-Chief.

She had been stunned at how surprised her Bobbsey's had been when she'd come home the previous week and announced she would not be returning to Elias Clarke until the New Year. Their disbelief was like a slap in the face because until that moment, with Caroline enveloping her in a tight hug while Cassidy bounced on the spot, she hadn't quite grasped just how much family time she had given up while searching for perfection between the pages of Runway.

It had been a sobering moment for her because although she had made more time for the twins since Stephen's abrupt departure, it hadn't been enough for her precious girls.

What she realised, in the face of their happiness, was that absolute perfection could easily be found in the arms of her children and future husband and she found herself basking in a four-way embrace.

Grabbing her grey cashmere robe, she moved quietly into the living room. She could hear Andrei humming along to the low music that played as Douglas chuckled. Poking her head around the door, she saw the cause of the hilarity. Andrei was frying eggs, his hips swaying along to the Motown music as he mouthed the lyrics. What made the moment funny was the fact Isolde perched perilously on his shoulder chattering along with him.

It wasn't the first time she had seen Andrei like this, he often goofed around when he was cooking, but it was Douglas's joy that affected her the most. She noticed immediately he had shaved and frankly he looked better for it. The dark circles that had been prevalent under his eyes the previous day, were now somewhat less noticeable in the light of this new day. He looked happy, well-rested and his laughter was carefree.

Leaning against the doorjamb, she watched as Andrei set the egg pan on the stove and moved to prepare coffee. As he turned, with her favourite mug in his hands, his smile widened at the sight of her there. She knew her answering smile was just as bright as she moved towards him, took the mug from his hands and standing on her tiptoes, brushed a light kiss on his cheek.

Out of the corner of her eye, she caught the movement as Douglas sat back, clearly surprised by her unconscious display of affection. Miranda found she didn't care. At that moment she only had eyes for her Andrei. She caught Andrei's eyes as she sipped from the searing mug of coffee and hummed. "Good morning, my darling." She husked.

"Good morning, my beautiful Miranda," Andrei whispered, blushing slightly from the knowledge Douglas could hear them. "I was just making breakfast. Eggs, Sunny-Side Up and bacon with toasted sourdough."

"Mm, sounds delicious." Miranda offered him a warm smile as her stomach rumbled. "I shall sit and leave you to weave your culinary magic." Turning away, she perched next to Douglas and sipped her coffee as she perused the Times crossword that Andrei had left for her.

She could sense Douglas watching her and smirked. "I can assure you Andrei is not simply in my life as chief cook and pot washer."
"He always enjoyed cooking." Douglas sputtered. "But...well...Um...I..."

"He is very good at it. He has even managed to get my Bobbsey's eating broccoli and other vegetables. A battle I have been sorely losing for the last nine years." Miranda's lips twitched. "Maybe it is because I'm a little lost in the kitchen and have no patience for following recipes. Although I have been advised I do a reasonable full English Breakfast and my Cottage Pie is exemplary."

"Mm Cottage Pie. Can we have that tonight?" Andrei asked his back to them.

"Of course, my darling." Miranda smiled. "Although if you wish to eat at Fogo de Chão or Delmonico's, I shall arrange it."

"The twins will be home just after lunch, and I'm sure our little ones will be tired after running rings around their grandma and grandad all weekend." She could tell Andrei was smiling.

"True. Perhaps another evening." Looking up from her crossword, she caught Doug's eyes. "You are welcome to stay longer, should you wish."

"I should head home and organise things. My heating's back on and the rent covered." Douglas looked away, suddenly embarrassed.

Miranda saw his discomfort and knew Andrei had no doubt covered both for his friend, probably stating it would be taken, over time, from his wages.

"That's good. If you find you do not enjoy your solitary pursuits, you are welcome here. Our girls make enough noise that you'll soon be yearning for quiet. And of course, you will be here for Christmas Dinner. It will only be a finger buffet, but Nigel, Seb, Amy and Michelle as well as a few others will make their presence felt over the day."

"Have you always entertained?" Douglas asked her curiously.

"No, this is a rather new development for me. I usually take it in turns with my first husband to have the twins. When they were with me, we would have a quiet day together and after they went to bed, I worked on the book." Miranda was honest. "When I was alone at Christmas, I'd take a walk in the park, sometimes stopping for coffee and after my return home I would sit down nibbling on a sandwich if I was hungry and having a few glasses of fine wine as I worked."

"Even when you were married?" Douglas seemed shocked.

"Yes, my second husband spent the day with his family, who never really took a liking to me, and so he did not extend the invite to me or my girl's." She turned back to her crossword and spoke quietly as Andrei plated up the bacon, eggs and sourdough toast and set it on the island for them to help themselves. "My life has changed for the better in the last year. I'm learning to take the time to appreciate all I have and how lucky I have become, since..." She felt tears prick behind her eyelids as they closed.

"Since Andy?" Douglas urged gently.

"Quite." The soft murmur of agreement and the light touch of Andrei's hand on her shoulder had her eyes blazing open and she looked directly into warm hazel eyes. "I believe I am the most fortunate woman on Earth."

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Andy drove Doug back to his apartment building on the Lower East Side. He had frowned when Doug explained he'd taken the lease on the old apartment he once shared with Nate.

In the journey across town, Doug spoke as if he wanted to know everything that had passed since they had last spoken all those years before. "So you and Miranda?" He grinned. "I wouldn't have believed it possible. I was certain she had burned you in some way."

Andy sighed. "She did. I laid my heart bare to her on the final day of Paris Fashion Week and she dismissed it entirely as absurd."

"Really? So why..." Doug trailed off.

Andy knew he wanted to know why she'd been given another chance. "I realised, shortly after losing my Grandpa, that life is just too short to cut someone off forever," Andy explained. "Miranda told me everyone had choices and I chose to forgive her for hurting me. Upon reflection, I could see she was scared. I found I couldn't stop loving her, but worked towards moving on from my impossible feelings for her by staying away."

"Oh wow. Even after she napalmed your feelings, you gave her another chance? That takes balls." Doug seemed stunned.

"Yeah, we took very small steps into the building of the relationship. I was wary, which you'd understand if you'd ever been burned by Miranda. I refused to just let her barge back into my life and take over it. I wasn't in any way responsive to her. I declined three weeks of meetings, even though I'd taken a job renovating her house in the Hamptons, just because I could." Doug laughed and Andy joined in. "You know how stubborn I can be."

"Hell yeah, the Andy Sachs stubbornness is very well known." Doug continued to laugh.

"Miranda is still difficult and demanding, she's blunt and often says the first thing that springs to mind." He smiled. "You'll never hear me say that any of this was easy, it's taken years for either of us to be ready for one another but she's continued to show me she has changed. When we reconnected, she was sincere, she apologised and she was the one who made the first move by asking me on a date. I think she finally understood I would not make the first move. At the time you could have knocked me over with a feather. I couldn't see how we could work." Andy stopped at a set of lights and smiled at the memories. "I eventually agreed to a date but set down specific rules. I told her our dates could not be organised by either of her assistants. She had to make all the effort. And she listened to me."

"It seems to me like it was all plain sailing from there." Doug smiled happily.

"You'd be wrong. It's often been three steps forward and two back. On our first date, I managed to piss her first husband off, and then Miranda shortly after. She came after me though. The second time I met James, about six weeks after we started dating, he kicked paint over a floor I'd spent almost two weeks fitting, so I picked him up and launched him out of Miranda's house before throwing paint stripper over his car."

"What kind of car?" Doug squeaked.

"Just his Maserati GranTurismo," Andy smirked as Doug clapped his hand over his mouth. "I eventually sent him some info on a reasonable auto body shop, a friend of mine who gave him a good deal. And then there was all the shit with that Christina Thompson, another run-in with James when he upset the twins and then losing the baby." He sighed. "Miranda is one of the strongest people I've ever met, but sometimes she lets fear get the better of her and she burns bridges. She
says things she doesn't mean. But we're committed to this, we learn from each other every day and we compromise."

"You mended your broken bridges," Doug muttered. "You're a stronger man than I am."

"Nah, I've always removed myself from situations that hurt me. But since Miranda, I've realised there's nothing wrong with reconciliation, I can forgive some of my hurt although I may not forget." They continued to move through traffic. "There are some people who deserve a second chance and for me, mending broken bridges is a big part of that. It would be unfair not to allow someone the opportunity to fix what they've broken if they are willing to right their wrongs."

"What about Nate?" Doug asked. "Could you forgive him?"

"No, he's one of the few exceptions." Andy shook his head sadly. "He's just toxic."

"He was in love with you, we all knew it, though we never mentioned it." Doug swallowed. "In the end, I chose to ignore it and to believe he had finally gotten over you. Lily told me it was a stupid decision."

"Lily was a bitch at times, but she was our bitch and she was always a straight shooter." Andy swallowed. "That night at the gallery, after I just found out I was going to Paris with Miranda, she pulled me aside and gave me what for, for breaking Nate's heart. I never led him on though. I have never been interested in men like that, but even if I was, he would not be my type." Andy grinned as Doug snorted. "He's far too hairy and his beard was always so fucking scratchy and gross."

"Not like yours?" Doug teased. "I felt how soft it was last night, even if it's long."

"Didn't you see the feature in Men's Runway. Grooming is essential Dougie." Andy pretended to be offended.

"I have had to let my magazine subscriptions lapse for now, but tell me about the Versace show. I saw it in its entirety on Runway's live stream of Fashion Week." Doug asked.

"Oh, it was a small favour for Donatella to celebrate Miranda's promotion to CEO and a thank you for all the work she's put into the fashion world," Andy chuckled. "And you know I never give up the chance to sing to Queen."

"I still have all the DVD's my mom filmed off our sectional and regional competitions. I should lend them to her." Doug grinned as Andy blushed and pulled outside the apartment.

"Oh, God," Andy muttered. "She'd love it." He unfastened his seatbelt and looked at Doug. "You know there's an open invite at the apartment. If you need company, give me a call and I'll come to get you or order you an UBER. You are not alone, Dougie. Please, remember that."

