

*Excerpt from Midnight Days*

I give a start when he pushes to his feet. The man staring down at me is wearing an expression that says he owns me. The heat in the cool blue of his eyes is the kind that can cut through iron. I imagine the blue flame of a welder melting steel as he rounds the corner of the table without moving his gaze from mine. His expression sharpens with intent. It should be a warning, but the magnitude of the power he exudes hypnotizes me, keeping me frozen in my seat.

He pulls my chair back as if the weight is nothing. Locking his fingers around my waist, he drags me to my feet. I'm a puppet in his hands, overwhelmed with fear, worry, and the notion of being trapped in a dark, endless tunnel. I don't see a way out, not for the foreseeable future and not when he lifts me swiftly onto the table.

My heart is beating a mile a minute as I stare up at his face. The harsh lines are drawn in lust. It's been too long. Too long for us, at least. We're used to making love at least a couple of times a day. His hands on my waist feel right, but my mind can't make peace with the new imbalance of power between us.

He lowers me gently, cushioning my head with one broad hand and going for the button of my slacks with the other. His gaze holds me prisoner, radiating pretty promises of safety and warmth as he pops the button through the buttonhole. My body heats instantly, his effect on me devastatingly powerful. The zipper of my slacks makes a scratchy sound as he pulls it down. His actions are slow and meticulous, his attention focused on my face.

I gasp when he slips a hand inside my underwear and over my folds. The mere brush of the pad of his finger over my clit makes my body bow. If he slips that finger inside me now, I'll be lost, and the victorious look on his face says he knows it.

If this were any other day, I wouldn't hesitate to take the pleasure he offers. I would give him everything he wants and all I'm capable of. When he took me in the bed and again in the shower the day before yesterday, we were on equal footing, or so I thought. Did I ever have a say in our relationship, or was it just a sweet illusion?

The thought hurts, adding to the growing mountain of torment in my chest. If I've been blind and naïve, I only have myself to blame.

Gently, he parts my folds, finding the wetness that's proof of my arousal.

"Katyusha," he says in a rough voice, his features tight with desire as he plants one hand next to my face.

When he lowers his head to move in for the kill, it takes every ounce of my willpower to say, "No."

He freezes above me. Inside my panties, his fingers curl into a fist. I don't have to look at him to know his control is hanging by a thread.

Gripping his wrist, I pull his hand from my underwear. Tears burn in my chest as I whisper, "I'm sorry. I can't."