

Amazon Bestselling Author



BITSY

Carol Dawn

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Trigger Warning

This book contains explicit language, graphic sexual situations, and intense violence. Additionally, it delves into a highly sensitive medical topic. Reader discretion is advised. The content within may be distressing or triggering for some individuals. If you are uncomfortable with strong language, sexual content, violence, or find discussions about challenging medical conditions emotionally difficult, it is recommended to approach this material with caution.

Please, prioritize your well-being and mental health while engaging with this book.

Dearest Reader

Bitsy is a known and well-loved character from the Phantoms MC series. While you can read this book as a standalone, you would get a better understanding of who Bitsy is and where she came from if you read the Phantoms MC series, first. I hope that you're ready to take this journey with me as we follow Bitsy's path, but I will warn you, have your box of tissues ready. This one is a doozy.

Prologue

Bitsy

“Daddy, it isn’t fair. I’m tired of you treating me like I’m still a five-year-old little girl when I’m twenty-six. Mom, help me out here.”

“Leave your mother out of this, Tiffany Renee.”

Crap. He’s pulling out my government name.

“I just want to ride out for the three-day biker convention,” I say.

“I can’t spare any men to go with you, and it’s too dangerous up there,” he tells me. “You can go next year.”

Next year. That thought alone causes my stomach to drop.

“I don’t need anyone coming with me,” I try to reason. “I’m perfectly capable of taking care of myself. You and all of my crazy uncles made sure of that.”

“It’s not happening, Bitsy,” he says, not even bothering to look up from his computer. “Not after what we’ve learned about that area. I need to finish this email. This conversation is over.”

Dismissed. I’ve been dismissed.

With a frustrated sigh, I toss my hands up and turn to leave the room. A glance at mom tells me that she doesn’t agree with my father but they have to have a united front and all that.

He doesn’t understand. How could he? I feel trapped behind the extremely fortified walls that are the Phantoms motorcycle club. Also known as Cap’s Security. My dad and his army buddies, my uncles, started this company years before I was born. I’ve spent my entire life surrounded by men whose main focus is the protection of those in need.

Well, the only thing I’m *in need of* is to break free. Even if only for a few days. I just need a little break to work things out in my head. I feel as if I’m going crazy and I just need the feel of the wind in my hair as I soar down the open road on my bike.

Unfortunately, my whole dang family is the giant roadblock blocking my way.

With nothing left to do, I leave and head to my home. Dad and my uncles built my house for me a few years back when I first expressed the need to be on my own. To try and figure out how to live life without having a big bad scary dude glaring at my every choice.

“You can’t go home.”

Using every bit of strength I possess I somehow manage not to turn around and punch my cousin in the face.

“And why is that?” I ask calmly.

“Because my dad is fixing your electricity,” Mikey says. “That last storm we had did some pretty severe damage to the property lines. That’s why you’ve been having issues. It won’t be ready until tomorrow.”

“Of course, it won’t,” I mutter.

Mikey is my Uncle Shadow and Aunt Grace’s son. He just turned thirty-six and is living a full and healthy life with his wife, Ester. When he was younger the doctors found a growth near his spine. He was told that if he had it removed then the likelihood of him being paralyzed from the neck down was extremely high.

Despite the recommendation, Mikey chose to forego the surgery for numerous years. Then his stepmom, Aunt Grace, entered the picture. With heartfelt determination, she begged Mikey to reconsider, stressing that the tumor had grown to a critical size, poised to result in complete paralysis. Furthermore, left unchecked, its progression could have led to his premature death.

I’m so glad he gave in. He was one of the lucky few who made it through the surgery without anything going wrong. He’s been up and out of his chair for ten years now.

“You know, with your brains, you could help me go to that convention without anyone knowing,” I tell him as I turn back to my parents’ house.

“I could,” he says, his voice light with humor. “But I won’t. Your safety is far more important than your freedom.”

“You sound just like them, Mikey,” I tell him.

“I am them,” he responds. “I understand your need for freedom more than most, Bitsy. I craved that same freedom for twenty years being stuck in that damn wheelchair. But, now that I’m older, I understand where our family was coming from. Safety is of the utmost importance.”

“You’re only saying that because you’re a new dad,” I remind him. “You used to be the fun cousin. Now, you’re just a Phantom. A protector.”

“I’m saying that because it’s the truth,” he says. “My job requires me to know the most intimate secrets a person has. I’ve gotten into the minds of sociopaths, Bitsy. I know the evil that lurks in this world. And beautiful women like yourself are prime meat for people like that. I’d much rather you be angry and safe than dead.”

“I get that,” I sigh. “I really do, Mikey. But it’s a biker’s convention. We go every year and you all know everyone who shows up. It’s not like I’m going to meet a bunch of strangers. I have friends there. You have friends there. Heck, even dad has friends who go. It’s not like it’s one of those wild ones that I always ask to go to. This one is familiar to everyone. Just in a new location.”

“I’m sorry, Bitsy, but I’m not going to help you sneak away. If the convention was someplace other than Harborbrook, Kentucky, I might have considered it. Now, get back in the house before the sun sets.”

With nothing left to say, he turns and heads towards my house where Uncle Shadow sits waiting.

“Mom, Mikey says my house isn’t livable until tomorrow.”

“You’re always welcome here, sweetheart,” she says, wrapping me in the warmest of hugs. “You remind me of Justin. You got a lot of your personality from him.”

I smile. Mom was my birth mom, but she and dad are not technically my biological parents. Mom agreed to be a surrogate for her brother, Justin, and his wife, Tiffany. Tiffany had developed lung cancer and had her eggs frozen before starting her treatments on the off chance that the chemo and radiation treatments would destroy her reproductive organs. Shortly before she passed away, she asked mom to be her surrogate so that my father would still have a piece of her once she was gone.

After mom became pregnant, my biological mother passed away and my father was killed shortly before I was born.

Mom and dad have never hidden that part of my past from me, and for that I’m grateful. I have the most amazing parents in the world and knowing that I’m their daughter because they chose me is a feeling of love unlike any other I have ever known.

But...

My dad is an overprotective pain in the butt.

