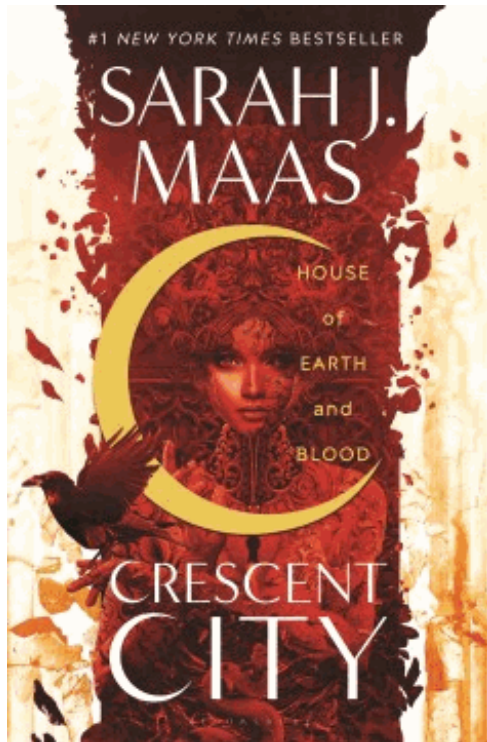


HOUSE OF EARTH AND BLOOD



Adult

By Sarah J. Maas

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Summary of Concerns:

This book contains obscene/explicit sexual activities and sexual nudity; frequent/excessive profanity; graphic violence; alcohol and drug use.

4 /5

Not For Minors
BookLooks Review Rating

Page	Content
29	She swigged from her beer.
31	Danika swigged from her beer.
32	<p>“One, I think it’s a hot name. And two, Reid is hot.” Gods help her, Reid Redner was hot as Hel. Though the sex was ... fine. Standard. She’d gotten off, but she’d really had to work for it. And not in the way she sometimes liked to work for it. More in the sense of Slow down, Put that here, Can we switch positions? But she’d slept with him only twice. And she told herself that it could take time to find the right rhythm with a partner. Even if ...</p> <p>Danika just said it. “If he grabs his phone to check his messages before his dick’s barely out of you again, please have the self-respect to kick his balls across the room and come home to me.”</p> <p>“Fucking Hel, Danika!” Bryce hissed. “Say it a little gods-damn louder.”</p> <p>The wolves had gone silent. Even their munching had stopped. Then resumed just a decibel too loudly.</p> <p>“At least he’s got a good job,” Bryce said to Danika, who crossed her slender arms—arms that hid tremendous, ferocious strength—and gave her a look. A look that said, Yeah, one that Reid’s daddy gave him. Bryce added, “And at least he’s not some psychotic alphahole who will demand a three-day sex marathon and then call me his mate, lock me in his house, and never let me out again.” Which was why Reid—human, okay-at-sex Reid—was perfect.</p> <p>“You could use a three-day sex marathon,” Danika quipped.</p>
36	<p>She stabbed pearl studs into her ears, hoping half-heartedly that they’d add some class to what might be considered a somewhat scandalous dress. But she was twenty-three, and she might as well enjoy her generously curved figure. She gave her gold-dusted legs a little smile as she twisted in front of the full-length mirror propped against the wall to admire the slope of her ass in the skintight gray dress, the hint of text from that still-sore new tattoo peeking over the plunging back, before she stepped into the living room again.</p>
47	<p>So he had to be with her through his own free will, then—or desire for whatever she offered: sex, money, influence. It was a fool’s bargain, though.</p>
48	<p>She could feel the eyes of a well-dressed angel at the next table travel up her expanse of bare leg, then heard the chair groan as he leaned back to admire the view of her ass.</p>
49	<p>As if she were just something he needed to feed before he fucked. She said clearly, “This isn’t working out.”</p> <p>His mouth tightened. “Excuse me?”</p> <p>She doubted he’d ever been dumped. She said with a sweet smile, “Bye, Reid. Good luck with work.”</p> <p>“Bryce.”</p> <p>But she had enough gods-damned self-respect not to let him explain, not to accept sex that was merely okay basically in exchange for meals at restaurants she could never afford, and a man who had indeed rolled off her and gotten right back on that phone. So she swiped the bottle of wine and stepped away from the table, but not toward the exit.</p> <p>She went up to the sneering Fae female and her human plaything and said in a cool voice that would have made even Danika back away, “Like what you see?”</p> <p>The female gave her a sweeping glance, from Bryce’s heels to her red hair to the bottle of wine dangling from her fingers. The Fae female shrugged, setting the black stones in her long dress sparkling. “I’ll pay a gold mark to watch you two.” She inclined her head to the human at her table.</p> <p>He offered Bryce a smile, his vacant face suggesting he was soaring high on some drug.</p>

