

The RA

Chapter Twelve: Squash

“I’m sorry, but he’s out of the office all day. I can relay a message if you like, or else I can get you in his schedule...” The woman scrolled her mouse wheel, tapping her chin right where those distracting little gray hairs were sprouting. “It wouldn’t be until the week after fall break.”

She looked to me for a response. What sort of message would I leave? “Hey, Bob, just wanted to see what you know about why Higgins Hall is ground zero for some sort of mind-bending fuck bomb, call me back, I’m in your staff directory. It’s Spencer.” Ugh.

I left the Lakeview Housing & Residence Life office without the appointment, too. If he had someone digging around in Ramona’s inbox deleting records of conversations about me, he sure as heck wasn’t going to keep an appointment.

There was only one thing to do.

I went to the rec center.

The indoor track was, as indoor tracks go, pretty impressive, an eighth of a mile up on the second floor. The interior of the loop was hollow, a steep drop-off partitioned with a steel railing that overlooked the main weight room. On the exterior, one of the two long sides had row after row of aerobic machines – bikes, treadmills, stair machines and so on, aimed at a massive window looking out at Swanson Park. The chapel was just visible, its steeple poking up between trees just beginning to change colors. The other side of the loop had an interior window, looking down at a series of athletic courts. The open-air, exposed feel of the rec center was one of the things I’d always liked about working out here. Everyone could see everyone. It kept people accountable.

After some thorough stretching a warm-up routine, something I hardly ever bothered with, I hit the track at a leisurely pace. A friend of mine who’d since graduated had been big into distance running, and he’d conned me into marathon training with him one summer. I only ever completed a half, which was at least a quarter too long for my tastes. Today, I put those techniques to use. I was rusty, so I tried to keep to running two laps, walking one. Run two, walk one.

For an hour. Then two. Three. Four.

Shortly after noon, I took a fifteen minute break. The vending machines had vitamin water and protein bars, priced so that it hurt my meager \$200 per month salary, but I knew I wouldn’t make it through the afternoon without it.

Back to it.

As a super duper senior, it felt like I couldn’t go to the rec center without running into bunches of people I knew. Another aspect of working out here that I enjoyed. Classmates, residents, former residents, RAs from Rowland, RAs from other buildings

I'd met at campus-wide training, professional staff from Housing, from cultural centers, from the health center, the occasional professor. Made a guy feel popular. Three days out from fall break, with most people either focused on mid-terms or already done with them, it was pretty sparse in here. I'd only recognized a couple people that morning, and nobody I knew well enough that it had required stopping to converse. One nod, one wave. Today, that was a positive. I was on high alert for—

“Spencer!”

“Oh, hey Emma!” I was already running towards where she was doing her stretching. Pausing her stretching, as I approached. I didn't know Emma as well as a lot of my residents. She was quiet in social settings, though I didn't think she was shy. As a sophomore, she had friends elsewhere on campus, so she hadn't formed the same closeknit bond the rest of the girls had. Beyond that, my sense was that she didn't feel like competing for attention, especially amongst a group of women like her floor mates, who were used to receiving plenty of it.

At a glance, she might have seemed plainer than the others – merely “really pretty” instead of “smoking hot.” There was nothing like seeing her in her workout attire, however, a sports bra that had its work cut out for it and a pair of shorts that had given up altogether, to correct that misapprehension. The girl might not wear much makeup or spend an hour a week tweezing eyebrows and perfecting her hair, but she had a Hottie body, no mistaking it.

“Working up a sweat, huh?”

I nodded, slowing to a stop as I drew near. “Yep. Finished mid-terms early, so I gotta fill the hours somehow. How about you?”

“I just have a couple normal classes to go. Tests and stuff are all done. I just wanted to get out. I like having a single and all, but sometimes I miss having a roommate.”

“Yeah? Were you and your freshman roomie tight?”

She nodded. “It's funny. She joined a sorority last year, so now we barely see each other, but we were inseparable until she rushed.”

“That'll happen.”

“You've been an RA for a long time, right?”

I nodded. “Fifth year.”

“Dang. A friend of a friend of mine started this year down in Wilkins. I saw her at a party a couple weeks ago and she said she couldn't imagine doing it again junior year.”