"You're a good man, Andy," Doug stated before sliding from the truck. He leaned in and smiled. "Thank you for giving me another chance. You won't regret it."

The door slammed shut and Andy watched as Doug let himself into the building. "I hope not, Dougie."

The chiming of his cell caught his attention and he looked where it was held on his dash. He smiled to see Miranda's name and swiped the screen and tapped the message icon.

A large image showed Cassidy and Caroline lying on their beanbags on the floor, with Gertrude and Isolde lying between them. It was Miranda's words that had him laughing.
Miranda Priestly-Blake-Sachs: *I believe the newest edition to our family has two new favourite humans to adore. Gertie hasn't been anywhere near me since their arrival home. I urge you to hurry, you are missing the joys of Frozen...again!*

Andy pulled his cell out from its holster and responded quickly while chuckling.

Andy-Pandy-Dandy-Daddio: *It's Gertrude. I'm just about to head home so will be there shortly. Do you need me to bring anything?*

The response was immediate.

Miranda Priestly-Blake-Sachs: *Just yourself, my darling. You are all we shall ever require. Drive safe.*

A tap on his windows caught his attention and Doug's grinning face had him hitting the button to lower his window. A plastic CD case was thrust at him without a word and he looked down at them in surprise as Doug charged back into the building.

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Miranda stretched out on the sofa with her eyes closed. Although she may look peaceful, her mind had taken her back to all the painful moments she had experienced. Years ago, a therapist had helped her to stop reliving some of these painful times, she had learned not to hear the hurtful words thrown at her echoing over and over in her head, unable to shut the voices out.

She knew a little bit of self-reflection could be helpful but this was not one of those moments. Although she now had everything she wanted, hopelessness soared within her.

She had always cared a little too much about what others thought and how they perceived her, even though she had learned to hide it. She hated being judged or found lacking. She had let this hold her back from the thing she wanted the most all those years ago. Miranda often wished she'd dared to follow Andrei that cloudy afternoon in Paris, to hold onto him with both hands and do what she truly wanted, to love him.

Miranda understood she was an over-thinker and a worrier, although she usually hid it well. These facets of her personality were, as far as she was concerned, some of her worst traits, because they caused her to lash out.

There had been times over the past few months, since losing the baby, where she'd feel like her thoughts weren't clear and that her memory wasn't as good as it used to be. The only way to describe it was a brain fog and it scared her. It left her feeling out of control and tired, even though she now got plenty of sleep, especially now her duties had lightened as CEO.

Sitting up, she decided she needed a distraction and Frozen just wasn't cutting it.

Moving to the kitchen, Miranda started preparing the cottage pie Andrei had requested for dinner. The prep itself would take around thirty minutes, and by that time she hoped Andrei would be home.

She had already cubed the steak up ready to be minced and popped the meat and the food processor blade in the deep freeze. She knew the meat was ready as the edges and corners were stiff, but the middle was still pliable.

She filled the food processor with the cubes of meat until it was half full and pulsed it ten times in
one-second bursts. It was something she had done often and knew just by looking at the finely chopped meat that it would be perfect.

She placed the ground meat out onto a baking sheet and sifted her fingers through the meat, picking out the large chunks that the blades had missed. She tossed them back in the food processor along with the next batch of cubes and repeated the process.

After washing her hands, she pulled a chopping board out and started to chop onion, carrots, celery sticks and two cloves of garlic. She worked efficiently and found herself becoming lost in the process as she concentrated on not catching the tips of her fingers with the sharp knife.

She moved to brown the meat, before once again setting it aside and cooking the vegetables in the same pan, stirring them occasionally as they cooked on a low heat for twenty minutes until they softened. She added the garlic, three tablespoons of plain flour and a tablespoon of tomato puree before turning the heat up and allowing it to cook a little before adding the meat back into the pan.

Miranda poured a large glass of red wine over the concoction and allowed it to boil until it had reduced slightly. Just as she was adding beef stock, Worcestershire sauce, thyme and a bay leaf, she heard her Bobbsey's squeal happily as Gertrude yelped and whimpered her greeting.

Andrei was home.

She lowered the heat to allow their dinner to simmer and patting her hair down, she turned towards the door and was swept up into Andrei's strong arms and all her previous negative thoughts disappeared. This was exactly what she needed. Her Andrei. His warmth, love and the comfort she had only ever found in his arms.

He caught her lips in a soft kiss and hummed before pulling back slightly. "Doug gave me the videos of my Glee performances."

"Oh, how wonderful." Miranda deadpanned. That will be far more enjoyable viewing than Frozen."

"Are you being sarcastic, Ms Priestly?" Andrei asked, his lips twitching.

"Me?" She pretended to be offended before offering a wide smile. "Never, my darling. Now come, I wish to see what music inspired the young Andrei Blake-Sachs." Miranda tugged his hand as he glanced over her shoulder, licking his lips as he inhaled the scent of the food simmering away in the large saucepan.

"Mm, someone's been keeping themselves busy." Andrei glanced down at her and grinned. "And something smells so good. Almost good enough to eat."

Rolling her eyes, Miranda brushed past him and headed back towards the living room.

"And I'm not just talking about the food," Andrei called out at her back.

"Well, if you are lucky, you may get a little taste." Miranda looked over her shoulder. "If you are good and come to watch TV with us." Andrei rushed beside her, grinning happily. "And eat all your dinner." She whispered teasingly.

"Promises, promises." Andrei sassed. "Come on, sweetheart, You're gonna spend the afternoon being blown away by my musical prowess." He smirked. "And I do believe you may find yourself falling in love with me all over again."

"Bighead" Miranda coughed causing him to laugh out loud.
Her heart contracted when he turned one of his bright smiles on her, his eyes shining with happiness. "Well let's hope the babies Priestly-Sachs when they come, take after their very modest mother."

"Babies?" Miranda squeaked.

"Mm, I believe there are cases of twins running on both sides of the family." Andrei shrugged as Miranda's eyes widened. "Didn't I ever mention that Michelle's Grandma and my Grandpa were twins? It's skipped two generations so far, so it's only a matter of time."

Miranda realised he was teasing and smirked. "Are you trying to scare me away, Andrei?"

"Never." Andrei pulled her into his arms and held her close against his chest. It was as if he knew she needed this. "Wherever you go, I go. And if you wanna burn bridges, I'll hand you the matches to do so. I'll always have your back, as I know you have mine."

"What if I burn bridges between us?" Miranda realised this was her greatest fear, the thing that had been gnawing at the edges of her subconscious.

"That will never happen because the bridges we have re-built will stand the test of time, they are indestructible," Andrei promised. "I'm not going anywhere."

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Chapter 24

Chapter Notes

Yay, another fic idea from the lovely celesse201, who for whatever reason, holds the belief I can bring her ideas to life. This is my first major AU. Not giving too much away. Miranda is Miranda but I am making her and the twins slightly younger for the sake of the fic. Andy is not the Andy you expect (Hence the AU)

I do not own the main characters related to The Devil Wears Prada. They are owned by the original author and 20th Century Fox. Some characters will be my own.

"Hey, Andy. Miranda phoned for you. What happened to your cell?" Doug grinned as Andy stepped into his office. "It's not like you not to answer her immediately."

Andy sighed. "This happened." He pulled a zip-locked bag out of his pocket and laid it down.

He watched as Doug stared disbelievingly where he'd laid his paint-covered cell. Andy picked up the desk phone and dialled Miranda's office. While it rang, he whispered. "Can you organise a new one for me?"

"Sure thing, boss." Doug scooped his keys up and moved from the office, his cell to his ear.

"Miranda Priestly's office." The snooty, bored tone of Miranda's new second assistant hit his ears.

"Hi, Amanda." Andy sighed. He'd usually go direct to Miranda's line, but knew she was in meetings all day. "Are you able to tell Miranda, I'm on the phone?"

"Miranda is not to be disturbed," Amanda stated. "May I ask who is calling and I'll leave word."

Andy frowned. The woman was an idiot. "Can you advise her that Andrei is on the line and put me through. I am aware Miranda is busy but..."

"She is not to be..." Andy started to lose his temper.

"I am aware of what she may have advised you in regards to being disturbed, but she has tried to call me and I am not some fucking minion to be dismissed. Get her on the phone, Now!" He caught the voice of Miranda's other assistant, Jessica, querying who was on the line and heard Amanda give his name and say he was being rude after being told he wouldn't be able to speak with the CEO.

Jessica demanded the phone and came onto the line almost breathlessly. "Andy, my apologies. Miranda has been trying to reach you. Please hold."

The line went silent and he relaxed when Miranda answered. "Hello, my darling, I was growing worried."

"I'm sorry, Miranda. I had a small mishap with a can of paint and my cell ended up submerged." Andy explained.
Miranda’s tinkling laughter erupted over the line. When she finally got control, he could still hear the laughter in her voice. "It could only happen to you. Do you need me to arrange a new cell?"

"I have Doug heading over to the Apple store now. He'll enjoy the chance to get out of the office." Andy smiled and sat back comfortably in Doug's chair. "Was there a reason you wanted me?"

He heard Miranda moving and pictured her walking around her desk. He was surprised to catch the small snick as her office door was closed. "I'm ovulating."

Andy grinned. "Oh, so when and where?"

"If you are free, I can be home in twenty minutes, although I am supposed to be meeting that wretched little fellow from Auto Universe a little later and will have to return for 3 pm," Miranda stated.

Andy looked up at the large art deco wall clock and frowned. By the time Miranda got home, there would be very little time before she would have to make her way back. "I could come there."

"Would you?" Miranda seemed surprised.

"Miranda it's been three months. If you believe this would give us a better chance of becoming pregnant, then I will do what is required, wherever you require it." Andy told her lightly.

"How romantic." Miranda sassed.

"I'll ensure the flowers and candles are ready when you come home later." Andy chuckled. "I should warn you, I'm. In my work gear."

"Get your gorgeous butt over here, Andrei," Miranda whispered. "I'll clear the next hour or so."