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	<p>Bryce smirked at the female. “I didn’t know Fae females had gotten so cheap. Word on the street used to be that you’d pay us gold by the armful to pretend you’re not lifeless as Reapers between the sheets.”</p> <p>...She swigged from the bottle of wine and flipped off the preening hostess on her way through the bronze doors.</p>
51	<p>To dance inside was to worship that nameless god, hinted at in the age-worn carvings of satyrs and fauns drinking and dancing and fucking amid grapevines. A temple to pleasure—that’s what it had once been.</p>
58	<p>She’d blown all her marks on the drugs. Unless someone had paid...</p>
59	<p>Gods, she wanted good sex. No-holds-barred, scream-your-lungs-out sex. Break-the-bed sex. She knew Connor would be like that. More than that. It’d go far beyond the physical with him. It might honestly melt whatever was left of her mind after tonight.</p>
61	<p>Fuck the drugs in her system—fuck Fury. She’d promised no hallucinations. Bryce was never drinking or polluting her body with those drugs ever again.</p>
67	<p>He tried to inquire about the injuries on the male, but she dropped the angel’s phone as the drugs pulled her back, yanked her down, and she swayed. The alley warped and rippled.</p>
81	<p>Bryce had written back twenty minutes later, I just hooked up with someone in the bathroom. Don’t tell Connor.</p> <p>...Danika wrote back, Was it good?!?!?</p> <p>Only good enough to take the edge off.</p>
82	<p>Stop fucking strangers in the bathroom, because Connor’s coming with me.</p>
87	<p>“The Raven’s owner told me she was drunk and had snorted a pile of lightseeker,” Ruhn snapped. “But you’ll find Bryce with that kind of shit in her system at least one night a week.”</p> <p>...“If you’re asking whether I’m fucking her,” Ruhn seethed, “the answer, asshole, is no. She’s family.”</p>
93	<p>Bryce Quinlan stumbled from the White Raven’s bathroom, a lion shifter nuzzling her neck, his broad hands grabbing at her waist.</p> <p>It was easily the best sex she’d had in three months. Maybe longer than that. Maybe she’d keep him for a while.</p> <p>Maybe she should learn his name first. Not that it mattered.</p>
94	<p>Just perfect: he thought she was one of the whores in Riso’s employ. Sacred prostitution, Riso had once explained—since the club lay on the ruins of a temple to pleasure, it was his duty to continue its traditions.</p> <p>“Consider it on the house,” she crooned, patting him on the cheek before she turned toward the glowing golden bar on the glass mezzanine hovering over the cavernous space.</p>
95	<p>Bryce ducked her head, making herself smile. “You say that to all the girls.”</p> <p>“Only the mouthwatering ones.”</p> <p>An offer for how this night could end, if she wanted: being sucked and fucked. She didn’t bother to inform him she’d already had that particular need scratched, minus the sucking.</p>
101	<p>Ruhn snorted. “Still happy playing slutty secretary, I see.”</p>
108	<p>The helmet’s visor cast everything into stark relief, its audio receptors picking up sounds from behind the shut bedroom doors lining either side of hallway: low-level sentries playing some video game, doing their best to keep their voices down as they cursed at each other; a female sentry talking on the phone; two angels fucking each other’s brains out; and several snorers.</p>

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109	He swigged from his beer.
124	Hunt clenched his jaw, but she strode for the front door, hips swishing like she knew precisely how spectacular her ass was.
129	Filled the space with midnight storms, sex and death entwined.
130	And just like that, that scent of sex rippling off the Archangel turned to rot.
141	Walking around the desk, she swept the silky curtain of red hair over a shoulder, the slightly curled ends almost brushing the generous curve of her ass.
144	Micah growled, “Keep your dick in your pants and your hands to yourself. Or you’ll find yourself without either for a long while.”
163	He needed a drink. A strong fucking drink.
180	Jesiba had said no, and instead bought a pet kelpie that had humped the glass with all the finesse of a wasted college guy.
182	If one of the females partying downstairs had shown herself into his room, thinking she’d get a nice, sweaty ride with a Prince of the Fae, she’d be sorely disappointed. He was in no shape for fucking right now. At least not any fucking that would be worthwhile.
183	Every bong and bottle of liquor, every pair of female underwear that had never been returned to its owner, every trace and scent of sex and drugs and all the stupid shit they did here had been hidden. ...Must be from when Declan had leapt off the stair railing onto it, swinging around and swigging from his bottle of whiskey. He’d fallen off a moment later, too drunk to hold on.
184	“Because you look high off your ass, too.”
186	Bryce asked, swirling the whiskey in its glass, “Is this house really befitting of the Chosen One?”
211	“Cthona’s tits,” he muttered, shaking his head.
214	“This drive contains footage of you at a three-day orgy?” Hunt demanded. “Let me know if it gets you hot and bothered, Athalar.” ...Her green eyes drifted toward his lap. “I hear you’re one Hel of a ride when you pause the brooding long enough.” Oh please. Hunt’s teeth flashed as he bared them in a silent snarl, so Bryce said, “Orgy and Hunt’s bedroom prowess aside, you’ve got a salt vendor in this market.” ...“You ever get sick of crawling for that sorceress, come find me. I have a stable of clients who’d crawl for you. And pay to do it.”
218	“Unfortunately, I don’t think the size differences between you and Athalar would work in the bedroom. You’re barely big enough to wrap your arms around his dick.” ...“I’m not the one who’s bingeing a show that’s basically porn with a plot. What’s it called again? Fangs and Bangs?” ...“It’s not called that and you know it! And it’s artistic. They make love. They don’t ...” She choked. “Fuck?” Bryce suggested dryly. ...Bryce said, “I doubt Hunt Athalar is the making love type.” ...Just to torture her a bit more, Bryce added, “He’s the type to bend you over a desk and—”
225	She turned on Lehabah’s electronic tablet. The screen revealed a vampyr and wolf tangled in each other, groaning, naked— ...The air in the room lightened, as if Bryce’s sorrow had cracked at the sight of the wolf