“It's not for everybody. I'm just lucky I wound up with you all this year. Easiest job I've ever had.”

She snickered and started stretching her shoulders. “Pff, I don't know about that. Our floor is... pretty wild sometimes. Nice girls, but I've never seen so much boy drama.”

Emma left it unsaid that I was the boy in all the drama, but it was implied. “It’s a bit much sometimes, yeah. Well-intended, though. Or so I tell myself when somebody gets out of hand.”

Had Emma watched Terri’s unsanctioned video? Probably. Did she believe the retraction, that the penis she’d masturbated to hadn’t been mine? Did any of them? So many of them had seen it firsthand, I had my doubts.

Emma didn’t decide to dive into the snarl of hyper-amplified teen hormones that was our home on Higgins 3. “Say, you want some company? I was going to use the treadmill, but a partner beats captioned CNN any day.”

I hesitated, though I hoped not for long enough to offend. I wasn’t here for a social call, but I doubted she’d be in the way. “Sure. I’m taking a slow pace, though – been at it for a while. I hope that’s OK.”

“Slow pace sounds fantastic. Though if you pull something trying to keep up, don’t worry, I have been trained in the fine art of the massage.”

With a laugh, I set out. She let me take a lap while she stretched, then fell in beside me. As before, I ran two, walked one, round and around.

Three hours later, Emma was still running with me.

She’d fallen behind me – right behind me – not twenty minutes in. “Drafting,” she’d explained, and since we were both breathing too heavily for laughs or even much smiling, I didn’t know if she was kidding. If our positions had been reversed, and the man in the scenario were someone else, I might have told him to back off, let the lady run in peace. Instead, I was the one trotting along with someone’s eyes locked on my backside.

“You’re not getting tired?”

“This is the best workout I’ve had in months,” she said.

That was our one and only exchange.

Three hours of that, and then finally, there that sonofabitch was.

I didn’t know the man entering the squash court with Bob. The stranger probably split the difference in our ages, salt and pepper next to Bob’s solid gray. He was the doughiest of the three of us; when I saw them enter the court, rackets in hand, I immediately pegged Bob and his lean, almost wiry physique as the favorite. As I continued my run, keeping to the innermost lanes so as to be less conspicuous to my quarry, I had no means of discerning the score. Whenever I was looking though, Bob seemed to be more than holding his own.

God, I was tired. This was mild exercise, but so much of it. I’d been near to calling it when Bob showed, but the success of my plan gave me a second wind. I’d heard from years from my managers and the grad assistants interning in the Housing office that Bob’s passion for squash was legendary. It was widely known to be the fast track to getting on the director’s good side – if you could give him a good match, that is. Wasting

his time with amateur effort was said to be the fast track to finding yourself on the outs. I was younger and fitter, but I'd never learned the sport. Just as well, because I wasn't here to cozy up to him. I was here for some goddamn answers, and while he might dominate me down there on his court, he had to leave eventually, and good luck outrunning me.

Reinvigorated, I gave up on walking. He wasn't getting out of here without going through me.

Their game went on for quite some time. Nothing dragged out a run like watching the clock. Even though I had no concept of how long a game of squash ran, I couldn't help trying to time it. They paused thirty-six minutes in and my heart leapt – finally – but after a water break and Bob's partner taking a moment to retrieve his phone from his gym bag and fiddle around with that for a few minutes, they went back to it. I kept watching the clock. Fuck. Any minute now, I told myself every thirty seconds or so.

At fifty-four grueling minutes, Bob bounced the ball up and caught it gracefully. His partner bent over, spent, with his hands on his knees, then came over and the two shook hands. This was it.

"I have to go, Emma," I said, not even turning my head. That seemed like too much effort.

"Cool. Back home?" she huffed.

"Gotta talk to somebody first, then yeah. See you there."

"I'll walk with you."

I didn't have the energy to argue it out. I hurried through this final lap, still running when I hit the stairs, Emma doggedly trailing behind. Bob's opponent was already shuffling down the hall. Had I missed him? Had he darted out so swiftly?

I ran to the glass door to their court. There he was, inspecting a skinned knee that was still bleeding a little. I paused, meaning to catch my breath before confronting him, but he saw me coming. Seeing that I'd clearly stopped right outside his court, he invited me in with a jerk of his head.