The call disconnected and Andy smiled. Grabbing his keys and making sure he had his wallet, he forwarded all calls to Doug's cell and locked up the office. Jumping in his truck he headed towards Midtown.

As he drove, his mind wandered to the time since Christmas.

The first month after Miranda came off the pill, she was certain they would get pregnant again. And then her period arrived as normal and the twins called him in a panic. He'd found Miranda in their bathroom, her head resting against her knees as she cried.

There had been no more tears since then, that he had seen, but Miranda found her hopes dashed twice more and it killed him to know that this wasn't going to be as easy as it had been the first time.

He'd been to his Doctor to ensure he wasn't the underlying issue and was told that everything looked normal. His testosterone levels were good, there had been no reduction in his sperm count. Dr Newman's advice was to exercise patience.

He understood patience was not a virtue Miranda held in spades. Andy had decided he would do what it took to give Miranda her heart's desire.

Pulling up outside Elias Clarke, he looked down at himself and shook his head. In jeans and a paint-spattered polo shirt, he would stand out like a sore thumb although luckily no one would dare question his presence.
Miranda still didn't miss a thing that happened in her outer office. She'd known Andrei would not phone her directly after she'd explained her day would be bedlam, and she had wanted to see how Amanda handled herself.

Jessica's almost panicked tone as she called out and told her Andrei was on the line, told her all she needed to know.

Focussing on her work once more, she settled to it, but part of her attention was on the small clock in the corner of her desktop.

Calling Amanda, she sent the woman out for coffee for herself and Andrei, a way of appeasing the man she loved, especially after she had been so dismissive of him. Jessica would go far within Elias Clarke, but right now she doubted whether her newest second assistant would last even a month.

The waiting for Andrei was torture. She let herself remember the last time they had been alone in her office, on her final day at Runway.

Andrei had taken her as he wished, pulling her down so she was straddling his lap, untucking her shirt from her skirt, ripping the shirt open and sending buttons flying, to reveal her bra. He bent to her breasts and took a nipple in his mouth while pulling the other between his thumb and forefinger. His mouth had finally moved up to hers while his hands played in her hair, pulling it from its usual hold.

She'd begun to move against him and was rewarded when she felt him come to life under her. She bent her head and kissed the sensitive pulse point and behind his ear.

Miranda was getting hot under the collar just thinking of that moment, and she knew they could relive that particular memory in her new office.

She heard Andrei's arrival in the outer office and he greeted Jessica warmly, Miranda pulled off her glasses and tossed them onto her desk while pointing for the coffee to be placed on the small table by her couch.

Amanda, who had unknowingly travelled in the elevator with Andrei had trotted straight into her office. She gave the young woman one of her shark smiles. "Send Andrei in, ensure I am not disturbed by anyone except my children."

"And...Andrei?" The young woman stuttered.

"My fiancé." Miranda pursed her lips at the woman's lost look. "My darling, I have coffee." She called out.

Andrei stepped into the doorway and she let her eyes roam over him in his torn jeans and paint-splattered t-shirt. He had little flecks of bright green paint in his beard and a large patch in his hair, as well as a smudge across his forehead. It looked like it wasn't only his cell that had fought and lost against the force of the paint can.

Andrei's smile was bright and he stepped towards her, ignoring the younger woman. Miranda loved how he made her feel as if she was the only woman in any room.

But she needed to get rid of the silly young woman gaping between her and Andrei like a guppy. "Amanda. I need you to go to Calvin Klein, ask for Lynnette and tell her you are there for the
package for me. Advise Jessica to man the desk. I'm in no way to be disturbed until 15 minutes before my 3 o'clock meeting with Paul. That's all."

Miranda felt Andrei shiver at the precise dismissal and turned to him as Amanda clattered from the office, closing the door noisily in her haste.

She couldn't wait any longer. Stalking around her desk, she unbuckled Andrei's belt, snapped the button open on his jeans and tugged the zip down. Freeing him from the support of his boxers, she slipped onto her knees and took him in her mouth.

Andrei groaned as her tongue went to work and he thrust his hips as he grew harder. His hands snared in her hair and he stopped moving. "Please, I'm gonna come if you continue..." He lifted her from her knees and manoeuvred her against her desk. "...and that wouldn't be in any way useful." Andrei's warm, calloused hands roamed under her skirt and her breath hitched as he pushed her lacy thong to one side and stroked her gently. "Mm, did you start without me?

Miranda threw back her head and arched her back into his touch. "Nu-uh, I was thinking about our last evening at Runway." Miranda whimpered as his touch eased off.

Andrei knelt and his hot breath washed over her before his tongue circled her clit. Miranda felt he was aiming to drive her mad. She pressed his face against her and rocked against him, moaning softly as he spread her legs further apart and lapped her. "Please, I need you inside me. Quickly."

Andrei stopped what he was doing and grinned up at her. "Anything for you, sweetheart," He told her. He got to his feet and spun her around to bend her over the desk. He made short work of her panties and hummed at the sight of her ass. Caressing it lightly he pulled her back onto him.

Miranda's fingers wrapped around the edge of her desk as he entered her in one smooth thrust until he bottomed out. She was stunned at how Andrei filled and stretched her. It was delicious. He held her waist as he thrust into her rhythmically.

She matched him thrust for thrust, rolling her hips until they were both panting. The pleasure he coaxed from her was like nothing she ever imagined. Every time they made love, it felt like a new experience, one that she wished to revisit over and over again.

Andrei stopped just as Miranda felt the waves of her climax rising. "I wanna see you." He muttered breathlessly pulling free.

Miranda whimpered as he turned her gently so her ass was perched on the edge of the desk. She spread herself out for him and he entered her once again. Her legs wrapped around his waist when he started moving in her with sharp and deep thrusts.

Her orgasm built quickly and she cried out quietly before biting her lip to stifle the moans as her body shook with her release. She could feel Andrei about to climax and rather than slowing down as he usually would coax another climax from her, he powered on and let himself tumble over the edge. She felt the streams of his searing hot cum settle deep inside her and was satisfied.

They were stood side by side in Miranda's executive bathroom. Miranda had tidied herself up and was trying to help him get the paint from his skin and beard without luck. She'd even googled and tried using toothpaste as a mild abrasive.

"I'll just use WD-40 like normal." Andy insisted as Miranda muttered darkly. She had him leaning over her sink as she tried to work her fingers through the matted mess.
"This is just ridiculous. You should not have to use such harsh chemicals." Miranda insisted.

Andy grinned up at her. "I could try olive oil."

Miranda shuddered. "How you managed to get paint in your beard, is beyond me."

The slamming of her office door against the wall had them both jumping and she heard the yelling. "Well, where is the Dragon?"

They heard Jessica telling the man he was out of order and Miranda was not to be disturbed.

Andy frowned and straightened up while Miranda rolled her eyes. She washed her hands and patted them dry before marching from the bathroom to handle things.

Andy heard the man yelling. "You cut my fucking budget?"

"We were due to discuss this at 3 o'clock, so why are you here now demanding my attention like a petulant child?" Miranda's voice was cold.

"You won't get away with this." The man roared.

"I have the full backing of the board. I have been allocated a budget across all twenty publications. Yours is one of two that is losing money each quarter, and yet my predecessor insisted on raising your budget and cutting that of other far profitable magazines. Why would I continue to waste time by allocating funds to a failing magazine when the money can be used to generate profit elsewhere?" Miranda spoke slowly, sounding exasperated.

"Like Runway?" The man spat.

"Like Men's Runway and Out In New York. Both made more profit in the last quarter than you have in a year." Miranda waved her hand airily.

"You bitch." The man was seething.

Unable to stand by and listen to Miranda being insulted, Andy stepped from the bathroom, water dripping down his face from his wet hair. "Apologise." He growled. His tone was deadly.

Miranda jumped slightly at the sound of his voice before turning to the door. "Jessica, call security."

"You can fuck off too. Irv was right about you." The man pointed angrily at Andy. "You're just fucking her to get what you can from her."

Andy saw red, in two large steps he was towering above the man, staring down at him. The man cowered and Andy sniffed once. "You're pathetic and full of shit. I'd go change your pants if I was you, it smells like you just shat yourself."

Security came running and stalled at the sight of Andy, his fists curled at his sides.

Miranda took charge. "Paul, I'm letting you go."

"Pardon?" The man was stunned.

"You are fired." Miranda reiterated.

"You poisonous fucking bitch! You can't fire me!" Paul yelled pointing a shaking finger at her.
"Just because you are on a power trip, you think that you can treat all of us like garbage and get away with it." The man scowled.

Andy stepped between the shaking man and Miranda. "Last warning." He advised.

Miranda's lips twitched up into a smirk. "I did not fire you because I am on some power trip. I am firing you because you are an entitled, incompetent moron and you are a drain on Elias Clarke resources." She advised the man. "I'm warning you now, should you utter another word, Andrei here will forcibly remove you from my presence. In any case, security is here to escort you to your office, where you will collect your belongings before removing yourself from the premises. You have an hour. That's all." Miranda turned her back to step towards her desk.

Paul brushed past him and gripped Miranda's shoulder as he shouted. "That's not fucking all..."

In a matter of seconds, Andy had the man's arm up against his back, wrenching it painfully. He tugged Paul away from Miranda and spinning him around pushed him towards security. "Have him removed from the building before I'm forced to take matters into my own hands."

Andy rarely let his anger overwhelm him, but seeing Miranda manhandled had pushed him close to the edge. To calm himself he brushed the wet curls from his head and rubbed his clenched jaw. He watched as security pushed the man in front of them out of the office.

Miranda eyed him and must have noticed he was still battling his anger. She stepped close and pulled his free hand in hers, coaxing his hand out of its tight fist. "Jessica, can you get me some olive oil? I am struggling to get the paint from Andrei's beard and hair."

"Yes, Miranda." Jessica ran from the outer office quickly to complete her errand.

"Come, sit. Explain how you feel right now, Andrei." Miranda spoke gently.

"You don't want to know, Miranda," Andy muttered darkly.