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	<p>pounding into the moaning vampyr female. ...Hunt, as if despite himself, chuckled. "You watch Fangs and Bangs?"</p>
229	<p>"The tattoo on my back—she and I got it done that week. We got stupid drunk one night, and I was so out of it I didn't even know what the fuck she put on my back until I'd gotten over my hangover."</p>
242	<p>"I'm just a half-breed slut, right?" ...Five minutes after Bryce got there, Jesiba's client—a raging asshole of a leopard shifter who believed he was entitled to put his paws all over her ass—prowled in and purchased a small statue of Solas and Cthona, portrayed as a sun with male features burying his face in a pair of mountain-shaped breasts.</p>
256	<p>The scent of sex and booze and sweat that hit him had every instinct rising with dizzying speed as they crossed the glass-framed courtyard and ascended the steps.</p>
258	<p>He glanced at Bryce, who was guzzling her booze like it was a protein shake. She hadn't eaten dinner yet, and even though he'd been distracted this morning when she'd emerged from her bedroom in nothing but a lacy hot-pink bra and matching underwear, he'd noted through the living room window that she'd also forgone breakfast, and since she hadn't brought lunch with her or ordered in, he was willing to bet she hadn't eaten that, either. ...Bryce reached for her drink again. But Hunt moved faster, his hand wrapping around her wrist and pinning it to the table before she could guzzle down more booze. ..."You have a rough day and you come to drown yourself in vodka?"</p>
265	<p>"When males are kneeling between my legs, Athalar," she said, "they're not usually grimacing." ...Just as he realized that he was indeed kneeling between her thighs, and had leaned closer to her lap to see that scar.</p>
288	<p>"One," he told her, yanking over a chair and turning it backward for him to straddle. "The last thing I want to do is fuck you, so we can take the whole Sex, Mating, and Baby option off the table. Two, I don't have friends, so there sure as fuck will be no couples-retreat lifestyle anytime soon. Three, if we're complaining about people who are clothing-optional ..." He finished the croissant and gave her a pointed look. "I'm not the one who parades around this apartment in a bra and underwear every morning while getting dressed."</p>
292	<p>At Luna's Temple, he'd heard Bryce refer to him calling her a half-breed slut.</p>
293	<p>Hunt lifted a brow. "What'd you wish for?" "For my boobs to get bigger." A laugh burst out of him, chasing away any lingering shadows that talk of Sandriel dragged up. But Hunt avoided looking at Bryce's chest as he said, "Seems your wish paid off, Quinlan." Understatement. Big, fucking, lace-covered understatement.</p>
294	<p>So Hunt said, "Since I'm perfectly happy with the size of my assets, I'd wish for you to stop being such a pain in my ass."</p>
297	<p>Bryce choked on a laugh at the title. "You sure that Starborn power isn't for finding smut?" She called to Lehabah, "This one's right up your alley."</p>
298	<p>"Any good sex scenes yet?" Bryce asked Ruhn idly, going over Danika's location data for the third time.</p>