"I'll be out in a few," I told Emma, and in I went. Time to find out what the fuck was going on.

"Spencer," he said simply, his attention still mostly on his knee. "Up for a match?"

I'd been rehearsing this confrontation in my head all day. In a way, I'd been preparing for it for five years, and at this man's direction. Confronting people who'd been caught redhanded doing something they knew they shouldn't be was a big part of my job. The ladies in Higgins might have let me get a bit sloppy, but this wasn't my first rodeo.

"Or did you just stop in to ask me for a condom for that cute little thing out yonder?"

I followed his eyes. Emma was standing in the hall catching her breath. She smiled at me, waved.

Having an authority figure casually offer to assist me getting laid, I have to say, threw me off my game.

“She’s one of my residents,” I said testily.

“I know. Emma Himschoot.” He tapped the scrape on his knee, winced, sucked the blood off his finger. “Little thing like this wouldn’t used to have bothered me. Never get old, Spencer. Hear me?”

“How do you know her name?”

“Yeah? That what you tried to barge into my office to ask this morning? What you’ve been hovering up there sweating your little balls off for the past hour?”

“The past eight. I figured you’d wind up here eventually. You’re predictable.”

“If I was so damn predictable, you wouldn’t have been waiting for eight hours.” He finally stopped fixating on his knee and looked at me. “So, say what you came to say. Some of us can’t afford to sit around the gym all day.”

“Why did you set me up on Higgins 3?”

It wasn’t the most pointed way of asking it, but it was the answer I needed, the point where the craziness had begun, and the point where my clues ended.

“This again? I told you, mishap. The mishapper was fired. What more do you want?”

“I don’t believe you.”

He smirked, then walked right past me, his arm brushing mine but not quite shoving me aside. He bent over his gym bag, fishing out a container and putting the squash balls inside. “Yeah?”

“You really expect me to believe that it’s a coincidence that you put a guy RA on a floor full of women. Gorgeous women. That even when accusations of sexual misconduct started to pile up, you let it sit.”

“Spencer, at this point, I can’t tell you how little I expect from you,” he said, taking off the sweatband around his forehead and tossing it in the bag.

“What’s that supposed to mean?”

“How long did it take you before you thought you were anything but lucky and handsome? When you felt a finger up your ass? Nah. When Ms. Gray cheated on her boyfriend after getting a sneaky peaky at your pecker? When that homesick little chit – what’s her name? Andrea?”

“Andi,” I said. Why was I answering *his* questions?

“Right, Andi. When she showed you how farmgirls do? No?” Bob fished a rolled up bandage out of the bag and started winding it around his knee. “How long, Spencer, my boy? At what point before they were jacking it in the halls did you think something just might be going on?”

“I guess I wasn’t anticipating having my employer use me as a guinea pig in some kind of sick experiment.”

“Yeah? Sick? I bet it’s been just awful. What’s your cunt count up to now? Five? Six?”

“My *what?!?*”

Bob tied off his bandage, grabbed his bag, and strode up in my face. “Look. You’re a nice guy. Your managers rave about you, evals top notch I’m told. Call it the fruits of good karma, and don’t look too close. All right? Now get out of my way.”

“Not until I get some answers.”

“You’re the fortunate recipient of a coed harem. Which you knew when you came down here and started this pitiful dick-measuring contest. What more is there to know?”

“Everything! Why? How?!”

“Yeah? I tell you what. I’ll answer some questions for you. But first, call that girl in here, do me one little favor, and then sure. I’ll give you some answers.”

My head whipped around, but Emma was still just standing there, looking bored. I made eye contact, and she brightened immediately, gave me another little wave.

“What favor? Why should I? No.”

“Then fuck off.” Bob pressed the butt of his squash racket pressed into my sternum and drove me backwards, off-balance and in a bit of pain. “Have a nice break.”

“You’re not going to hurt her?” I asked quickly.

Bob stopped, at least, and looked back like I was an idiot. “You think I’m going to just, what, punch her? No wonder you’re on the six-year plan.”

I looked between them. I suppose it was silly to think he was going to harm her somehow. Embarrassing me seemed a lot more likely. Against my better judgment, I gestured for Emma to come in. She stepped in, looking self-conscious but, like any Hottie, glad to be in my presence.