"I want to know everything, my darling." Miranda urged him towards the large sofa and pushed him into it. "Sometimes you seem like a total stranger and yet other times, it feels like I have known you in multiple lifetimes."

"I'm so fucking Angry, Miranda." Andy sat forward and held his head in his hands.

Miranda sat back and waited for Andrei to speak, knowing she wanted to learn all she could about his reaction that day.

It certainly wasn't unusual for someone to cuss her out, especially after being fired by her, but Andrei's reaction to the events, especially after that man touched her, was extreme and went against everything she knew about him.

Andrei spoke into his hands. "Sometimes, and without warning, I can go from being fairly happy to an all out rage." He stated. "And every time it's happened, it has been on your behalf. You are my trigger, well, not you, but people's poor reaction to you and the twins."

"You keep control though," Miranda stated softly.

Andrei pulled his head up. "I try. But how long will I be successful at maintaining that control? There are people out there who just say something about you that I don't care for and it fires
something inside me. I get furious at their lack of tact, their ignorance and their disrespect. But what scares me about it is that I know I am capable of physical anger. I could have throttled that man for grabbing you." Andrei admitted. He took one of the cold coffees and sipped it trying to gather his thoughts. "I don't want to let anger rule my life with you, Miranda. I don't want you to look at me one day and fear the man I am."

"I won't." Miranda wanted desperately to reassure him. "I know you, Andrei. Deep down you are kind and extraordinarily gentle. You show it in all ways. We all experience anger, my darling."

"Not like this," Andrei whispered. "I feel so out of control. I hate it." He sniffed back his tears. "I don't want to lose you."

"That will not happen, my darling. We are getting married and planning for a future, including a baby or two," Miranda stated. "If I was in any way unsure, this would not be happening."

"You know, I watch you with the twins and I see how much you love them and the way they love you in return. Your love is for one another is so beautiful and I am truly awed by it." Andrei sat back and caught her eyes. His own glistened with tears and she watched as a single tear escaped to roll down his cheek. "You captivated me when we first met but now..." He took a shuddering breath. "...now, you burn brighter than anybody else in a room. I have felt your love, in each kiss, touch, and all the things you do for our family. So, tell me, how can I just stand by and listen to someone spew their vitriol? How can I just stand there when I've seen the pain in your eyes or heard it in your laughter? You say people's opinions mean nothing to you but it's not just nothing. I know only the small bits of the things you have shared with me and I know there's more that you hold close in silence. I know there are times you feel worthless and wonder how I can love you. But I see you, Miranda. I always have."

Miranda found her tears forming. No one had ever spoken to her like this, so eloquently and passionately. "I know." She admitted pulling him into her arms. "Please, my darling, I know you see me. You are the only one who ever has. It how I know this is my one chance at true love. You are my one true love."

Jessica's reappearance at the door had her stalling at the sight of them in such a close embrace. Miranda raised her head, she gestured with one hand for her to enter and took the olive oil from her.

"Will there be anything else, Miranda?" Jessica asked lightly, keeping her eyes averted.

"Coffee?" Andrei husked hopefully.

"Would you mind?" Miranda asked.

"Not at all. Two triple venti no-foam, lattes coming right up." Jessica offered them a small smile before turning on her heel to leave them. "Searing hot." She assured them.

"Thanks, Jess," Andrei called out as he pulled away and scrubbed his face with his palms. "Now, how about we try to get the paint out of my hair."

"Acceptable, my darling." Miranda caught his eye and smiled softly. "Seriously, you are worse than our daughters."

Andrei's small explosion of laughter was worth the small teasing joke at his expense and she marvelled once again how she had become lucky enough to have him in her life. She swore once again that she would safeguard his sensitive heart, keeping it from further hurt.

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Andy went back to the office and found his new cell waiting for him. It had been backed up from
the cloud and was charging in preparation for his use.

Doug handed him a few messages while looking at him curiously. "Your hair seems rather slick.
It's like Nate's used to get after a night on the fryers."

Andy chuckled. "Miranda insisted on getting the paint out of it. You could have told me before
you ran out of here."

"Why would I do that? The chartreuse suited you." Doug grinned up at him cheekily before
frowning. "Is everything okay?"

"Yeah, just had a bit of a run-in with the ex Editor-in-Chief of Auto Universe," Andy spoke quietly.
"I didn't appreciate him calling Miranda a bitch after he stormed her office and she fired him."

"Oh wow. Tell me you kept your temper?" Doug asked.

"After a fashion." Andy looked through his messages and stepped to his desk. Sitting down he
fired up his Mac and contacted his usual florist by email. Closing his eyes, he wracked his brain to
remember if he had replaced the small scented t-light candles Miranda preferred.

Miranda had work to do to smooth some of the ruffled feathers at Auto Universe. Five people
followed Paul out of Elias Clarke, quitting in a fit of solidarity. The Human Resources team were
already hard at work searching for replacements.

Miranda was sure that with some shuffling Auto Universe could do rather well. It needed new
blood and Miranda had a list of writers and photographers that would help her make the magazine a
success again. It needed to focus on vehicles rather than relying on semi-naked women to generate
sales.

Andy understood Miranda would feel the need to stay at Elias Clarke until she felt everything was
on the right track, and he wanted her to be able to come home and leave all her worries at the front
door. He had plans to have a bath prepared and perhaps a small tray of hors d'oeuvres with a glass
of wine.

The sound of the door opening and Cassidy and Caroline's yells of hello to Doug had Andy
grinning. Their initial routine had changed in the months since Christmas. He'd eased up a little. He
knew he wasn't needed at home on afternoon's and that Cara would continue to do what she did
best and look after the twins, keeping them safe.

Most days they came looking for him at the office anyway, and more often than not, when he was
there, they sat on the floor with their homework while he worked at his desk or drafting table.

Cassidy was very interested in watching him bring his designs to life and copied his work, adding
unique design features. Caroline, like her mom, had an eye for colour. It had been her idea to use
the chartreuse in the kitchen he had been remodelling for an artist friend of Doug's.

Cassidy ran into the office and crawled up onto his knee and stroked his jaw, grimacing at the
greasy texture under her fingers. "Eww, daddy. Your beard feels icky."

"I need a shower. I had to use olive oil in my beard and hair because I got splattered with a can of
paint." Andy explained.

Caroline giggled. "Did Mich throw it at you? She told me she's grumpy because Amy is keeping
her awake with her weird cravings for a rare steak, papaya and sauerkraut."
Andy laughed and patted his knee. Caroline jumped up and nuzzled into his neck happily. "No, my little one. Mich would come off far worse in a paint slinging contest."

"So what happened?" Cassidy asked.

"I just wasn't paying attention and ended up covered in that green paint Caro chose." Andy smiled.

"You're so silly, Daddy." Caroline squealed when he dug his fingers in her ticklish spots.

"Shall we take Gertie for a walk?" Andy asked.

Cassidy caught Caroline's eyes and they held one of their silent conversations.

"Bathtime, pyjamas, mermaid blankets and a movie." They told him in unison.

"Not Frozen." Andy counteracted. "Perhaps Beetlejuice or The Goonies?" He was desperate to show them movies he'd watched as a kid.

Cassidy's shrugged as Caroline smirked. "Okay, but only if we can have pizza for dinner."

Andy's smile widened. The pizza was a firm favourite for the three of them and it was an easy thing for him to agree to. "You're on, my little ones." He couldn't believe how lucky he was to have these beautiful girls in his life. Hugging them close, he found himself reflecting on his luck. "I love you, my little ones."

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It was close to 10 pm when Miranda finally arrived home. After the events of the afternoon, there had been a major shuffle of the existing staff at Auto Universe. She had placed a woman in the temporary position as Editor. The woman was a true car enthusiast and it was that alone that swayed her decision.

Stepping into the apartment, she was stunned to find everything dark. She patted Gertrude's head as the large puppy came to greet her before moving towards the twin's bedrooms.

Seeing her daughters sleeping, she was newly amazed by their innocence as they dreamed. She bent to place a kiss on their heads and tucked the blankets firmly around them. Leaving their rooms, she stepped down the stairs to the lower level where they had settled into the rooms over the time after the New Year.

The bedroom was cast in low lamplight, but there was still no sign of Andrei. She caught the sound of movement in their ensuite and smiled. Easing her tired feet out of her pumps, she moved quietly on stockinged feet towards their large bathroom.

Opening the door fully, she was surprised to see the flickering candlelight. A large glass of wine sat on the corner ledge of the deep bathtub that was filled with steaming water and bubbles.

Andrei stood in nothing but a pair of jeans holding a tray of lovely little delicacies. There were a few of her favourites held on the tray. Tuscan Pepper Bruschetta, Crab-and-Avocado Toasts and Mini Zucchini and Goat Cheese Tarts. She found her mouth-watering and gave silent thanks for the man in front of her. She had barely stopped all afternoon and was hungry.

Unbuttoning her blouse, Miranda let it fall to the floor and her pencil skirt followed suit leaving her in nothing but her matching La Perla thing and bra and sheer thigh-high stocking.
Miranda watched as Andrei’s eyes darkened and he licked his lips. She adored that she continued to have that effect on him. Stepping closer, she took one of the mini tarts and hummed as the flavour exploded on her tongue.

Andrei reacted quickly. Placing the tray down he turned her and unfastened the back clasp of her bra. She shook it from her arms as he knelt and lifted one of her legs onto his knee. He eased down one stocking before repeating the process with her other leg. When she was back on two feet, he gathered the elastic waist of her panties and tugged them down. She kicked them away as he stood and entwining their fingers, handed her into the warm, soothing water.

After settling back, he sat beside her on the floor and handed her the glass of wine. Miranda’s eyes fell closed as she took her first sip of the crisp white wine and felt the stress of the day melt away.

"Will you eat or would you like me to remove your makeup?" Andrei’s voice broke into her conscious and her eyes opened to see him offering her one of the crab and avocado toasts. Sitting up, she leaned towards him and took hold of his hand as she took the morsel from his fingers and ate it slowly, savouring it.

"Makeup now, food later," Miranda told him after she'd swallowed the delicious hors d'oeuvre.