“I think I’m going to go ahead and lie down,” I tell mom. “Maybe watch some tv before getting some sleep. You know, since I don’t have anywhere to

go.”

“Your father loves you,” mom tells me, still holding me tightly. “He loves you so much that he’s in a constant state of fear that you’re going to go out into the big bad world and get hurt. He only wants what’s best for you.”

“Maybe what’s best for me is a few days outside of his walls of protection,” I tell her.

“Maybe,” she whispers. “But, when the time is right, your dad will let go just enough to let you live. Just give him time, sweetheart.”

I don’t need to remind mom that I’m twenty-six years old. My time has already been cut in half and if I wait any longer...well, life will pass me by.

“Love you, mom,” I say. “We’ll talk more tomorrow.”

I pull from her reluctant hug and head to my room. I understand Daddy’s fear. I truly do. But he doesn’t understand mine.

So, I’ll lie here and wait until everyone is asleep. Then I’m leaving for the convention. When I return, I will willingly walk back into the bars of protection that my family offers with a smile on my face.

But I just need these next few days to think. To remember. To let go of the fear that has been threatening to drown me for weeks now.

I need this one last hoorah before my life turns upside down.

Chapter One

Bitsy

Under the cover of darkness, I slip out of my room, careful not to wake my slumbering family. My heart races with a heady mix of anticipation and guilt as I pack my belongings and prepare my motorcycle for the journey ahead.

As the night swallows me, the engine's growl harmonizes with the exhilaration that courses through my veins. The wind whips against my face, carrying whispers of freedom and the thrill of the open road. I embrace the solitude of the ride, the black ribbon of asphalt unfurling beneath my wheels, leading me to a world beyond the familiar confines of our club.

The sun travels the sky as I ride with an unyielding determination, pushing through fatigue and uncertainty. Every mile traveled is a testament to my thirst for independence, a refusal to be confined by the chains of expectation.

I travel for hours, ignoring the constant vibration of the phone in my pocket. Ignoring my primal needs and just enjoying the freedom of fresh air through my wind-whipped hair. Having forgone my helmet, my hair flows freely with each passing mile.

My heart aches for my parents. I know that they're worried about me, but if they only knew what I knew, they would understand my taste for freedom. Even if it's just for these next few days.

The roads are shrouded in darkness as the initial droplets of rain make contact with my face. Yet, it hardly fazes me. In this instance, nothing else matters. A broad smile graces my lips as the heavens themselves seem to weep, concealing the quiet tears that escape my own eyes.

I lift my hands from the bike's handles, tossing them in the air, and I just yell. Is it a shout of happiness, the taste of freedom, or anger?

Maybe it's all three.

Maybe it's my declaration of the unfairness of the world.

Whatever the reason, it comes from deep within my soul. Never before has such an emotional sound escaped the body of a woman.

Which is probably the reason why I don't feel my bike tilt until it's too

late. My tire must have hit a pot hole causing the wheel to jerk. I grab the handlebars and try to straighten my bike but it's of no use. I'm going too fast.

Resigned to fate's retribution, I shut my eyes, embracing the impending consequences. The bike's rear lurches upward in an attempt to unseat me, yet I cling on tenaciously, defying gravity momentarily. Despite my resilience, the flip's force prevails. Like a weightless feather, my body is launched into the air, my grip on the handlebars slipping away.

Agony courses through my body upon impact, the ground proving an unforgiving landing surface. Despite my efforts, I can't seem to move—I'm trapped, unable to draw even a single breath.

Gradually, my ability to perceive sound slips away, leaving me in silence. However, on the horizon, a beacon of light emerges. Its brilliance, a radiant orb, appears to rush toward me, only to halt suddenly. Within moments, a pair of black boots, much like what my father wears, materializes before me, as if bidding a somber farewell.

Call it poetic justice if you will. But those boots send me right back to the safety of the Phantom's fortress. To love and happiness. To safety. To my family.

With the last bit of strength I possess, I close my eyes and pray that the Lord gives my family strength to get through my death.

Chapter Two

Viper

“Blaze, call Ghost and tell him to clear out the clubhouse,” I order my Sargent at Arms. “I need Venom to be clear-headed when we get there. Tell him Doc needs to be in control.”

“On it,” Blaze says, pulling out his phone.

I look down at the sweet angel lying unconscious on the road. Blood pours from her head but I don’t panic. Head wounds always bleed more severely than other wounds.

I should know. I’ve made a few people bleed in my time.

“Venom would like for me to inform you that you know that’s not how it works but he will try his best.”

Strangely, it takes a lot of self-control not to lose my shit on my brother. I know he can’t tell Doc what to do. I know that it isn’t really up to him to decide if Doc is in control. But, for some strange reason, getting this angel to Doc as quickly as possible is the most important thing to me right now.

“Pull him down off his high horse, Venom,” I shout through the rain so that he can hear me through Blaze’s phone. “Tell him I need him and he needs to be ready in ten minutes.”

I reach down and gently pull this angel into my arms. She’s breathing, but it’s unsteady.

“Check her bike for any personal belongings,” I say. “Pull it to the side of the road. We’ll come back and deal with it later.”

Walking to my bike, I take a minute to try and figure out how to hold this unconscious female against my body while trying to drive through the storm.

“I’ll hold her until you get on,” Blaze says. “Then we can place her against your chest and tie her to you using this sweater I found in her bag. It’s not the best or safest plan, but it’ll have to do.”

I hesitate slightly before handing the stranger to Blaze and straddling my bike.

“Turn her to where she’s sitting backward,” I say. “I’ll be able to control

the turns that way without fear of her falling.”

It takes a couple of minutes but we manage to get the angel secure enough for a quick trip back to the clubhouse.

The woman moans as I start the bike and I can do nothing else but grip the back of her head with one of my hands.

“Hang in there, little one,” I say. “Everything is going to be alright.”

As we journeyed back to the clubhouse, I found myself replaying her crash in my mind. She had been moving far too fast to be on a bike in the middle of a storm. In an instant, her headlight had been hurtling toward us at breakneck speed, only to start somersaulting before ultimately colliding with the ground.

Why wasn’t she wearing a damn helmet?