“Emma, this is—”

“One of Spencer’s teachers,” Bob interjected. The lie redoubled my apprehension.

“Oh. Hi. I’m Emma – which I guess he already said. I live on Spencer’s floor. Hi. Um, again.” She smiled awkwardly. We were both exhausted. I probably didn’t sound much more composed.

“Spencer’s told me a lot about you. Sounds like he’s got himself quite the little crush. I can see why, pretty girl like you.”

She brightened, faded at the creepy comment, but then looked to me again, brighter yet. “He... he did? He does? You do?”

“Emma, I—”

“I consider myself something of a relationship guru, Emma, so I thought I’d save you two some time and tedium and just get the ball rolling for you. Spencer, why don’t you just kiss the girl already?”

“What? I’m not going to—”

“Then we can finish that conversation we were having,” he added weightily.

Emma’s eyes were widening, her fair skin beginning to blush. “Um, did you really...? I mean, do you want to...? I didn’t think you... I mean, I like you too, but I just didn’t... Like, you could, I guess, if you want. Ugh, I’m so gross right now. But I guess you are, too, so maybe it’s OK. If you want. I mean, I want to. If you do.”

Emma only got to babble so long because I was so caught off guard. What point was Bob trying to make? Just to embarrass me? Throw me off-balance? Well, fuck it. I’d done a lot more with my girls, and for a lot less cause. Emma was still sputtering anxiously when I walked up to her and kissed her.

She moaned rapturously, and wasted no time offering her tongue. We were both still breathing hard, but she was giving it her best. I suppose I didn’t want to disappoint her either.

“There you go. Young love, nothing quite like it,” Bob said, approaching the two of us. Before either of us knew what was happening, he was grabbing Emma’s hands and placing them on my backside. Then lifting the back of my shirt and placing them on my bare skin, right above the waistband of my shorts.

“Whmmf...?!” I attempted, but Emma’s lips never left mine. Even being grabbed and posed by this total stranger, she only kissed me harder. One arm snaked up my back until her hand popped out behind my neck, nestling into my sweat-soaked hair and holding me to her.

“You two make such a nice couple. You know, Emma, Spencer was getting pretty frank with the locker room talk a minute ago.”

“Mm, he was?” she asked, mostly into my mouth.

“Oh yeah. How’d he put it, ‘I want to drag her in here by her pussy and fuck her against the wall, right here, right now,’” Bob said.

Emma didn’t let go of me, I squirmed, but she was holding on tight. She should have let go, slapped him right on his foul mouth, but instead she hooked a leg around my waist. “I... I mean... if you want... if we were, you know, alone...?”

“Oh don’t mind me. Got three kids of my own, so I know where they come from. Here, let me help.”

I could barely keep my balance with Emma basically hanging off of me, so when Bob suddenly jerked down my shorts and boxers, it was let it happen or fall on my suddenly bared ass. What the fuck was he doing?! God, Emma was hot. Still!

“And now you, girl,” A moment later, my cock, hard in spite of everything surrounding the stimulus it was interested in, was resting against Emma’s sweat-slicked belly, my balls tickled softly by the hair on her pussy. Her bare pussy. Her own shorts and panties removed, my resident’s leg went right back around my ass, locking me against her.

“Mm, don’t touch me,” she whined, still kissing.

“Oh I’m sorry. I guess Spencer didn’t tell you, he likes to share, and he and I are such good friends. He was just asking me to share with him, so I figured he’d be happy to share with me. It really gets the boy hot. You want to make him hot for you, don’t you, girl?”

Emma’s lips pulled back, barely, but she was still coiled around me with python-like tenacity. “Really? I mean... I don’t... I mean I will, if you want, but...” She grimaced.

“What do you say, Spencer? You feel like sharing?”

Bob didn’t wait for an answer. He helped himself to a handful of Emma’s exquisitely toned ass, squeezing, looking like it met whatever standard he was using for ass squeezes. “Well?”

I glowered hatefully over her shoulder. If he felt threatened, he gave no sign. Emma needed her hands to hold her up in her one-legged pose. She didn’t mean to let me go, and from the smirk plastered beneath his thin gray mustache, Bob knew it. I saw his arm shift, just slightly, and Emma’s body trembled from where his hand had moved.

“Y-you’re really into this?”