As Andrei moved to gather the items she preferred, Miranda reflected on how things had changed.

When they had first started sleeping with one another, she had been wary of allowing him to see her without makeup, so much so that she left her face lightly made up so it looked natural enough.

Andrei had known, however, and frowned. He had moved to the bathroom, bringing her the alcohol-free makeup removal wipes and her cleanser, toner and moisturiser and handing them to her shyly. "I read once that it's not good for your skin to sleep in makeup."

Miranda remembered blushing. "Andrei, I..."

"I've seen you without makeup before. You are just as stunning without as you are fully made up," Andrei told her. "Please, do not fear a potentially negative reaction. I think you are breathtaking." He told her softly.

Miranda soon leaned the truth behind Andrei’s words. He loved her regardless and she became more confident and comfortable with him. His wide genuine smiles rivalled the brightness of the sun when he caught sight of her in her natural state.

As Andrei worked on her face, she smiled softly. He was so gentle, and he made sure that her makeup was removed properly. He wasn't like Stephen who had claimed in the final months that she was getting old and frumpy or James who dared to suggest a slight nip and tuck.

Her stomach growled and she blushed. "Enough, I need food." Miranda's voice was low.

Andrei's smile was wide. He washed his hands before holding out one of the Tuscan Pepper bruschetta's to her and she took that into her mouth too, humming at the flavours exploding on her tongue.

Andrei continued to feed her as she lay back soaking and occasionally sipping her wine.

When the water started to cool, she stood and he followed, holding a large fluffy bath towel out for her. He wrapped it around her securely before brushing a light kiss against her forehead and leaving her to finish her nightly ablutions.
When she finally dried off and removed brushed her teeth and hair, she moved back into the bedroom as naked as the day she was born. Andrei had turned down the bed and was lying on his side, his hands tucked beneath his head.

He wore nothing but a cheeky smile, his eyebrow raised as she moved to her closet in search of suitable nightwear.

Finding a pale blue silk babydoll, she pulled it over her head and smoothed it over her thighs. She knew it wouldn't be on long, but wanted to tease Andrei a little.

Turning back towards the bed, she collided with a strong, warm body and was wrapped up against Andrei. He had caught her quite unaware on bare feet. She felt the hardness of him against her and relaxed into his embrace. She felt cherished and desired in a way she had not experienced before him. It was still such a novelty.

His breath coasted against the shell of her ear. "God, you are beautiful. I'm so lucky."

Miranda looked up into his beautiful expressive eyes and saw his eyes shining with his love. Stroking her hand along his jaw and cheek, she was happy to find he'd managed to remove the oil.

She realised Andrei had trimmed his beard between leaving her at Elias Clarke and her return home. He looked like he had the first time she'd seen him again and her heart thudded almost painfully. She was grateful once again that he had seen fit to give them chance after chance, the alternative did not bear thinking about.

"Love me, Andrei." Miranda leaned up on her tiptoes and kissed him softly.

"Always," Andrei muttered, sweeping her into his arms bridal style and carrying her to their bed.

Laying Miranda down gently, Andy was stunned by the unguarded love in her eyes as she looked up at him. Miranda was still an enigma, but he was willing to peel the layers away, to keep uncovering the woman under the icy facade she presented to the world.

He had always known there was much more to the woman he loved, and each new facet of her that he uncovered, left him amazed. She was beautiful and sensitive. She cared deeply about her family and was protective of those she classed as friends. And yet she was often guarded, holding the world at arm's length.

Andy knew if the world saw his Miranda, it would fall at her feet. Instead, she had created this persona of the Devil in Prada. It was a safeguard to ensure she couldn't be hurt.

Andy wanted to protect her. He had noticed her growing more comfortable with him and it made his heart soar joyfully.

Hovering over her, his weight resting on his arms on either side of Miranda, Andy lowered his head and teased her lips with light kisses, occasionally slipping his tongue between her parted lips and making her gasp and moan into the caress. He wanted to take things slowly, to make love to her. He wanted her to feel every emotion she created in him. The awe, the passion, the love and the desire.

Andy wanted for their love for one another to create a new life.

He let his gaze roam indulgently over the woman underneath him and saw his desire reflected in
her eyes. Miranda had wanted to tease him by dressing sexily for bed, but it would be Andy doing the teasing that night.

Gently, he cupped one of her breasts and rubbed his calloused thumb against the stiffening peak of her nipple under the silk. Andy adored how sensitive her breasts were, he loved to lavish them with attention until she was squirming or until she had climaxed.

He saw Miranda biting her lip, fighting against the urge to whimper at his light, teasing touch. That just wouldn't do.

He wanted to hear her passion as it intensified. To have her calling out his name or screaming for more.

Andy often found himself fascinated by Miranda's reactions to him. Pinching her nipple, it hardened beneath his fingertips. He bent and lapped her nipple through the silk of the sheer nightgown. One slow, wet lick.

Miranda's back arched, and his arm encircled her waist, holding onto her.

He continued licking until he held it between his teeth, applying enough of the right kind of pressure to make her gasp.

Andy glanced up as Miranda threw her head back, pulling his hair. Her hips bucked, making contact with his cock. He felt himself growing harder and pushed his hips down, not enough to give her pleasure, but so she knew he was ready once he believed she was.

His focus switched to her other breast, offering small bites, licks and occasionally sucking at the hardened peak.

Miranda begged him for more. She wanted him to stop teasing her, to have mercy on her, to take her and make her his.

Andy adjusted slightly and his cock pressed against her. He could feel the heat of her against him, the wetness coated the head.

Miranda writhed in pleasure, gasping as he sucked her nipple in his mouth and bit down. She was rubbing her clit against the tip of his cock, trying to get friction where she needed it most.

Andy decided to satisfy her another way, moving down he peppered kisses between the valley of her breasts before moving south. His lips trailed over her silk-clad belly as his hand pulled the babydoll up over her hips. He continued moving until his mouth hovered over her clit, his hot breath blowing over the sensitive bundle of nerves.

Giving Miranda time to calm herself slightly, Andy inhaled the scent of her desire and blew a breath across her clit as he hummed.

Unable to resist from tasting her, his tongue teased her, swiping between slick folds. Miranda whimpered and her hips bucked against his mouth.

Miranda looked down at him and as he caught her eyes, he flicked his tongue over the sensitive bundle of nerves, once, twice, a third time had Miranda arching her back and entangling her fingers in his hair as she wailed his name and shuddered through her first orgasm of the night.

Andy continued paying attention to Miranda's clit, coaxing her through the waves of her climax as
her muscles spasmed until she went limp. Her grip on his dark hair remained tight as he rested his head on her thigh and waited for her to gather herself.

Miranda shivered and her grip loosened. She ran her fingers through his hair gently. Casting his eyes up, he saw her small smirk of satisfaction. He moved up between her parted thigh and brushed his nose teasingly against hers in an Eskimo kiss.

Miranda's eyes were filled with desire and tenderness. Andy raised his muscular body and flipped them so Miranda was lying on top of him. Her hands cupped his jaw and she nuzzled into his neck.

He knew she would feel his cock where it stood erect between them and he was surprised when she lifted her hips and eased the tip of his cock against her opening. Slowly, she lowered herself onto him until he was sheathed fully.

Their foreheads touched as he breathed deeply, revelling in the intimacy of the moment. Neither of them moved.

Miranda slowly began to rock her hips, which built a pressure between them that had them both moaning.

The pace she set was deliciously slow and lost in Miranda's eyes, the world around him ceased to exist and the only sound he heard within the busy city they lived, was that of their pleasure as Miranda continued to ride him towards his climax. Andy felt himself lengthening and hardening in preparation of his orgasm and when he finally exploded, her orgasm ripped through her.

Miranda collapsed against him, her breathing ragged in his ear.

Using the last of his energy, Andy turned them so they lay face to face in the lamplight. Miranda's body trembled as it recovered from the aftershocks of their lovemaking and he pulled her against his chest.

Unconsciously, Miranda teased the tips of her fingers across his shoulders and upper back and drew his lips to hers for a sweet kiss.

Andy knew they would both eventually sleep, wrapped around one another in their love. And tomorrow would be another day, of loving this woman, of being her champion and along with their children they would continue to build a life together.

Pulling back slightly, he brushed a light kiss on Miranda's forehead and follow followed it with kisses on her closed eyelids. Andy watched as a small smile blossomed on her face and at that moment, he finally understood the true meaning of contentment.

This was where he belonged.

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Epilogue

Another fic idea from the lovely celesse201, who for whatever reason, holds the belief I can bring her ideas to life. This is my first major AU. Not giving too much away. Miranda is Miranda but I am making her and the twins slightly younger for the sake of the fic. Andy is not the Andy you expect (Hence the AU)

I do not own the main characters related to The Devil Wears Prada. They are owned by the original author and 20th Century Fox. Some characters will be my own.

Miranda marched into the apartment and stalled. It was quiet but for a low voice and the whisper of feet. Smiling softly, she moved directly towards the kitchen only to come to a standstill again at the sight before her.

She let herself reflect on the time nine months before when their future wedding plans changed unexpectedly.

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"But Andrei, it's all arranged." Miranda hissed in disbelief.

Why was he trying to change things now? Didn't he want to marry her?

"I'm sure everyone would understand if we just slipped away. Just you, me and our little ones." Andrei coaxed.

"But Bora Bora, I thought..." Miranda held her hand up seeing he was going to interrupt. "...you wanted a beach wedding."

"I just want you. I don't care where it happens. Michelle and Amy will be having their baby around Memorial day and they won't be able to fly with a newborn or with Amy heavily pregnant." He sighed. "We could get married in L.A rather than at City Hall, At Malibu beach or my family home. The gardens are quite beautiful."

"It does not leave us much time to arrange things," Miranda stated.

"Then we'll push it back a little. And when you think of it, what's to arrange? Neither of us is religious, so we could hire any celebrant. We have our marriage licence already. Just think about it. A week in L.A, enjoying warm summer days and nights as we celebrate our marriage. We could even honeymoon in Bora Bora if you want." Andrei counteracted her arguments easily.