It takes longer than I would have liked to make it back to the clubhouse. The storm is in full force making it hard to see and I didn’t want my angel to slip from my grip.

“Doc, you better be ready,” I shout the second I turn my bike off.

I dismount before pulling the woman into my arms and rushing into the building.

“In here, Viper,” Doc says in his British accent. “What’s going on?”

“She flipped her bike,” Blaze says. “Crazy woman was out driving in this rain going way too fast.”

“With no damn helmet,” I add, placing my bundle onto the waiting bed. “What the hell was she thinking?”

“Probably the same thing you two were thinking, son,” Ma says, walking to the woman’s side and moving the hair from her face.

For the first time, I get a full view of her face.

“She’s fucking beautiful,” I say.

“So young,” Ma says. “Did she have any ID with her?”

“What do you mean the same thing we were thinking, Ma?” Blaze asks. “We weren’t just out for a joy ride.”

“She means how you boys never wear helmets, son,” Pops says. “What’s the situation, Doc?”

“She’ll be fine,” Doc grumbles. “Not some much as a scratch apart from her head. She just needs a couple of stitches and she’ll be perfectly fine.”

“She’s unconscious, Doc,” I remind him.

“Just a little nap,” he replies. “She’ll be waking up in a little while.”

“Got her ID,” Blaze says, tossing her bag on an empty chair. “Say’s her name is Tiffany Renee Williams. Lives at least eight hours away.”

“She looks familiar,” Pops says. “Can’t quite place her face but I know I’ve seen her before.”

I look at her beautiful face and know for a fact that I’ve never come face to face with this woman before. I wouldn’t have forgotten her if I had.

“Give me your cut son,” Ma says. “You’ve got blood all over it.”

“I can clean my own cut, Ma,” I smile, but remove the leather anyway.

“If there is nothing else, I’ll be moseying to the back,” Doc remarks. “Next time, a simple request will do to fetch me up front, Viper. There’s no call for barking orders. You are well aware that I have no taste for folks acting all high and mighty.”

“Thanks, Doc.”

“Don’t make a fuss about it. I’m off.”

“I don’t think he likes you much,” Blaze says.

“Doc has been around since we were kids,” I remind him. “He’s never liked me because I always won at chess and he’s a sore fucking loser.”

Venom scuffs and I look over and smile.

“Doc says he always let you win,” he laughs. “But he’s more than happy to let you think whatever it is you want to think.”

I laugh as Venom cleans Tiffany’s blood from his hands and packs up his medical supplies. Ma and Pops adopted Venom when he was only five years old. His parents were killed right in front of him which is what his therapist thinks may have caused the personalities to emerge. To protect himself, he hid away. Ma fell in love the very second she saw him and he’s been our brother since.

Venom has Dissociative Identity Disorder. Or multiple personalities. There are three as far as we know. Apart from Venom, there’s Doc, the one who was working on Tiffany. Then there’s Xander. He’s the most put-together man I’ve ever met. And, of course, Miles. Miles is gay. Venom is not.

It’s a whole thing.

Venom has been through years of therapy and, for the most part, has control over his *system*. That’s what he calls his group of alters.

Doc is the alter that fronts, or takes charge, only when he’s needed. He could be a full-on brain surgeon if he wanted but Venom doesn’t know the first thing about first aid. It’s strange, but kind of cool when you think about it. Not to mention, Doc is British and speaks with the heaviest accent I’ve ever heard. Half the time I have no idea what he’s talking about.

Venom tried to mimic Doc’s accent once and it had us all in tears from

laughing. It was horrible.

Xander's the alter who *fronts* the most. He's brutal and isn't afraid to do dirty work when the need arises. He's a stickler for the rules and has a massive case of OCD. Venom and Miles drive Xander crazy because they're as messy as little children.

Miles may be messy, but he's also very loving and protective. Miles' personality in Venom's body is a force to be reckoned with.

Venom is a mixture of all of his alters. He's impatient like Doc, extremely protective like Miles, and Brutal like Xander. All of them together make the deadliest weapon we have. Which is where Venom got his road name.

"She's waking up, brother," Venom says.

I gently nudge Pops so that I can move to stand close to my angel's face. She moans as she slowly opens her eyes.

Blue, pain-filled eyes look right at me and I feel as if my whole life has just been altered. I don't know this woman or her history, but I have a feeling she's going to be a huge part of my future.

"My father is going to kill me," she moans quietly.

Chapter Three

Bitsy

I can hear everyone talking but I can't seem to open my eyes or get myself to make a sound. It's almost as if I'm completely paralyzed. I passed out when I crashed but was conscious by the time the stranger lifted me off of the road and placed me on his motorcycle.

"She's so young," a woman says. "Did she have any ID with her?"

"What do you mean the same thing we were thinking, Ma?" someone says. "We weren't just out for a joy ride."

"She means how you boys never wear helmets, son," I hear another man say. "What's the situation, Doc?"

"She'll be fine," the man I'm presuming Doc grumbles. "Not some much as a scratch apart from her head. She just needs a couple of stitches and she'll be perfectly fine."

"She's unconscious, Doc." That's the voice of the stranger who picked me up and saved me.

"Just a little nap," Doc replies. "She'll be waking up in a little while."

I just listen as this group of strangers talks about me as if I'm not here. Someone at one point says that I look familiar to them. Maybe they know my father?

I finally feel like I can move, so I do. I manage to move my head which caught someone's attention.

"She's waking up, brother."

They've brought me somewhere other than a hospital, they keep calling each other *brother* and I've heard a few nicknames thrown out. Not to mention being placed on a motorcycle to get here. Am I in another club's territory?

I blink my eyes open and am met with the gaze of the most captivating man I have ever laid eyes on. His sea-green eyes hold a mixture of worry and care as they lock onto mine. His hair, a deep shade of brown, frames his face impeccably, and he sports a well-maintained clean-shaven look, accompanied

by a subtle five o'clock shadow. A slightly crooked nose hints at a past break, adding to his rugged charm, while his tanned skin speaks of countless hours spent in the open outdoors.

Standing beside him is an older version of his likeness. Both look like bikers to me.

"My father is going to kill me," I mumble.