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303	The legionary who lounged on a low-lying couch wasn't particularly skilled in stealing covert glances at her ass. Bryce looked over a shoulder, as if some extra sense told her someone was watching, and gave the soldier a smile.
305	<p>"Which one? There was the one drooling on the Traskian carpet, the one with his tongue rolled out on the floor, or the one who was staring at your ass like it was going to talk to him?"</p> <p>..."They must keep you all starved for sex in these barracks if the presence of one female sends them into such a tizzy. So—do you know his name? The one who wanted to have a chat with my ass."</p>
306	"Do you have a girlfriend? Boyfriend? Someone whose ass you gawk at?"
308	And since half-breed sluts weren't allowed into those, she'd never had a chance to take one home.
316	<p>"So? Just because I saved his life, that doesn't mean I'm destined to be his girlfriend. It'd be like banging a statue anyway."</p> <p>Hunt smirked. "In all fairness, the females who have been with him say otherwise."</p> <p>..."See, that right there is the problem. You and the whole rest of the world seem to think I exist just to find someone like him. That of course I can't be genuinely not interested, because why wouldn't I want a big, strong male to protect me? Surely if I'm pretty and single, the second any powerful Vanir shows interest, I'm bound to drop my panties. In fact, I didn't even have a life until he showed up—never had good sex, never felt alive—"</p>
338	<p>Highlight(pink) - Chapter Thirty-Five > Page 338 · Location 5622</p> <p>"When the Vanir tell you you're not good enough for any job because of your human blood, when males like this asshole next to you just see you as a piece of ass to be fucked and then discarded, when you see your mother—it is a human mother for you, isn't it? It always is—being treated like trash ... You'll find those self-righteous feelings fading real fast."</p>
344	He trailed off again and swigged from his beer.
361	<p>"You wanna tell me about everyone you've ever hooked up with, Athalar?"</p> <p>His silence told her enough. She smirked.</p> <p>But then the angel said, as if he needed something to distract him from the pulped remains they'd left behind, "None of my hookups are worth mentioning."</p>
362	<p>"Want to hear my worst hookup?" she asked, throwing him a forced grin.</p> <p>He chuckled. "I'm half-afraid to hear it, but sure."</p> <p>"I dated a vampyr for like three weeks. My first and only hookup with anyone in Flame and Shadow."</p> <p>..."And I couldn't stop wondering what part of me he wanted more: blood or ... you know. And then he suggested eating while eating, if you know what I mean?"</p> <p>...She didn't fail to note his glance to her legs—between them. The way his eyes seemed to darken further, something within them sharpening. "Wouldn't that hurt?"</p> <p>"I didn't want to find out."</p> <p>..."No more vamps after that?"</p> <p>"Definitely not. He claimed the finest pleasure was always edged in pain, but I showed him the door."</p>
371	He forced himself to focus. Consider the conversation at hand and not contemplate whether Quinlan's legs would feel as soft beneath his mouth as they looked.

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376	Ruhn had once nearly run from a date with a young nymph when her high-pitched giggling had sounded more like a porpoise’s squeal. And in bed ... fuck, how many partners had he never called again not because the sex had been bad, but because the sounds they’d made had been unbearable? Too many to count.
396	She blinked at him. “You thought it was a sex toy, didn’t you?” He said nothing. “You think I keep my vibrator in my linen closet?” He crossed his arms. “What I want to know is why you have a box of these things.”
398	“Here. Next time you want to check out my vibrators, just ask, Athalar.” She inclined her head toward her bedroom door and winked. “They’re in the left nightstand.” ...“I’d rather be a pain in the ass,” she said slyly over her bare shoulder, “than a snooping pervert.”
402	He certainly had not been looking for any of her sex toys when he’d opened up the linen closet last night. But he’d spied a flash of purple sparkles, and—fine, maybe the thought had crossed his mind—he’d just pulled down the box before he could really think. And now that he knew where they were, he couldn’t help but look at that nightstand and imagine her there, in that bed. Leaning against the pillows and— It might have made sleeping a shade uncomfortable last night.
408	“I’m surprised you don’t have a tattoo of Jelly Jubilee somewhere.” His eyes skimmed over her, lingering on the short, tight green dress. Her toes curled. “Who says I don’t have a tattoo of her somewhere you can’t see, Athalar?” She watched him sort through everything he had already seen. Since he’d moved in, she’d stopped parading about the apartment in her underwear while getting dressed, but she knew he’d spotted her through the window in the days before. Knew he realized there was a limited, very intimate, number of places where another tattoo might be hidden. She could have sworn his voice dropped an octave or two as he asked, “Do you?” With any other male, she would have said, Why don’t you come find out? With any other male, she would have already been on the other side of the desk. Crawling into his lap. Unbuckling his belt. And then sinking down onto his cock, riding him until they were both moaning and breathless and—
410	His face was flushed, and his eyes ... Fucking Solas, his black eyes glittered, wholly fixed on her face. Like he was thinking of touching her. Tasting her. “Okay,” he said roughly, running a hand through his hair. His eyes settled, the dark fire in them banking. Thank the gods.
420	“It’s hard to remember, isn’t it, when you were high, drunk, and fucking strangers.”
448	Hunt chuckled, letting himself bury his face against her neck. “So am I.” Bryce’s fingers curled against his spine, exploring and gentle. Every single one of his senses narrowed to that touch. Came roaring awake. “We should get out of the rain,” she murmured. “We should,” he replied. And made no move. “Hunt.” He couldn’t tell if his name was a warning or a request or something more. Didn’t care as he grazed his nose against the rain-slick column of her neck. Fuck, she smelled good. He did it again, unable to help himself or get enough of that scent. She tipped her chin up slightly. Just enough to expose more of her neck to him.