Miranda sighed and rubbed the bridge of her nose. Miranda knew she would give in. She was happy to give Andrei whatever he wanted. "Fine." She agreed. "We'll vacation in Bora Bora another time but we shall have the wedding no later than the last week of June. That gives us time to get organised."
"Okay-Doki," Andrei smirked at her. "That gives us plenty of time to organise stuff."

She couldn’t stop her elbow from digging in Andrei’s ribs and his laughter was unnecessarily boisterous.

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Andy heard Miranda's heels but continued as he was, holding their daughters close as he swayed and hummed softly along to the quiet music in the background. He caught sight of his wife's soft smile and thought back to the days before their wedding, held at his family home.

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He travelled with Doug and Seb to L.A the week before the wedding, leaving Miranda and the twins with promises he would call and keep them updated.

They worked like Trojans to ensure everything was perfect and his tan deepened from his work out in the gardens, making sure there was not a blade of grass out of place. Doug and Seb set up rooms for the twins.

Amy and Michelle decided to travel to L.A with their baby, Jonathan, the way they had travelled to New York just over eighteen months before. Enjoying an extended road trip, they made their way across the country, calling Andy three days after leaving New York to tell him they were just leaving Tulsa.

Miranda and the twins, along with Nigel, Serena and Emily flew out to Los Angeles the day before the wedding. He met them at L.A.X and swept Miranda and the twins into his arms, holding them tightly against his chest.

It had been a long week, but it had been worthwhile. The house, even if he admitted it himself, looked beautiful and their wedding day would be perfect.

"I can’t wait to show you all my home, from home." Andy grinned brightly until he saw how pale and tired Miranda seemed and his smile faltered. "Come, my loves. It’s time to go home and rest. We’ll have a good dinner and settle for the evening. Tomorrow will be a busy day."

When they pulled into the gates of his home, Miranda’s eyes widened in surprise at the large Spanish style residence he’d once called home. "How big is it?" She asked a little breathlessly.

" The main house has four bedrooms, six baths, an executive office, and the usual family rooms. Then there’s the three-bedroom, two-bath guest house, the pool, a spa, outdoor kitchen, garden, patio and my workshop." He licked his lips nervously. "The main building was built in 1928 and Grandpa added the extras over the years."

He knew Miranda hadn't expected this house. It was something that surprised many. He'd had a few people over the years, since his Grandpa's death, asking if he would be interested in selling. He’d been offered five million dollars in a cash sale the year before and had refused without even thinking about it. Perhaps one day he would sell, but right now he didn't want to let it go. It is where he felt close to his Grandparents.

The SUV came to a stop and Cassidy and Caroline squealed at the sight of Amy and Michelle and rocketed from the car to pull faces and coo at Jonathan, who was wrapped in Amy's arms. Nigel rushed from the car behind the twins and swept Seb in a large hug before leaning in and kissing him. Serena and Emily left the car hand in hand and gazed up at the house.
Miranda smiled genuinely. "It's beautiful, my darling. Will you show me to our room so I can freshen up?"

"Sure thing, sweetheart." Andy was quick to agree. Leading her quickly through the house, he opened the wide double doors of the master suite. "There's fresh towels and your usual toiletries in the ensuite. I'll go get your bags and try to coax the twins away from little Jon."

"Good luck with that." Miranda's lips twitched into a half-smile and she started to strip her clothes and he gaped at her.

Unable to resist, he stepped close and tilted her head up to catch her lips in a kiss. "Be right back, beautiful lady and if you're lucky I'll scrub your back."

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When Andrei started to sing softly to their daughters, Miranda remembered their wedding night and leaned against the door frame and crossed her arms against her chest to watch her family.

"Every time our eyes meet
This feeling inside me
Is almost more than I can take

Baby, when you touch me
I can feel how much you love me
And it just blows me away."

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The day had gone off without a hitch, with them saying their vows, declaring their love and being declared man and wife. She wore cerulean as she first said she would, while Andrei wore black chinos and a crisp short-sleeved white shirt. He had rainbow suspenders attached to his pants, which added a touch of colour to his outfit and which he admitted had been his little one's idea.

The afternoon wore on, they had their first dance and then Andrei had pulled the twins into his arms and swung them around the makeshift dance floor singing along to What a Wonderful World by Louis Armstrong. The twin's clear happiness as they danced with him had everyone smiling.

The dancing continued with Douglas, Seb, Nigel and Andrei twirling her around in turn. Andrei danced with Amy, Michelle and Serena but upon offering his hand to Emily she shook her head furiously, punched him in the arm, called him a stupid arse and then kissed his cheek before trotting away. He turned to Donatella instead and she had allowed herself to be swept up and led around the room gracefully. Miranda found herself unable to tear her eyes from the man.

She watched as Michelle pulled Andrei to one side, whispered in his ear and gestured to the corner of the room. His smile was bright and a hush rose through the room as the music stopped.

Andrei stepped through the guests towards her, strumming his guitar with ease and then he started to sing.

"I met you in the dark,
You lit me up
You made me feel as though
I was enough
We danced the night away,
We drank too much
I held your hair back when
You were throwing up

Then you smiled over your shoulder
For a minute, I was stone-cold sober
I pulled you closer to my chest

And you asked me to stay over
I said, I already told ya
I think that you should get some rest

There were cheers and whoops of delight as he continued to sing softly to her. It was the perfect song and Andrei was simply sublime.

I knew I loved you then
But you'd never know
'Cause I played it cool
When I was scared of letting go

I know I needed you
But I never showed
But I wanna stay with you
Until we're grey and old

Just say you won't let go
Just say you won't let go."

As soon as the song finished she pushed herself into his arms and sighed as she felt his lips brush against her head before he whispered. "I promised my little ones another dance each." He pulled away reluctantly and offered her a wide smile.

Putting his guitar down, Andrei stepped beside Cassidy and held out his hand out.

Cassidy took it and he lifted her so her feet were on his and then took her in a waltz around the room, laughing loudly as she squealed. He did the same for Caroline and she caught sight of Patrick snapping photos of them. She knew they would become firm favourites out of the ones taken that day.

The evening wound down and the guests left except those that were staying at the house with them. Cassidy and Caroline had been put to bed after curling up on the sofa and falling asleep despite the noise that surrounded them.

"A toast," Douglas called out, tapping on his wine glass to catch everyone's attention. "You know, watching Miranda and Andy together has renewed my faith in true love. I feel honoured to be a part of this special day." Douglas wiped a tear from his eye. "May you continue to show your love for each other every day. I raise my glass to toast the two of you on your wedding day."

Their friends and family hoorayed until Nigel giggled. "Doug's a poet and didn't know it." He giggled again, clearly having drunk too much.
Miranda caught Serena and Emily's eyes and rolled her own and she bit back her laughter as Seb clapped his hand over Nigel's mouth and told him to shush.

Taking a sip of the iced water she was drinking, Miranda stood up and gestured for quiet. "This is not the wedding I imagined Andrei and I would have when he asked me to be his wife, even though I'd been advised he wanted a small, intimate ceremony. Regardless, it has been an altogether wonderful day. I want to thank you all especially for being here to celebrate with us and for becoming the family I hadn't realised I needed." She smiled at the room before turning to Andrei. "But most of all I thank you, my darling. For granting me the opportunity to love you. You have brought so much happiness to my life and I am thankful each day for you."

"Ditto." Andrei gave her a dopey grin, clearly surprised by her open display. He looked around. "Now, I think it's time we drink up and head to bed. Some of you have an early start tomorrow. He looked pointedly at Nigel who was due on the red-eye back to New York the following morning. Seb, Douglas, Emily and Serena were heading back to the city too."

Andrei took her hand after they had with everyone goodnight and led her to their bedroom, closing the door and flipping the lock in place. He stepped close and pulled her against his chest. "Hello, Mrs Blake-Sachs."

"Mm, we never discussed names in all of our planning, did we?" Miranda stated.

Andrei shook his head. "No." He smiled. "I'd understand if you kept Priestly. It's less of a mouthful."

"I have a gift for you." She pulled away and grabbed her cell. Ignoring the messages of congratulations. She pulled up her video app and handed him the phone. "Please, watch that." She waited for him to press play and concentrate on the screen before letting her eyes fall closed.

The scent of the chicken that was currently in the oven comforted Andy, and he sang as if it was only him in the room. However, as always he could sense Miranda's eyes following him as he moved.

"I don't know how you do what you do
I'm so in love with you
It just keeps getting better."

He let his mind take him back to the moment his life changed again.

Andy watched intently as Miranda's voice came over the video. "How do I rotate this thing?" He heard a low female voice that he didn't recognise in the background. "Oh, never mind, here we are." Her face came into the picture and her smile was wide and breathtaking.

He watched her eyes flick away once, twice, before looking directly into the camera. The sound of a door clicking closed in the background told him Miranda was alone and the way the video shook, showed she was nervous.

"Hello, my darling. I have some news, and perhaps I will send this to you later, although there is a part of me wishes to see your reaction." She licked her lips, making them glisten invitingly. "We have been so busy with work, family life and the wedding that we have been remiss in taking the
time to connect." There was a brief pause. "I suppose you're wondering what this is about? I am at
my doctor's, my darling. I missed my last period and didn't realise, but three days ago, the day
after you left for Los Angeles, I started feeling so sick. The only time I have felt like that was when I
was pregnant with the twins." She smiled softly. "I'm sure you have guessed by now but I have
someone I would like to introduce you to." The camera flipped forward and he saw the familiar
black monitor showing an ultrasound. "This is your son or daughter, Andrei. We are fourteen
weeks pregnant and everything is looking perfect. The heartbeat is strong and he or she is quite the
correct size for the age." The image was blurry and he couldn't make anything out. "Fourteen
weeks, can you believe it?" The camera rotated again and he saw the tears glistening in Miranda's
eyes. "I didn't dare hope for this, my darling. I thought..." She took a deep shuddering breath. "...I
thought all hope was lost, but I swear this time everything will be fine. I promise you I will do all I
can to ensure this child comes into the world healthy."