"Not under my watch," the younger male says.

"Not literally, goof," I say, sitting up. "Dang, my head hurts."

"Doc says you're going to be fine," someone says.

I glance to my left and see a black-haired man with a kind smile and dark brown eyes looking down at me.

"I can assure your Doc that being 'fine' is far from my current state," I retort, my voice laced with a touch of sarcasm. "Once my dad gets wind of this, I'll be in for a lifetime of grounding. Age twenty-six or not, I'm undoubtedly doomed."

A kind smile graces the man's lips as he responds, "Your old man can't exactly ground you if you're twenty-six."

A wry chuckle escapes me. "Clearly, you've never had the pleasure of meeting him, my uncles, or my cousins. They're a whole clan of overprotective baboons."

"I don't think there's such a thing as being overly protective."

I glare at the handsome man to my right.

"You would fit right in with my club," I say. "As a matter of fact, I need to call them. Dad's going to be mad about a few other things, too. Can someone please find my phone? And maybe some Tylenol. Where's this Doc of yours?"

"She's got spunk," the older man laughs. "Doc's around and Blaze has your phone."

"Here you go spunky," a new man, says. He also has a strong resemblance to the older man. Except for his size. My eyes bulge as I try and take all of him in. I'm pretty sure his muscles have muscles. And let's not even mention that fiery red hair.

"Don't call me spunky," I say, accepting my phone from the red-haired man. "Do they call you Blaze because of your hair?"

"Sure," he chuckles. "My hair."

I smile, knowing full well there's a story there.

"Doc says to take two of these," the kind man says. "I'm Venom, by the

way.”

“Thank you, Venom,” I say, graciously accepting the unopened bottle.

“Ma, could you grab her a bottle of water on your way through?” the handsome man says to an older woman heading this way. She has long brown hair with some gray speckled throughout. She’s so beautiful and it makes me miss my mom so much.

“I need to go home,” I whisper. “I’ve made a terrible mistake.”

“Here you go, lovely,” the older woman says as she reaches the bed. Now, I’m surrounded by strangers. I feel like a caged animal.

“I’m about to call my dad and I’m sure he’s going to be livid,” I warn. “You’re all more than welcome to stand here and listen but he might target one of you to yell at. It’s sort of his thing.”

The group laughs but makes no move to leave.

Alrighty then.

“Are you all a family or a club?” I ask as I pull up my dad's number. I know that I’m just hesitating, but I don’t care. “I know clubs are families, I’m in one myself, but most of you look so much alike.”

“We’re a family,” the handsome man says. “We’re also a club, though. It’s a family-run club. My name is Viper. These are my brothers, Venom and Blaze, and our parents, Robert and Victoria. We have two more brothers in a meeting. Ghost and Steel.”

“Big family,” I smile at Victoria.

I’ve always wanted to have kids. Not just one, but five or six. I don’t think that will be possible now, but a girl can dream.

“Come on, Rob,” Victoria says. “Let’s get out of the way so our boys can help this young lady. By the way, what’s your name?”

“Tiffany,” I say. “But everyone just calls me Bitsy.”

“Well, I’ll be damned,” Robert smiles. “Your ID said your name is Tiffany Williams. I knew it sounded familiar. You belong to the Phantoms, don’t ya girl?”

I raise my brows and grin. “Yep,” I say, popping the *p*.”

Robert laughs and pats my leg.

“Yeah, you’re doomed,” he says. “My boys will be too if they don’t back up. The Phantoms don’t play when it comes to their women and children.”

“I’m fine where I am, Pops,” Viper says. “Call your old man, Bitsy. He needs to know you’re safe.”

With a resounding breath, I hit call.

“Bitsy, where the fuck are you? I’ve been trying to reach you all day.”

“Hi, Daddy,” I say. “It’s good to hear your voice.”

“Where are you, baby? I’ve called my guys at the convention and they said they haven’t seen you. Based on the time you snuck out of the house you should have been there hours ago.”

“I didn’t sneak out of the house,” I say. “I just left quietly so I wouldn’t disturb your beauty sleep. You’re getting old, Daddy. You need all the rest you can get to keep up with mom.”

He’s quiet and I know he’s trying to compose himself. I made him laugh but he doesn’t want me to know that.

“Answer the question, Bitsy. Where are you?”

“Really? Uncle Reaper? Is everyone there?”

“Yes,” a chorus of voices say.

I roll my eyes and put my phone on speaker. My head is killing me and I just need to close my eyes and lay down. I place my phone on my chest and throw my arm over my eyes. Maybe it’s because I’m so used to never being in places where I can come to harm, but I don’t feel the need to try and keep myself protected around these people.

Or maybe I have brain damage from the crash.

“I was on my way to the convention,” I admit. “I just needed a few days to clear my head.”

“Was on your way?” Daddy says. *“And what reason do you need to clear your head?”*

“Tell us where you are right now,” Uncle Shadow says. *“We’ve given you your time, but now you need to let us come and get you.”*

I sigh.

If I thought they were overprotective baboons before, then I’m in for a shock when I inform them about a couple of things.

“It started to storm,” I say. “It was stupid, but I took my helmet off to enjoy the rain and the wind. I know, I know. But you guys just don’t understand.”

“Tell them the rest, sweetheart.”

I glare at Viper, which causes the pain in my head to explode.

“Who the fuck was that?” Daddy shouts. *“You best get the fuck away from my daughter. The last thing you want is for me and my family to come after you.”*

Viper smirks but raises a single brow.

Jerk, I mouth.

“Well,” I say, taking a deep breath. “You see, the thing is, I may or may not have thrown my hands up in the air like I was on a roller coaster and my front wheel hit a hole and I flipped my bike.”

Sure, I spoke faster than an auctioneer. But, maybe, just maybe, they misheard me and thought I said something completely different. However, based on the outburst on the other end of the phone, I don’t think that’s what happened.

They’re angry. Heck, even the men glaring at me from all ends of my bed are angry.

“How could you do something so fucking stupid?” Mikey says. *“You’re a hell of a lot smarter than that, Bitsy. You could have died.”*

“I’m fine,” I try and say. “I just hit my head but this doctor says I’m going to be fine. I just have a headache is all.”