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	<p>Hel, yes. Hunt almost groaned the words as he let himself nuzzle into that soft, delicious neck, as greedy as a fucking vampyr to be there, smell her, taste her.</p> <p>...Bryce's fingers tightened on his back—then began stroking. He nearly purred.</p> <p>He didn't let himself think, not as he brushed his lips over the spot he'd nuzzled. She arched slightly against him. Into the hardness that ached behind the reinforced leather of his battle-suit.</p> <p>Swallowing another groan against her neck, Hunt tightened his arms around her warm, soft body, and ran his hands downward, toward that perfect, sweet ass that had tortured him since day fucking one, and—</p>
450	He stopped his arm before it could cover Bryce's breasts—the heart beating beneath them.
481	"Is it wise to cook when you've been pounding whiskey?"
482	<p>She pointed to the sweep of her hips. "I was told my half-human body was too clunky. I was also told that my boobs were too big, and my ass could be used as an aerialport landing pad."</p> <p>"Your ass is perfect." The words slipped out. He refrained from commenting on just how much he liked the other parts of her, too. How much he wanted to worship them. Starting with that ass of hers.</p> <p>Color bloomed on her cheeks. "Well, thank you."</p>
485	He leaned against the counter behind them and swigged from his beer, letting her fill in the rest.
501	<p>He was naked, she realized, having somehow forgotten. Utterly naked. She didn't let herself contemplate it as she began lathering his neck, his powerful shoulders, his muscled arms. "I'll leave your bottom half for you to enjoy," she said, her face heating.</p> <p>He was just watching her with that raw openness. More intimate than any touch of his lips on her neck. Like he indeed saw everything she was and had been and might yet become.</p> <p>She scrubbed down his upper body as best she could. "I can't clean your wings with you sitting against the wall."</p> <p>Hunt rose to his feet in a mighty, graceful push.</p> <p>She kept her eyes averted from what, exactly, this brought into her direct line of vision. The very considerable something that he didn't seem to notice or care about.</p> <p>So she wouldn't care about it, either. She stood, water splattering her, and gently turned him. She didn't let herself admire the view from behind, either. The muscles and perfection of him.</p> <p>Your ass is perfect, he'd said to her.</p> <p>Likewise, she could now attest.</p>
503	So she grabbed the white T-shirt she'd intended to give him, and twisted away, peeling off her own shirt and bra and chucking them into the bathroom. They landed with a slap on the tiles, drowning out the rustle of his soft shirt as she slid it over herself. It hung down to her knees, providing enough coverage that she shucked off her wet sweats and underwear and threw them into the bathroom, too.
508	<p>He had a long-lost love he was still holding a torch for. And she'd just gone too long without sex. Cthona's tits, it'd been weeks since that hookup with the lion shifter in the Raven's bathroom. And with Hunt here, she hadn't dared open up her left nightstand to take care of herself.</p> <p>Keep telling yourself all that, a small voice said.</p> <p>The muscles in Hunt's back stiffened. His hands paused whatever they were doing.</p> <p>Shit, he could smell this kind of thing, couldn't he? Most Vanir males could. The shifts in a</p>

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	<p>person's scent: fear and arousal being the two big ones. He was the Umbra Mortis. Off-limits in ten million ways. And the Umbra Mortis didn't date—no, it'd be all or nothing with him. Hunt asked, voice like gravel, "What are you thinking about?" He didn't turn from the stove. You. Like a fucking idiot, I'm thinking about you. "There's a sample sale at one of the designer stores this afternoon," she lied. Hunt glanced over his shoulder. Fuck, his eyes were dark. "Is that so?" Was that a purr in his voice? She couldn't help the step she took back, bumping into the kitchen island. "Yes," she said, unable to look away. Hunt's eyes darkened further. He said nothing. She couldn't breathe properly with that stare fixed on her. That stare that told her he scented everything going on in her body. Her nipples pebbled under that stare. Hunt went preternaturally still. His eyes dipped downward. Saw her breasts. The thighs she now clamped together—as if it'd stop the throbbing beginning to torture her between them. His face went positively feral. A mountain cat ready to pounce. "I didn't know clothing sales got you so hot and bothered, Quinlan." She nearly whimpered. Forced herself to keep still. "It's the little things in life, Athalar." "Is that what you think about when you open up that left nightstand? Clothing sales?" He faced her fully now. She didn't dare let her gaze drop. "Yes," she breathed. "All those clothes, all over my body." She had no idea what the fuck was coming out of her mouth. How was it possible all the air in the apartment, the city, had been sucked out? "Maybe you should buy some new underwear," he murmured, nodding to her bare legs. "Seems like you're out." She couldn't stop it—the image that blazed over her senses: Hunt putting those big hands on her waist and hoisting her onto the counter currently pressing into her spine, shoving her T-shirt over her midriff—his T-shirt, actually—and spreading her legs wide. Fucking her with his tongue, then his cock, until she was sobbing in pleasure, screaming with it, she didn't care just so long as he was touching her, inside her— "Quinlan." He seemed to be shaking now. As if only a tether of pure will kept him in place. As if he'd seen the same burning image and was just waiting for her nod. It'd complicate everything. The investigation, whatever he felt for Shahar, her own life— To fucking Hel with all that. They'd figure it out later. They'd—</p>
514	<p>Just like it had this morning when he'd seen her breasts peak, and had scented how filthy her own thoughts had turned.</p>
567	<p>And Hunt, as if he sensed it, too, leaned forward again. Brushed his mouth against hers. Just a hint of a kiss—a feather-soft glancing of his lips over hers. A star bloomed inside her at that kiss. A long-slumbering light began to fill her chest, her veins.</p>
571	<p>That too-brief kiss he'd given her had said enough. So had the light he could have sworn glowed in her eyes as he'd pulled away.</p>
590	<p>Hunt gripped her trembling fingers. "What's this about?" he murmured, unable to help himself from pressing his mouth to the dusky nails. How many times had he thought about these hands on him? Caressing his face, stroking down his chest, wrapped around his cock?</p>