“I...” Fuck. FUCK! I wanted my answers, but not like this. “Emma, you’re amazing. We’ll finish this up back home. For now, can you give me and my friend a few minutes?”

I had to repeat most of it, and physically removed her hands, but she finally relented. Once we broke contact, she seemed to realize she was standing there with her pussy and her ass exposed in public, in front of a stranger. Bob had apparently kicked them across the court. Emma looked around frantically, then darted over and tugged them on.

“I’m, um... thank you,” she blurted, then fled the squash court.

In the meantime, I’d gotten myself clothed again. “What the *fuck* was that about?!” I roared.

“Something in your sweat,” he said, watching Emma – Emma’s ass – as she retreated. “It’s the main thing. Catalyst, I think it’s called. Gets on your skin, gets on everything you touch. It’s in your other juices, too. Your blood, your piss, even your stool, though that’s probably not been doing much to anybody. I hope not, at least. Your spunk’s a bit weaker, though to my mind, if you’ve got a girl’s mouth on you, she’s getting more of your spunk than she ever would your sweat, long haul.”

“What is it?” My temper over how he’d humiliated Emma went into stasis. Answers. Finally. “What the hell did you put in me?”

Bob went on like I hadn’t spoken. “Residence halls are as perfect a dispersal system as you could hope for, at least if you can get an RA involved. Two weeks of training, you were in every room on that floor, checking for damages, positioning

furniture, touching every goddamn thing. Plus the showers. Aerosolizes it, makes it so they *breathe* the shit in.”

“The showers...?” Lines, Ramona had said. Lines formed to be near my stall.

“Oh yeah. Damned if I know how it works, not in any way that’s useful to anybody. I barely understand the layman’s version. Gets inside them and kicks the right parts of their brains into overdrive. Pleasure centers. Arousals. A bunch of crap I half-understood about lobes and glands getting coated in the stuff, and then along comes another dose of you,. Every little taste, and they’re teaching themselves that Spencer equals pleasure, Spencer equals happiness, without even knowing it. Some psychology, some chemistry, but every time you pass them in the hall, pop in their rooms for a how-ya-doin’, their addiction to that feeling they’re barely aware you’re causing gets burned in just a little harder. Every whiff of you they get is more of those fancy little particles triggering that dampness in their panties.”

“That’s why it’s getting worse,” I said, mind racing. Marisa had been so close in her speculation. God, *had* she been in on it? No, she couldn’t be. Not her.

“It’s getting worse because it was always going to. It’s not some conspiracy to harness the power of those strangled noises you make before you spurt. It’s just data. Nothing more. How much Spencer-juice does it take to get a smile? A kiss? A hummer? To get your slut of a manager to make herself your slave?”

“She told you.”

“She didn’t have to. You’re welcome, by the way. Couldn’t have done it without Ramona. She sure got what she had coming. And hey, I could’ve set you up with Lana over in Franklin, let that tubby bitch soak you in and tear you up. I knew you’d catch on eventually. Even a starry-eyed believer like you can only get so much pussy thrown at him before he questions it. So before you start barking accusations, maybe start with a thank you. Wasn’t easy, shunting all that trim your way, but thanks to yours truly, you’re the only man in line at the Higgins Premium Pussy Buffet. Congrats.”

“So it only affects women?”

His eyes narrowed. “So you don’t feel ‘affected’ yourself?”

“If it’s coming from inside me, it obviously can’t be hitting me as hard as them. I’m still myself.”

“They’re still them. But since I asked, and since they told me, the chemical soup in your particular version of the thing hits the ladies a lot harder than the fellas. Feed a buddy a jug of your cum and he might take a shining to you, but shy of that...” He shrugged.

“My version? Of what? Did you drug me or something?”

“You’re safer not knowing. Trust me: don’t fuck around with your innards, or you’ll break some things inside you that you’ll miss. Like your brain.” His lips twisted consideringly. “Maybe you won’t miss it so much.”

“Whatever.” Nice comeback. “You said something about data? What data?”

“I don’t know, and what does it matter? Nothing you can do about it. Nothing you should *want* to do about it. You know everything I can tell you, so why don’t you go home, do that little girl a favor and fuck her?”

“Who’s doing this? You know more than you’re telling me!”