“We leave in five,” Daddy says. *“Michael, track her fucking phone if you have to. Just get us to her as fast as possible.”*

“I’m fine,” I repeat. “I’m going to call a car rental place and I’ll be home as soon as I can. There’s no need for the full force of the Phantoms to ride out and collect me.”

“What were you thinking?”

“Why would you remove your helmet?”

“I’m putting a tracker under your skin.”

“You threw your hands in the air while on a bike in this storm?”

“You’re lucky you weren’t killed.”

The comments were coming from all over. Through the phone, the men in the room, my own mind. I can’t take it. I’m falling apart on the inside and I don’t have the strength to fight everyone in the real world. So, I do the only thing that seems logical.

“I HAVE CANCER.”

Silence. Every single voice instantly stops. It’s so quiet that I can hear my own heartbeat.

“I have cancer,” I repeat quietly, tossing my arm back over my eyes. “I wasn’t feeling well last week and I went in for a checkup. All of the results came back normal until they took a chest-XRAY. There was an abnormal mass located in my right lung. Further testing showed that I have early stages of lung cancer. Apparently, the cancer my bio mother had was hereditary. I start treatments next week.”

When the room and phone remain quiet, I sigh and sit up. Thankfully, Viper helped me. I feel weaker than I ever have in this moment. Not physically, but mentally. Emotionally. I feel vulnerable. Which is something I never wanted to feel. My parents, my family, taught me to be tough and to never depend on anyone.

Looking up into the sad eyes of Viper, I know now, more than ever, I need to depend on someone.

“Once I start treatments,” I say, not looking away from Viper. “I’ll be weak. I’ll be sick. I just needed this last trip to remind myself of what I needed to fight for. Not just for my family, but for my own life. For my own future. For the freedom I felt when I lifted my hands in the middle of that storm. For the feeling of the wind as it was rushing through my hair. Hair that will soon be gone. I just needed a few days of complete freedom before my body fights back with every ounce of energy I possess.”

Viper wipes the tears from my face that I didn’t even know were falling.

“I might not survive this,” I whisper. “This cancer might very well destroy not only my body but my mind as well. I might never again be the person that I am right now. It’s just not fair.”

I finally give in and let it all out. I cry at the unfairness of life. I cry for the future that I might never get to have. I cry for my family whose hearts are breaking because of me.

Viper lifts me and holds me against his chest before laying down on the bed.

“You don’t need to worry about anything else,” Viper says against the top of my head.

I hear my mom crying over the phone and guilt threatens to drown me. I wanted to tell my family about my cancer in person so that I could hug my mom. My bio mother was her best friend and I just know this whole thing has thrown her right back into the past.

“My baby girl,” Daddy says, his voice breaking. *“Oh, my beautiful baby girl. Please, come home. I need to hold you.”*

Viper places the phone on his chest right beside my head.

“Please, don’t cry, Daddy,” I whisper. “I’m sorry that I didn’t tell you sooner. But I really wish I had. I don’t want your heart to break.”

“It’s already breaking, baby girl,” he says roughly. *“Only because you’re about to go through something that I can’t fight for you. You are so fucking strong, Bitsy. You will beat this. I will have it no other way.”*

I shove my face further against this stranger's chest as a giggle escapes my mouth.

"Daddy, you can't just demand that I beat cancer," I laugh. "That's not how it works."

"I'm a fucking Phantom, baby girl," he growls. *"Everyone fears us. Even cancer."*

"When are you coming home, sweetheart?" mom says softly.

I take a moment to sort through my thoughts. I want to comfort my family. I want them all to know how much I love them and how sorry I am about all of this.

But I don't feel like going home is the right decision for me just yet.

"I'll be home before the first treatment," I finally answer. "I'm going to need the comfort and support of our family when things get hard. But, for now, I just need to live."

"You can come home and live," Daddy demands. *"We can do whatever you want every day, baby girl, but we can do it while you're here."*

I roll my eyes and try to sit up but my head starts to pound harder so I flop back down against Viper's chest.

"Okay," I start. "I'm just going to be straight with you, old man. I'm not coming home for a few days. For one, I have a massive headache and I don't think I could even pee by myself let alone drive for hours. And two, I need this last hoorah before I get weak and tired. I'm going to the two-day biker convention and then I'll head home."

"I don't fucking think so."

"Not happening."

I look up and glare at Viper and then down at the phone on his chest.

When glaring causes my vision to blur, I close my eyes and put my head back down.

"Neither one of you gets to decide how I live my life," I say. "Daddy, you're just being the overprotective meanie that you are and Viper, I don't even know you."

Yeah, I sound like a child throwing a tantrum, but I can't control my emotions and my pain at the same time. Right now, it's taking all of my concentration to not scream at the pain in my head.

"Sir, my name is Viper. Enforcer of Obsidian MC over here in Harborbrook, Kentucky. I will do everything in my power to make sure Bitsy is safe. She isn't leaving this clubhouse until her headache is gone and she's

ready to head back home.”

“Viper,” Daddy says, clearing his throat. “I’ve met your Pop a few times years back when he was in charge of Obsidian. How’s the old coot doing?”

“I’m still alive and kicking, you old bastard,” I hear the old man laugh. “It’s been a long while, Cap. Don’t worry about your baby. My boys will make sure she doesn’t do anything stupid. It looks as if my boy Viper has a special interest in her. He’s being overly protective.”

“I don’t need to be kept,” I grump.

Viper runs a soothing hand up and down my back. But as relaxing as it is, it won’t change my mind. I’m doing whatever the hell I want to do.

“The Obsidian’s have a good reputation,” Daddy tells me. “I’ll trust you all to keep my baby girl safe.”

“Or I’ll come over there and cut your fucking throats. Starting with the bastard already trying to claim my niece.”

I sigh as Viper growls at Uncle Shadow’s threat.

Honestly, men are animals.

“I’m getting off here, Daddy,” I say. “I need to call a taxi and get a motel for the night. My head is about to explode and all of this growling isn’t helping.”