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	<p>Her swallow was audible. He pressed another kiss to her fingers. “This wasn’t supposed to happen—between us,” she whispered. “I know,” he said, kissing her shaking fingers again. He gently unfurled them, exposing the heart of her palm. He pressed his mouth there, too. “But thank fucking Urd it did.” Her hands stopped shaking. Hunt lifted his eyes from her hand to find her own lined with silver—and full of fire. He interlaced their fingers. “For fuck’s sake, just kiss me, Quinlan.” She did. Dark Hel, she did. His words had barely finished sounding when she slid her hand over his jaw, around his neck, and hauled his lips to hers.</p> <p>The moment Hunt’s lips met her own, Bryce erupted. She didn’t know if it was weeks without sex or Hunt himself, but she unleashed herself. That was the only way to describe it as she drove her hands into his hair and slanted her mouth against his.</p> <p>No tentative, sweet kisses. Not for them. Never for them.</p> <p>Her mouth opened at that first contact, and his tongue swept in, tasting her in savage, unrelenting strokes. Hunt groaned at that first taste—and the sound was kindling. Rising onto her knees, fingers digging into his soft hair, she couldn’t get enough, taste enough of him—rain and cedar and salt and pure lightning. His hands skimmed over her hips, slow and steady despite the mouth that ravaged hers with fierce, deep kisses.</p> <p>His tongue danced with her own. She whimpered, and he let out a dark laugh as his hand wandered under the back of her dress, down the length of her spine, his calluses scraping. She arched into the touch, and he tore his mouth away.</p> <p>Before she could grab his face back to hers, his lips found her neck. He pressed openmouthed kisses to it, nipped at the sensitive skin beneath her ears. “Tell me what you want, Quinlan.” “All of it.” There was no doubt in her. None.</p> <p>Hunt dragged his teeth along the side of her neck, and she panted, her entire consciousness narrowing to the sensation. “All of it?”</p> <p>She slid her hand down his front. To his pants—the hard, considerable length straining against them. Urd spare her. She palmed his cock, eliciting a hiss from him. “All of it, Athalar.” “Thank fuck,” he breathed against her neck, and she laughed.</p> <p>Her laugh died as he put his mouth on hers again, as if he needed to taste the sound, too. Tongues and teeth and breath, his hands artfully unhooking her bra under her dress. She wound up straddling his lap, wound up grinding herself over that beautiful, perfect hardness in his lap. Wound up with her dress peeled down to her waist, her bra gone, and then Hunt’s mouth and teeth were around her breast, suckling and biting and kissing, and nothing, nothing, nothing had ever felt this good, this right.</p> <p>Bryce didn’t care that she was moaning loud enough for every demon in the Pit to hear. Not as Hunt switched to her other breast, sucking her nipple deep into his mouth. She drove her hips down on his, release already a rising wave in her. “Fuck, Bryce,” he murmured against her breast.</p> <p>She only dove her hand beneath the waist of his pants. His hand wrapped around her wrist, though. Halted her millimeters from what she’d wanted in her hands, her mouth, her body for weeks.</p> <p>“Not yet,” he growled, dragging his tongue along the underside of her breast. Content to feast on her. “Not until I’ve had my turn.”</p> <p>The words short-circuited every logical thought. And any objections died as he slipped a hand up her dress, running it over her thigh. Higher. His mouth found her neck again as a finger</p>