Andy didn't know what to say. Sinking on the edge of the bed he replayed the video. His breathing
was short and sharp as he fought his emotions but he wasn't able to stop his tears.

When he finally looked up, he found Miranda on her knees in front of him, her head bowed.

Andrea caught her whispered words. "I suppose being Mrs Blake-Sachs is fitting in many ways. I
should have the same name as our child."

Andrei’s soft voice continued to croon soothingly as his eyes mapped the features of their youngest
child, from her dark curls to the full pouting lips and bright cornflower blue eyes. He often looked
at her and their three daughters as if they were magic and perhaps in his eyes they were.

"The smell of your skin
The taste of your kiss
The way you whisper in the dark
Your hair all around me
Baby, you surround me
Touch every place in my heart."

Miranda remembered the months of her pregnancy, with Andrei fussing over her. He had been so
proud of her, of her changing body, as their child grew within her. He’d placed her and the twins at
the centre of his world and they knew they were loved wholeheartedly.

She was weary but euphoric when she stepped into the apartment. Auto Universe had finally made
a small profit under its new Editor-in-Chief. Smelling the scent of home cooking, her stomach
rumbled and Miranda rubbed her growing bump absent-mindedly. She hoped it was something
delicious.

Looking up she found Andrei watching her, his smile widening as he stepped towards her. His
hand reached out and settled where she had been rubbing and was greeted with a strong kick that
had her wincing.

Andrei leaned forward and brushed his lips against hers. "Hi." His voice was low. "The twin's are
in bed. Come, we'll have supper and then get you comfortable."

They settled at the kitchen table and Miranda looked down to see the lamb chops with sweet potato
wedges, snow peas and broccoli he'd set in front of her. She pushed the dish away. "I can't eat that." She started to cry. "I want a meatball pizza." She was almost hyperventilating. The pure need left her overwhelmed. It was ridiculous.

Andrei stood quickly and pulled his cell from the counter. "Hi, Alessandra. This is Andy from upstairs. Could you do me a huge favour? I need a large Meatball pizza..."

"...with Ranch dressing and black olives." Miranda hiccupped.

"You hear that?" Andrei laughed. "Thanks, I'll be down in ten." He disconnected his cell and slipped it into his pocket. Taking her plate, he placed the contents in a Tupperware box. "Looks like Doug and I have leftovers for lunch tomorrow. Yum."

"I'm sorry, my darling." Miranda swiped at her eyes.

"Hey, none of that now," Andrei told her. "How many times do I need to tell you? Whatever you and the baby need, you'll have."

Miranda wasn't surprised when he left her.

Andrei had categorically stated that he would do anything to help her. They were a team and she was going through so much. He told her how amazed he was at how well she was handling everything.

Pouring herself a glass of Pellegrino, she made her way to the living room and eased her swollen feet from her heels and curled up on the couch.

Andrei returned quickly with a large pizza box in his hands. He set it down on the low coffee table and opened it.

Miranda moaned as the scent of melted cheese overwhelmed her senses. Scrabbling for a slice, she took a large bite and moaned again. She finished the slice quickly and grabbed another. "You are my knight in shining armour." She told him as she bit into the second slice almost reverently.

Andrei sat next to her, watching her with his hand resting on her knee. She swallowed her mouthful. "Why are you watching me? Do I have the ranch dressing on my face?" She asked.

"Nope." Andrei grinned. "You're cute though."

Miranda sputtered and placed her slice down. Sipping her water, she turned slightly. "You are absurd. I am far from cute, my darling."

"Whatever." Andrei scooted back and bent low, his lips touching her rising bump. "Your mommy's the cutest, kiddo. Don't ever let her tell you otherwise." He glanced up at her almost shyly. "Have I told you lately how much I love you?"

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Andy had spent the last months of his life in a constant state of bliss with one or two exceptions. What he and Miranda had was truly special. He had always known how much she loved their children, but the way she was with him was a revelation.

"I want to spend the rest of my life with you by my side
Forever and ever
Every little thing that you do
Passionate, caring and fiercely loyal, when rumours started about him having an extramarital affair two months after their wedding, when he was spotted with a beautiful, older woman, Miranda used all of her pull to set the record straight.

"I cannot say I am happy about this, but I shall do what you wish this once." Miranda's words carried across the room to him and he wondered idly why had caused her to raise her voice from its usual whisper.

He stepped away from the Maitre D' quickly and headed towards their usual table only to come to a standstill. Sliding into position next to his wife, he bent and kissed her cheek before straightening and glaring at the woman opposite.

"Hello, son. It's good to see you." The woman looked across at him, and her eyes locked on where his hand covered Miranda's shoulder and on the wide platinum Cartier wedding band he wore.

"Hey, mom. I wish I could say the same." Andy swallowed as Miranda stood and pushed him down into the chair she had vacated.

"I must head back to Elias Clarke, my darling." Miranda squeezed his hand.

"But Miranda, I..." Andy was stunned. "You should eat."

"My darling, I was just here to facilitate this meeting. Please hear her out, just this once. Give her a chance." Miranda spoke quietly. "My afternoon is fairly clear should you need me."

Andy watched as Miranda swept from the restaurant. He had a feeling that this lunch would be one that had him seeking out the comfort of his wife's arms.

"You look good, son." His mom said softly.

The words had him tearing his focus from his wife. "Yeah, to say I'm the family disappointment I turned out okay." Andy found himself growling.

His mom looked shamefaced for a moment before pulling herself together. "I've seen you in the papers and magazines talking about your work. You are very talented. Then a few months ago your aunt showed me the modelling you did for Runway and then Calvin Klein. It was a shock to see your image rising from a large poster in Saks Fifth Avenue in Cincinnati." She sipped a glass of ice water. "Your dad told me not to come here today, but I emailed Miranda and she said it was fine." His mom continued to babble. "She looks good, son. She's simply glowing as she carries my grandchild."

"Granddaughter," Andy stated. "We're having a girl."

"How wonderful." His mom smiled, and he saw himself in the tilting of her lips and the shape of her cheekbones.

"What do you want from me, mom?" Andy asked.

His mom placed her hand on top of his and leaned closer. "A chance to make amends. To be a part of your life. You are my only child and..."
Andy snatched his hand away. "Why now?" He demanded. "What do you really want?"

The woman opposite frowned upon seeing he didn't believe her. Andy knew she just wanted something from him and was determined to find out what. They sat in uncomfortable silence for a few moments as their server brought the salads ordered before his arrival.

"I want you to sell me the house in Los Angeles." His mom finally admitted, playing with her food.

"No," Andy whispered. "If I sell, it won't ever be to you or dad."

"I've left your dad." His mom admitted. "I need to leave Ohio. I need time to work out who I am without him."

Andy felt her sadness but his decision was made. "I'm not going to sell you the house." He saw his mom about to argue and held up his hand. "But you can stay in the guest house until you get back on your feet. It's plenty big enough."

"Andrei, I..." His mom started to speak.

"No, don't call me that." Andy interrupted. "There's only one person who uses my name like that, and I married her. Don't ever call me Andrei, you never have before, so why start now?"

His mom nodded. "Okay, if that's what you wish. You must realise I am truly sorry about what happened between us, Andy and pleased to see you have achieved your heart's desire."

"You should have been happy I was following my heart years ago. Now, if you'll excuse me, I have an appointment with my daughters." He stood and looked across at the woman who had given him life. He pulled a business card from his wallet and handed it to her. "I'll be at my office tomorrow morning. Swing by and I'll have the access codes and keys waiting for you."

"Will I get to meet Cassidy and Caroline." She asked hesitantly.

"Maybe one day, mom." He looked at her. "You and dad hurt me more than I'll ever be able to express. You belittled me and made me feel like I wasn't enough." Andy faltered. "I don't know if I'll ever be able to forgive that."

He stood and made his way to the Maitre D, who told him Miranda had paid for lunch. He left the restaurant and started walking down the sidewalk aimlessly.

He heard his name being called and spun on his heel to face his mom. He was stunned when she wrapped her arms around his waist and buried her face in his neck and patted her shoulder awkwardly as she cried.

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Miranda wasn't surprised when the twins finally spotted her and let out little squeals of delight. They had got used to her being home and this first week back at work had been hard on them all.

As they let go of Andrei as he continued to sing, they charged towards her she scooped them up into her arms easily and smothered them with kisses.

"Every little thing that you do
I'm so in love with you
It just keeps getting better
I want to spend the rest of my life with you by my side"
She remembered the afternoon after leaving Andrei with his mother.

_She became increasingly worried as the afternoon passed. Andrei hadn't made contact and upon calling his cell was met with his voicemail._

Cara eventually called to advise her that Andrei had arrived home and promptly locked himself away in their bedroom. It was so unlike him she called out to Jessica for her bag and coat and advised to have Roy waiting to take her home. She asked Cara if they could make themselves scarce and Cara advised she and the twins would walk Gertrude.

_Miranda swore if Elizabeth Blake-Sachs had hurt her Andrei in any way she would never forgive it._

_Upon leaving Elias Clarke she was stunned to see the milling reporters. As soon as they saw her they shouted their questions. Demanding to know what they thought of Andrei's betrayal with another woman._

_Miranda had no idea what they were talking about and as Roy stepped beside her to ease her into the car he told her about a photo that had appeared an hour before of Andrei and an unknown woman in an intimate embrace._

_Miranda pulled up the website for TMZ and almost laughed. There was a photo of Andrei, stood stiffly as his mother wrapped her arms around his waist tightly, her head buried in his neck. It was ridiculous that the assumption had been made that he sought solace elsewhere, but the press wouldn't care about finding out the truth._

_Miranda dialled the Ritz Carlton and asked to be put through to Elizabeth Blake’s room. Elizabeth picked up immediately. "Miranda, what can I do for you?" Her voice was hoarse as if she'd spent time crying._

"You will come to dinner this evening. Le Bernardin, 8 pm. I will send a car for you." _Miranda stated._

"I don't think Andy..." _The woman started to speak._

"No, no. That wasn't a question." _Miranda heard the woman huff and smirked._

"Fine," _Elizabeth responded._

_Twenty minutes later, Miranda made her way into the apartment and toed her heels off and unfastened the button on her skirt. She sighed in relief. The baby kicked and she smiled. Their little girl had spent the day making her presence felt._

_Pulling herself to her feet, Miranda moved carefully down the stairs to their bedroom and tried to open the door, it was locked. She knocked twice and was met with silence. "My darling, open the door." She spoke softly._

_Getting no response, she sighed and made her way to her study and used the adjoining door_
leading through to their ensuite. She entered the bedroom and saw Andrei sprawled on the bed, her pillow clutched against his chest as he napped.