“What she meant to say,” Viper rudely interrupts, “is that she’s going to take some Tylenol and stay awake for the next couple of hours before I put her to bed in one of our guest rooms here at the clubhouse. She will not be going to no damn motel.”

“You’ll do,” I hear my dad chuckle. “Do as the man says, Bitsy. I love you, my sweet girl. Call me tomorrow. Your mom says she loves you.”

The call ends before I can say anything.

As I feel myself drifting off to sleep, I can’t help but mumble, “What is it with you overprotective alpha males trying to control my every move? I just want to ride my bike. And take a nap.”

Viper, his presence strong and reassuring, speaks up, lifting me into his arms gently. “Come on, sweetheart,” he says softly. “You can’t do either of those things right now. Your bike is totaled, and you have a concussion. You’re going to take a shower and eat something. Then we’ll talk about that nap.”

I manage to regain some of my lucidity, enough to quip, “I’m not taking a shower with you. You’ll see me naked.”

Viper chuckles, a low and warm sound, as he replies, “As much as I would

love to see you naked, little one, Ma is going to help you shower.”

What a shame. Just because I don’t want him to see me naked doesn’t mean I don’t want to see him naked. I bet he’s built like a god under all of that bossiness.

“I’m not bossy,” Viper chuckles, causing my face to burn with embarrassment.

“I guess I wasn’t talking in my head, huh?” I laugh. “My bad.”

“Don’t feel bad,” he tells me, sitting me down on my feet outside what I assume is the bathroom. “I like knowing the most beautiful woman I’ve ever set my eyes on is thinking about my body.”

“Leave her be, son,” Victoria chuckles as she stops next to me. “Sorry about him, lovely. He’s a charmer. Let’s go and get you cleaned up. I’ve brought something that will help with your headache. Doc says it’s safe to take these with the Tylenol he already gave you. Viper, why don’t you go and warm her up some of the chicken and dumpling soup you made tonight? We’ll be down shortly.”

Instead of listening to his mother’s demand, Viper leans down until we’re face to face.

“Don’t even think about walking down those stairs when you’re finished,” he orders firmly. “I will be right back up here to carry you down.”

My mind is practically screaming at me to give this fool a piece of my mind for trying to boss me around. However, my body seems to have other plans—it remains still.

“My body and mind are not exactly on the same page right now,” I say, trying to assert myself. “I’m going to go and shower.”

Viper chuckles softly as I follow his mom into the bathroom. I stumble but manage to catch myself on the wall.

“Aw, poor darling,” Victoria says sympathetically. “Your body is still in shock. Come on, let’s get you cleaned up so that you can rest.”

I can’t resist a bit of sarcasm, adding, “If your son allows me to, that is.”

“He’s just like his father,” she sighs. “Whoever he ends up with is going to be treated like a queen. But, in the process, he’s going to drive her to commit murder. These boys can’t seem to figure out where the line is.”

“The men in my family are the same,” I say, pulling my shirt over my head. “But I think they all know exactly where the lines are. They just ignore them.”

“I’m sure you’re exactly right, my dear,” she chuckles. “I’ll be sitting right

here in case you need me.”

I step into the shower and moan as the hot water cascades down my body. I wonder if I’ll have the strength to stand and shower once I start treatments. As I wash my hair, I take my time running my fingers through the long strands. Knowing that Victoria is still in the room, I make sure to remain silent as my tears mix with the water.

It’s just hair. Logically, I know that. But soon, I won’t have any. My long, thick, blonde hair will be gone. My brows. My eyelashes. There’s a good possibility that I will lose them all.

Try as I might, I’m no longer able to hold back my cry.

“Oh, honey. Here, let’s get you out and dried off.”

I don’t move. I can’t. I’m rooted to the spot I’m standing in, my emotions making my legs too heavy to lift.

“I’m going to have to get one of my boys if you don’t move, honey,” she tells me softly. “I can’t lift you.”

Move, you idiot. Lift your dang leg.

Nothing happens.

Victoria turns off the water and I just stand here crying.

“I got her, Ma. Go on and rest.”

“She’s not doing well, son,” I hear her tell Viper.

“I got her,” he repeats.

Meanwhile, I’m on the verge of hysterics. I can’t stop crying, I can’t move. I’m not even sure if my eyes are open or closed.

“Come on, baby,” Viper says, lifting my wet body into his arms. “Let’s get you dressed and into bed for a few minutes.”

I don’t fight him as he dries my body and hair before dressing me in an oversized shirt. He doesn’t touch my body in any way that makes me uncomfortable. He simply cares for me. Something I’m going to need done a lot as my body battles against itself to save my life.

“It’s not fair,” I cry as Viper lays me on a soft mattress. I have no sense of time or direction. I simply allow this man, this stranger, to control everything.

“I know, baby,” he whispers against my head. Did he lay down with me? “It’s not fucking fair. But I have this overwhelming belief that you will get through this on top. And I’ll be by your side the entire time. Through every single step. All the ups and downs. I’ll be your rock, baby. Your unwavering support.”

“You don’t even know me,” I sniffle, my tears finally stopping. “Don’t

make a declaration of love to someone you just met. Especially someone who might be dead in the next six months.”

“You will not die,” he growls. “I will not have it.”

“Great. Now you sound like my father.”

“And, I didn’t make a declaration of love,” he interrupts. “I made a vow, a promise, to someone I believe with my whole heart belongs with me. The moment I lifted you off of the pavement, it was as if my heart stopped beating for me and started beating for you. Our hearts beat in tandem with one another, Bitsy, because we are made for one another. If such a thing existed, I would say you were my soul mate.”

“Double great,” I laugh bitterly. “You’re a sappy romantic. The last thing I need in my life right now is someone promising forever when I can’t even promise tomorrow. I’m in no state of mind to be making romantic relationship decisions, Viper.”

“That’s okay since I’ve already decided for us. Now, let’s go get you fed and then back into bed.”

“Bossy,” I mutter, but don’t fight when he lifts me once again and walks me back down the stairs.

I’ve lived my entire life surrounded by overwhelmingly bossy men. I’ve always told myself that I would one day settle down with a soft, quiet man who just goes with the flow.