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	<p>explored the lacy front of her underwear.</p> <p>He hissed again as he found it utterly soaked, the lace doing nothing to hide the proof of just how badly she wanted this, wanted him. He ran his finger down the length of her—and back up again.</p> <p>Then that finger landed on that spot at the apex of her thighs. His thumb gently pressed on it over the fabric, drawing a moan deep from her throat.</p> <p>She felt him smile against her neck. His thumb slowly circled, every sweep a torturous blessing.</p> <p>“Hunt.” She didn’t know if his name was a plea or a question.</p> <p>He just tugged aside her underwear and put his fingers directly on her.</p> <p>She moaned again, and Hunt stroked her, two fingers dragging up and down with teeth-grinding lightness. He licked up the side of her throat, fingers playing mercilessly with her. He whispered against her skin, “Do you taste as good as you feel, Bryce?”</p> <p>“Please find out immediately,” she managed to gasp.</p> <p>His laugh rumbled through her, but his fingers didn’t halt their leisurely exploration. “Not yet, Quinlan.”</p> <p>One of his fingers found her entrance and lingered, circling. “Do it,” she said. If she didn’t feel him inside her—his fingers or his cock, anything—she might start begging.</p> <p>“So bossy,” Hunt purred against her neck, then claimed her mouth again. And as his lips settled over hers, nipping and taunting, he slid that finger deep into her. Both of them groaned. “Fuck, Bryce,” he said again. “Fuck.” Her eyes nearly rolled back into her head at the feeling of that finger. She rocked her hips, desperate to drive him deeper, and he obliged her, pulling out his finger nearly all the way, adding a second, and plunging both back into her. She bucked, her nails digging into his chest. His thunderous heartbeat raged against her palms. She buried her face in his neck, biting and licking, starving for any taste of him while he pumped his hand into her again.</p> <p>Hunt breathed into her ear, “I am going to fuck you until you can’t remember your gods-damned name.”</p> <p>Gods, yes. “Likewise,” she croaked.</p> <p>Release shimmered in her, a wild and reckless song, and she rode his hand toward it. His other hand cupped her backside. “Don’t think I’ve forgotten this particular asset,” he murmured, squeezing for emphasis. “I have plans for this beautiful ass, Bryce. Filthy, filthy plans.”</p> <p>She moaned again, and his fingers stroked into her, over and over.</p> <p>“Come for me, sweetheart,” he purred against her breast, his tongue flicking over her nipple just as one of his fingers curled inside her, hitting that gods-damned spot.</p> <p>Bryce did. Hunt’s name on her lips, she tipped her head back and let go, riding his hand with abandon, driving them both into the couch cushions.</p> <p>He groaned, and she swallowed the sound with an openmouthed kiss as every nerve in her body exploded into glorious starlight.</p> <p>Then there was only breathing, and him—his body, his scent, that strength.</p> <p>The starlight receded, and she opened her eyes to find him with his head tipped back, teeth bared.</p> <p>Not in pleasure. In pain.</p> <p>She’d driven him into the cushions. Shoved his wounded back right up against the couch. Horror lurched through her like ice water, dousing any heat in her veins. “Oh gods. I am so sorry—”</p> <p>He cracked his eyes open. That groan he’d made as she came had been pain, and she’d been</p>

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	<p>so fucking wild for him that she hadn't noticed— "Are you hurt?" she demanded, hoisting herself up from his lap, reaching to remove his fingers, still deep inside her. He halted her with his other hand on her wrist. "I'll survive." His eyes darkened as he looked at her bare breasts, still inches from his mouth. The dress shoved halfway down her body. "I have other things to distract me," he murmured, leaning down for her peaked nipple. Or trying to. A grimace passed over his face. "Dark Hel, Hunt," she barked, yanking out of his grip, off his fingers, nearly falling from his lap. He didn't even fight her as she grabbed his shoulder and peered at his back. Fresh blood leaked through his bandages. "Are you out of your mind?" she shouted, searching for anything in the immediate vicinity to press against the blood. "Why didn't you tell me?" "As you like to say," he panted, shaking slightly, "it's my body. I decide its limits." ...He gripped her wrist again. "We're not done here." "Oh yes we fucking are," she seethed. "I'm not having sex with you when you're spouting blood like a fountain." An exaggeration, but still. His eyes were dark—burning. So Bryce poked his back, a good six inches beneath his wound. His answering wince of pain settled the argument. Setting her underwear to rights and sliding her dress back over her chest and arms, she dialed the public medwitch number.</p>
594	<p>Then Hunt had the nerve to ask if he was cleared for sex. The witch, to her credit, didn't laugh. Just said, When you're able to fly again, then I'd say it's safe for you to be sexually active as well. She nodded toward the couch cushions—the bloodstain that would require a magi-spell to erase. I'd suggest whatever ... interaction caused tonight's injury also be postponed until your wings are healed. ...Cleared for sex, indeed.</p>
608	<p>She and Danika had been no better than two addicts, inhaling and snorting everything they could get their hands on.</p>
624	<p>She'd snapped another photo of him working in the kitchen: of his ass. With her own hand in the foreground, giving a thumbs-up of approval.</p>
782	<p>And she wanted to be kissed by that light. Now. Wanted to kiss him back, and tell Syrinx to go wait in his crate for a while. ...When Bryce looked back at Hunt, she found his focus on her lips. And became hyperaware of the fact that she was sitting across his lap. On her bed. From the hardness starting to poke into her backside, she knew he'd realized it, too. Still they said nothing as they stared at each other. So Bryce wriggled slightly against his erection, drawing a hiss from him. She huffed a laugh. "I throw one smoldering look at you and you're already—what was it you said to me a few weeks ago? Hot and bothered?" One of his hands traced down her spine again, intent in every inch of it. "I've been hot and bothered for you for a long time now." His hand halted on her waist, his thumb beginning a gentle, torturous stroking along her rib cage. With each sweep, the building ache between her legs ratcheted. Hunt smiled slowly, as if well aware of that. Then he leaned in, pressing a kiss to the underside of her jaw. He said against her flushed skin, "You ready to do this?" "Gods, yes," she breathed. And when he kissed just beneath her ear, making her back arch</p>