“Of course I do, and if your head wasn’t up halfway up her ass, you’d be wondering if I’ve lied about some of what I’ve said. Keep pestering me, and I’ll really spin you about. You’ve gotten your answers, kid. Right now, you’re dialed up only about halfway, but it looks like it’s hitting them pretty hard. Probably test out the next step up soon.”

“No they won’t. It’s three days to fall break. Then I’m getting the hell out of here, going home and I’ll have my own doctor figure out what the hell you put in me!”

“Is that so.”

“Yeah. It is.”

Bob laughed, raw contempt. “After what I just told you, your first thought is to head home? Expose sweet Mrs. Lawrence to all that? She still do your laundry when you go home? And you’ve got a sister, too, right? Will she be home? Picture that, her huddled outside the bathroom while you’re taking a shower, losing her goddamn mind, jacking off like a fucking monkey, too blinded by the Spencer fuck sauce to care.”

The temperature of my blood was dropping a few degrees a second. “You wouldn’t.”

“I don’t have to. I don’t have an on/off switch for you, Spencer. Untested science, though, so while it’s not meant to be permanent... who knows. Probably best not to dick around with it.”

This time, Bob wasn’t so gentle when he brushed past me. Whatever was in my sweat didn’t seem to intimidate him any more than whatever was in my anger.

“Why would you do this?”

He picked up his gym bag and paused near the door. “You have to ask? Spencer, I was you once, a long ways back. Never had much luck with the girls then. Thirty-six years later, I’ve gotten less and less lucky every one of them. Grayer and grayer, while these girls stay young, and I feel less lucky by the day.”

Bob grinned. “You’re going to help them perfect it. Then I’ll get mine, and retire with some Emmas of my own. I’d been thinking maybe five, but the more I hear about all the fun you’re having – or fucking ought to be – the more I think maybe I’m shorting myself.”

“But... they’re *people*. We’re supposed to be taking care of them,” I said feebly.

“The more fun you have with them, the happier every single person involved in all this will be, Spencer, my boy.”

Bob jerked the zipper on his gym bag, reached inside and came out with a handful of those same condoms he'd been trying to get rid of in his office the last time we'd met. He threw them at me. They pelted me in the face, then rolled down in a pile on the squash court floor.

“Now go take care of them.”

“So are we fucked or what?”

“Not yet. Prime got back... fuck, over fourteen hours ago now. Hit the bed and hasn't move since. Didn't even answer the door when 8484 came up for a fresh dose.”

“Which one was it at the gym? 7131, I think I read?”

“Um... fuck, I forget. Emma. Whatever her number is.”

“Yeah, that's her. Do we have a feed on... there she is. God, she's glowing in the fucking dark still. Did you say fourteen hours?”

“Yep. Hasn't stopped masturbating since they got back. Not until she dozed off anyway, and if you look...”

“What am I looking... Oh fuck me! Is that thing on?”

“Wouldn't be the deeper color if it wasn't.”

“Shit. I can't believe that old codger sold us out!”

“What was he supposed to do? You heard him talking to Marisa the other night. He knows. From the report, it doesn't sound like the guy told him anything he wasn't guessing at. Tried to scare the shit out of him about it, too.”

“Yeah, goddamn brilliant. Why go with the carrot – you know, three dozen babes infatuated with him – when you could go with the stick and try to make him feel bad about doing the one goddamn thing we need him to do?!”

“Hey. Whoa. Fucking *whoa*. I'm not the housing guy, OK? Don't yell at me.”

“Sorry. Just... fuck! You know I have a bag packed in the car if I need to flee town? That's where we are right now.”

“It's going to be fine. Better than, actually. He's too scared to go home and nympho-ize his family, so now we don't have to dial him down. That means he's still got to finish out the week with no classes, nothing to distract him but the fruits of our labors.”

“I guess. Not ditching that bag, though.”

“You are such a pussy sometimes, I swear. Come on. This is a win. There's nothing to hold him back now. 2629 and 8484 are breaking his monogamy pattern. He knows what that lick fest at massage night did. Heard it even, in every room on the goddamn floor, thanks to 6582's trampy little video. 6818 offer herself as his goddamn slave, and the head cheese told him his only job is to kick back and enjoy himself. We finally get to see what he does without—”

“Oh hey, look who's waking up.”