Miranda tugged her skirt down over her thighs and kicked it away. Unfastening her blouse, and unfastening the front clasping bra, she found one of Andrei’s t-shirt and pulled it over her head. Sitting on the end of the bed, she pulled her stockings free and scooted back. Pulling her pillow from Andrei’s arms she tossed it at the head of the bed and snuggled against him.

Andrei hummed and pulled her closer, he rubbed his nose against her hair and his grip tightened. She let her eyes fall closed and sighed. She was so comfortable lying in Andrei's arms and it seemed like an intolerably long time since they had woken together that morning.

Andrei's hands came to life, running up and down her back before cupping her ass and giving it a light squeeze.

She bit back a moan. One thing this pregnancy had brought about was an almost insatiable urge for Andrei. Loving him sometimes seemed like one of the cravings she just couldn't fulfil, no matter how much she tasted him.

Andrei certainly had no complaints. When she'd initially started to gain weight she had grown upset and he'd offered reassurances that he still found her desirable. His coaxing touches bringing easing her doubts as pleasure surged through her.

If she was honest, she was glad to finally be able to take her clothes off. Her breasts had been achy all day and were swollen. They had become increasingly sensitive over the last three months and would only become more so in the next two months.

Andrei's hands had pushed the t-shirt up and his warm palm was splayed against her stomach.

"So beautiful." Andrei’s soft murmur had her eyes opening and her eyes locked with his. She saw the desire in them and pulled his face down to kiss him, her tongue slipping between his parted lips.

Right now, she was craving his physical touch, but she needed to make sure he was okay.

Andrei's other hand moved up and began to caress her breasts. She loved how caring and attentive he was. She whimpered a little and hoped he wouldn't think he was hurting her.

Andrei stopped caressing her and pulled his hand away. "Sweetheart, did that hurt? I need you to tell me if...my fingers are a little wet. What is that?" Andrei lifted his hand and gazed at it.

Miranda saw the little white droplets on his fingers and blushed. "Oh, I should..." She made to move but Andrei stopped her.

"Sweetheart, don't be embarrassed. You're starting to lactate. It's just your body preparing for our daughter." Andrei smiled. His voice was so tender. He stroked her cheek, gazing deeply into her eyes. "This is amazing. You are amazing."

"I feel like I don't even know my body anymore." Miranda husked. She felt she could barely keep up with the changes, even though she’d been through this before.

Andrei looked at her with so much love and understanding. "Sweetheart, I'm sorry you feel that way, but I love sharing this experience with you and you are so sexy. I can't keep my eyes off of you." He stroked down to her ass again. "Or my hands."
Miranda felt her smile was starting to form. She'd had no inclination to have sex when pregnant with the twins but this time she was so horny. It had initially made her quite self-conscious.

"Seeing your body change and watching you handle it with such grace, you simply glow. But I also know you're uncomfortable and I don't want to hurt you." Andrei stated.

"Make love to me," Miranda asked. She wanted him so much.

Andrei's hand moved to her inner thigh. It felt so good. She couldn't quite believe he wanted her.

"Yes, sweetheart. I want to make love to you, to make you feel good, to take care of you in every way that I can and every way that you need."

She couldn't hold back her moan at the words.

Andrei adjusted himself on the bed so that he was laying on his side, next to her. He moved his hand up a little to feel her panties. "Oh, my beautiful Miranda. You are already so wet. Is that for me?"

"Ye-es." Miranda hissed as he moved his fingers up and down the front of her panties.

"How about we take these panties off?" Andrei whispered teasingly. He pulled her panties down and off in one smooth movement and tossed them aside. He moved her legs, spreading them wider and placing a pillow under her hips before slowly inching his hand down her body and pressing his fingers between her folds to gently rub her wet pussy.

Miranda reached between them to feel his cock under his pants. He was already rock hard.

Andrei picked up the pace and paid attention to her clit. Her arousal had caused it to swell. His movements slowed and he set his fingers to run in steady circles.

"Fuck. Don't stop. It feels so good..." Miranda's orgasm crashed through her and she saw stars behind her eyelids as they squeezed shut.

"Oh, Miranda. You're so gorgeous." Andrei's fingers swirled around her opening, spreading the juices seeping from her as her body quivered. He moaned, as he blazed a trail of kisses on her cheeks, eyelids and finally her lips.

Miranda felt lighter and she couldn't stop smiling. "I needed that."

"Oh, I'm not done with you, yet," Andrei told her moving down and between her legs until his mouth was inches from her pussy. He smiled up at her, and her breath caught. He dipped his head and licked slowly, lapping at her clit while he brought his middle finger to her entrance. He toyed with the opening before slowly entering her.

Miranda could feel herself adjusting to having him inside her and hooked his finger and grazed her g-spot and she was back on the edge another orgasm. She arched her back, not being able to contain the pleasure. Her hands wound in his hair and she shook against his lips.

"I think you're ready for me now." Andrei husked breathlessly. "If it hurts, I need you to tell me right away, okay?"

"Okay." Miranda was willing to agree to anything as long as Andrei continued to pleasure her. He knew her so well.
"You're so beautiful, Miranda." Andrei hummed against her and entered her with a second finger as his thumb ran across her clit. She felt herself growing wetter and she could feel her orgasm coming on, clenching and unclenching around her fingers. He held her ass up so he could hit g-spot consistently. Within seconds, her back arched and she let out a loud moan and squirted over his face and hand.

"Holy shit, so fucking hot," Andrei whispered.

"Please, I can't wait anymore. I need you right now. I need to feel you inside me." Miranda was desperate.

They had tried many different positions. They found having her on top was the most comfortable. Andrei stroked her breasts and belly gently before moving to lay beside her on the bed. Stripping his pants and boxers off, he lifted her onto him and placed her across his lap.

Miranda needed him so badly. Using his shoulders as leverage she eased herself down upon him, enjoying the sensation of stretching around him.

He looked her in the eyes as he lifted her slightly and adjusted her so she was comfortable. She loved how he seemed to know what she needed.

She couldn’t see over rounded belly but as he settled deep inside her she looked down at him and saw his pleasure. Letting her weight to push down on his cock, she let out a loud moan and sank even further.

Andrei took a deep breath and lifted her a little and started to slowly thrust into her. She knew he would feel her pussy throbbing as moved and his moans were like music.

"Harder, please!" Miranda's breathing had turned ragged.

"How can I say no when you're so polite?" Andrei thrust harder, his grip on her hips helping him lift her up and down on as he rammed into her quickly. "God, you turn me on so much." Andrei groaned.

She felt so loved and safe with Andrei, but most of all she felt sexy. "I'm going to come." Miranda breathed. Andrei increased his speed, pounding into her. "Yes, I want you to come, for me."

"Come with me," Miranda demanded. "Please, I need you to come inside me."

Andrei moaned and started to thrust even harder. He sat up and held her against him, thrusting deeper.

She looked up into his eyes and saw they were almost black from desire and yet his smile was still gentle as he watched her. She could feel herself clenching around him as he hardened further.

He slowed the pace of and she soared through another climax. Andrei held her down on his length as he erupted inside her, thrusting slowly until he was whimpering. "Oh, God." His breathing was laboured.

"Mm, quite" Miranda collapsed on top of him and he turned them so they were both lying on their side. "Are you okay, my darling. I was worried."

"I am now. Holy shit! What a way to wake up." Andrei's smile was wide. "What you do to me woman."
Miranda hummed and her eyes fell closed. She was suddenly very sleepy. "Wake me for dinner. We have reservations with your mom at 8 pm."

Andrei pulled away quickly. "What?" He was red-faced "Why?"

Miranda groaned and ran her fingers through her hair. "So we can show TMZ she is not your newest floozy and perhaps so I can work out her weakness and end her should she hurt you again."

Andrei's loud laughter was a relief. "My floozy? Oh my..." He continued to laugh until tears sprang into his eyes and didn't stop.

Miranda pulled him close and held him against her, stroking her hands up his back soothingly. "I will not allow anyone to hurt you, Andrei. You are my family now and I will fight dirty, if necessary."

With his song over and their elder daughters in Miranda's arms, Andy looked down at his wife and grinned. Stepping close he watched as she held her hands out for their daughter. Handing her over, he brushed a kiss against her forehead and his free hands ran through the twin's fine red hair and they smiled up at him happily.

The last six weeks, since the birth of their little one, had been hard on them all. Miranda had a c-section and Andy stayed beside her throughout it all.

The moment Abigail Grace Blake-Sachs took her first breath she made her presence felt. She was like her beautiful mother in that respect and as Miranda pronounced, just like her namesake, Miranda's mom. The Doctors had let him Abigail's umbilical cord and they'd had their first skin on skin contact with her as doctors worked on closing Miranda's wound site.

After Abigail's birth, Miranda had been bedridden for a week which had left her frustrated. Then there was also the fact she couldn't just pick their daughter up due to the surgery. She had made her annoyance at the situation felt until they had piled on the large sofa and snuggled up under blankets.

He couldn't imagine life without his four girls, even when Miranda was being Miranda and the twins being their usual puckish selves, and then there was his Abigail, everyone commented what a happy baby she was. She would be the best of him and Miranda, he just knew it. His family was beautiful beyond belief and he counted himself blessed.

No matter what their life through at them, they could withstand it...

...together.

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