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	<p>slightly, she said, "I recall you promising to fuck me until I couldn't remember my own name." He shifted his hips, grinding his cock into her, searing her even with the clothing still between them. "If that's what you want, sweetheart, that's what I'll give you."</p> <p>Oh gods. She couldn't get a solid breath down. Couldn't think around his roving mouth on her neck and his hands and that massive, beautiful cock digging into her. She had to get him inside her. Right now. She needed to feel him, needed to have his heat and strength around her. In her.</p> <p>Bryce shifted to straddle his lap, lining herself up with all of him. She met all of him, satisfied to find his breathing as ragged as her own. His hands bracketed her waist, thumbs stroking, stroking, stroking, as if he were an engine waiting to roar into movement upon her command. Bryce leaned in, brushing her mouth over his. Once. Twice.</p> <p>Hunt began shaking with the force of his restraint as he let her explore his mouth. But she pulled back, meeting his hazy, burning gaze. The words she wanted to say clogged in her throat, so she hoped he understood them as she pressed a kiss to his now-clear brow. Sketched a line of soft, glancing kisses over every inch where the tattoo had been. Hunt slid a shaking hand from her waist and laid it over her thundering heart. She swallowed thickly, surprised to find her eyes stinging. Surprised to see silver lining his eyes as well. They had made it; they were here. Together.</p> <p>Hunt leaned in, slanting his mouth over hers. She met him halfway, arms snaking around his neck, fingers burying themselves in his thick, silken hair.</p> <p>A shrill ringing filled the apartment.</p> <p>She could ignore it, ignore the world—</p> <p>Call from ... Home.</p> <p>Bryce pulled back, panting hard.</p> <p>"You gonna get that?" Hunt's voice was guttural.</p> <p>Yes. No. Maybe.</p> <p>Call from ... Home.</p> <p>"She'll just keep calling until I pick up," Bryce murmured.</p> <p>Her limbs were stiff as she peeled herself from Hunt's lap, his fingers trailing over her back as she stood. She tried not to think about the promise in that touch, as if he was as reluctant to let go of her as she was of him.</p>
785	<p>But it shocked away any lingering heat between her legs and the heady desire clouding her mind.</p>
786	<p>He hadn't cared that an entire city was looking on: he'd wanted to kiss her when the light of her power had faded, when Hunt had lowered his wings to find her in his arms, looking up at him like he was worth something. Like he was all she needed. End of story.</p> <p>No one had ever looked at him like that.</p> <p>And when they'd come back here, and he'd had her on his lap on her bed and seen the way her cheeks became pink as she looked at his mouth, he'd been ready to cross that final bridge with her. To spend all day and night doing so.</p> <p>Considering how her firstlight had healed him, he'd most definitely say he was cleared for sex. Aching for it—for her.</p> <p>...Hunt smiled, going half-hard again at the sass in her tone. He could listen to her snark all fucking day. He wondered how much of it would make an appearance when he got her naked again. Got her moaning.</p> <p>The first time, she'd come on his hand. This time ... This time, he had plans for all the other</p>

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	<p>ways he'd get her to make that beautiful, breathless sound as she'd orgasmed. Leaving Bryce to deal with her mother, willing his cock to calm the fuck down, Hunt grabbed a burner phone from his underwear drawer and dialed Isaiah, one of the few numbers he'd memorized.</p>
794	<p>Ruhn glared at the adjacent rooftop where Hunt stood. "Athalar has a big fucking mouth." One she'd like to put to good use on various parts of her body, she didn't say. She didn't need Ruhn puking on her clean clothes.</p>

Profanity	Count
Ass	158
Bitch	18
Cock	15
Cunt	1
Dick	17
Fuck	528
Piss	50
Prick	15
Shit	224
Tit	4