So, why, all of a sudden, does that sound like a very boring life? Why does the thought of bossy and arrogant Viper as my forever person make life sound wonderful?

But I can’t do that to someone right now. My mind has been in a constant state of “what ifs” since I received my diagnosis.

What if mom and dad can’t handle my cancer?

What if my family doesn’t support my decision if I decide to stop treatments?

What if my hair falls out?

What if the treatments don’t work?

What if the cancer spreads?

What if the cancer vanishes?

What if I can never again ride my bike?

What if I die?

Adding, what if I’m not enough for Viper because I’ll be needy and sick to my long list of *what-ifs* just isn’t feasible at this time in my life.

Viper is just a dream that can't come true right now.

Besides, I'm pretty sure my whole family would tear him to shreds. They've scared off every potential boyfriend I've ever had my entire life.

I turn and hide my face in Viper's chest so he doesn't question the smile on my face. My family may be a pain in my ass, but I love them all so very much.

Chapter Four

Viper

“Eat this,” I tell Bitsy. “I want to see every last bite gone.”

“Yes, Daddy,” the little brat says.

“Careful, little one,” I whisper against her ear. “I don’t hate the sound of that.”

I chuckle when her eyes widen.

“Does your head still hurt?” Blaze asks. “Would you like me to give you a massage?”

My brothers all know that I’ve already claimed Bitsy as mine. Blaze just wants to piss me the fuck off.

“Lay one finger on her and I will put a bullet in your leg,” I warn.

Blaze smirks but takes a few steps back. He knows for a fact that I don’t make empty promises. I won’t kill him, but I won’t hesitate to wound the fucker.

“Viper,” Bitsy gasps. “You can’t threaten to shoot your own brother.”

“Wouldn’t be the first time he’s threatened one of us,” Blaze says.

“Hell, it wouldn’t be the first time he’s shot one of us,” Venom retorts.

Bitsy laughs as I shake my head.

“Shouldn’t have dared me,” I tell Venom. He was the one I shot.

“Hey, I wasn’t the one who dared you to do anything,” Venom says. “That was all Miles. I don’t think I should be punished for the stupid shit Miles gets himself into.”

“Whose Miles?” Bitsy asks. “I’ve met your parents, Venom, and Blaze. I even remember someone talking named Doc. I also remember you mentioning Ghost and Steel. Are they more brothers or someone from your club?”

“Viper,” Blaze warns when I make a move to answer her question. I nod and wait for Venom to decide if he wants to reveal who Miles is.

“Viper,” Venom says. “Are you going to murder me if I go and sit beside your woman?”

“I’m not his woman,” Bitsy says. “Come and sit down. Who cares what the big meanie says.”

Venom doesn’t break eye contact with me until I nod. My brothers may tease the fuck out of one another but we respect each other completely.

“Alright,” Venom says once he’s seated next to Bitsy. “First off, Ghost and Steel are finishing up a meeting and should be joining us soon. Now, this is going to be a lot. And you may or may not even believe me. But everything I’m about to tell you is the truth. And it’s also not something I let a lot of people know.”

“You don’t have to tell me,” Bitsy says, shoving her food aside and laying her hand on top of Venom’s. I can feel his nerves from where I’m standing and to see Bitsy, this stranger, comforting my brother before she even knows why he needs comforting just cements my plans into place.

She will be mine.

Fuck cancer. I’m stronger and I’ll be by her side until she’s ready to accept me back.

“It’s hard because people have called me a freak or think I’m lying for attention,” he explains. “But I have medical proof to back up everything I’m about to say.”

“I don’t need your proof, Venom,” she tells him. “All I need are your words. I promise not to call you names and I promise to believe what you tell me.”

“Okay,” he says, taking a deep breath. “When I was four years old, I witnessed my birth parents being killed.”

Bitsy gasps but doesn’t say a word, giving her full attention to Venom.

“My father was beaten until his face was unrecognizable before he and I were forced to watch my mother as she was brutally raped. I don’t know why they didn’t kill me, too. But, once they were finished with my parents, they just left.”

I move to sit down beside Bitsy as Venom collects himself. Even though his parents were killed thirty years ago, he still wakes up screaming with night terrors a couple of times a year. I have a bad feeling that tonight is going to be one of those nights.

“Anyway, I went into the system and was eventually adopted by Ma and Pops,” he continues. “It took almost a year before I was placed in their home. I was moved from foster parent to foster parent because they said they couldn’t deal with my tantrums. I could never remember the tantrums they

were talking about. To make a long story short, Ma and Pops never once complained about my mood swings and they never gave up on me. Instead, they had me tested for months before it was concluded that I have a mental condition called Dissociative Identity Disorder. They said it was most likely my brain's way of protecting itself.”

“Multiple personality?” Bitsy asks softly. When Venom nods, she continues. “Does that mean that Doc was actually you?”

“No,” Venom answers. “Doc was Doc. He was just using my body. It’s hard to explain in a way that people can understand. When I was younger, I couldn’t control the system. That’s what we call what happens in here.”

Venom points to his head before reconnecting his hands with Bitsy’s.

“When things would become overwhelming, Doc would come forward. He was the first Alter to appear. The first *other* personality. When he would front, or take control, I wasn’t aware of it. It was as if I was asleep. I couldn’t remember any of it. Then, in high school, Miles came forward. Doc was always super smart. He was the one who took all of our tests.”

Bitsy’s laugh causes Venom to smile.

“It’s a good thing because I never paid attention,” he jokes. “Anyway, he always told people he wanted to be a doctor one day. When Ma and Pops told me this, that’s when we named him Doc. Miles, on the other hand, was up front about his name and who he was. That man is always making life difficult for me.”

Everyone in the room laughs which causes Venom to frown.

“You don’t help the matter any,” he grumps. “Always encouraging him.”

“Miles is gay,” I explain to Bitsy.

“There isn’t anything wrong with being gay, Venom,” she glares at my brother. “I have two uncles who are very much in love and it’s the most beautiful thing.”

“*Miles* is gay,” he says slowly.

“So what?” She shrugs.

“I am not,” he clarifies, causing us to laugh. “And he isn’t the shy type of gay. I can’t count how many times I’ve woken up in bed with a strange man beside me.”

Bitsy tosses her head back and laughs.

Beautiful.

“Why is your eye twitching?” she giggles.

“Because Miles is trying to come forward to plead his case,” Venom tells

her. “But he’s going to have to wait. He swears up and down that he’s never actually had sex with any of those men but simply falls asleep in their bed to mess with me. I’m not sure I believe him.”

“Has your ass ever been sore, brother?” Blaze laughs.

“Honestly, boys,” Ma chides. “Venom, finish your story so the poor dear can eat and get some sleep.”

“Yes, ma’am. Nowadays, for the most part, I can control who fronts. Like earlier, when Viper and Blaze brought you in, they needed Doc. Before, he only came out when I was emotionally overwhelmed, now, I simply step aside when he’s needed. I know it sounds weird, but I can’t do what Doc does.”

“The man I heard talking had a heavily British accent,” she says.

Venom smiles and nods. “Always trying to make sure the world knows he’s better than everyone else.”

“So, there’s you, Doc, and Miles? Can they talk to each other?”

“They can. They communicate with each other the same way you would think about something. There’s also Xander. He’s been with me as long as Ghost but for years, he never communicated with us. He just listened and watched. He didn’t front a lot back then but he’s the one who fronts the most these days. He’s always in a foul mood and gets so fucking mad when I or one of the other alters, makes a mess.”

“He’s also not someone to fuck with,” Ghost says. “I’ve never seen a more deadly person in my life.”

Xander has killed people for the club, but that’s not something I’m going to inform my little obsession of.

“I’m sorry about the reasoning behind all of that,” Bitsy says. “But I say this with all of the kindness in my heart. That is so freaking cool.”

Venom looks shocked but tosses his head back and laughs.

“That wasn’t the reaction I was expecting,” he says once he’s calmed down. “I guess it is pretty freaking cool.”

“Alright, dear,” Ma interjects. “Finish up your food. You need a good night’s rest before tomorrow.”

“What’s tomorrow?” she asks.

Ma smiles and walks away. Bitsy isn’t aware of this, but she has some visitors coming.

“I see you’re giving Viper’s food a try. I would warn you against it but his cooking is almost as good as Ma’s.”

“Thank you, Blaze,” she smiles up at my brother. “I’ve already had a few bites and am pleasantly surprised by how good it is.”

Her comment makes my heart warm, but I chuckle when I see the gleam in my brother’s eyes.

Here we go.

“Tell me, Bitsy, since we’ve met what is your opinion of me as a person?”

Bitsy’s eyes narrow in confusion as she takes another bite of her food.

“Well, you seem nice,” she tells him.

“Nice?” he asks. “Okay, how about my looks? Do you think I’m handsome?”

Bitsy glances at me before shrugging and answering. “I do. I think all of you are handsome. But, for some stupid reason, I’m more attracted to your bossy and annoying brother.”

“Touche,” he laughs. “You would think he was the oldest with how bossy and annoying he is. But that would be our lustrous President, Ghost.”

“Don’t call me lustrous,” Ghost growls as he enters the room. “I’m badass. Not lustrous.”

“He’s also arrogant and overbearing.”

I can’t help the laugh that bubbles up my throat as Bitsy does a double take when she gets a look at who’s talking behind her. Blaze is standing there in all his glory smiling from ear to ear.

“You think I’m nice, huh?” he asks. “Not charming, or god-like? Maybe mouth-watering?”

Bitsy turns to look at Steel, my brother who was pretending to be Blaze.

“Hello,” he said. “I’m Steel. Blaze’s much better-looking older brother.”

“Better-looking?” she says. “You look like you were copied and pasted.”

This time, even Ghost chuckles. Which is a feat on its own.

“Now that that’s out the way, I’m heading to bed,” Pops says. “Tonight, we’re all staying here to make sure Bitsy is safe. If something happens to her on our watch, those Phantoms will kill us before we know what’s happening.”

“I’d like to see them try,” Ghost growls. “No offense, ma’am.”

“None taken, Mr. President,” she says, sipping the last of her soup. “I think you all could give my father and uncles a run for their money. But you guys honestly don’t have to stay here. I’m feeling loads better. I can just call a taxi and have them take me the rest of the way to the convention. My dad has friends there that we usually stay with when we go to these things. I’ll be

fine.”

“You’re not going,” I tell her. “I want you here where you’re safe.”

“You know, for someone I just met you sure like to think you can tell me what to do. Well, I have news for you, Viper. I will give in and sleep here tonight but I have every intention of leaving here first thing in the morning. I have less than three days before I need to be home to get these damn treatments started and I am not going to spend those days stuck here surrounded by strangers who have no interest in my future. I appreciate everything each one of you has done for me tonight. But my plans haven’t changed. I need to live before that opportunity is taken away from me because there is a high probability that by trying to fight this battle to survive, I might not.”

Fuck.

“Your parents will be here in the morning,” I admit.

“What?”

“While you were upstairs, I made some phone calls,” Pops answers. “I didn’t mean to overstep but I thought you might be interested. I have a friend who specializes in Oncology. He has his own practice here in Harborbrook and he thinks you might be the perfect candidate for a new treatment he’s developed.”

My body is strung tight as I wait for her response. Pops only did what he thought was best. And, it very well might be, but I don’t know Bitsy enough to gauge her reaction.

“The only issue is that you would have to remain here where his practice is. If it’s successful, it could shorten your treatments by several months.”

“That’s wonderful,” she says after a few moments of silence. “And I appreciate your kindness. But what does any of that have to do with my parents coming here tomorrow?”

“While Pops was on the phone with his friend,” Ma explains. “I received a phone call from a young man named Michael. He said he was your cousin and was worried when you didn’t answer your phone. So, he somehow found my unlisted number and called me instead. They must have overheard Pops talking because your Ma got on the phone and said they would be here first thing in the morning to talk with you about it.”

“That defeats the whole purpose,” she says angrily. She rises from her chair and walks over to Pops. “I am not in the least bit angry with you. I appreciate what you did and I will most definitely go and meet with your

friend to see if that is the right path for me. I'm not even mad at my parents. But I just wanted a few days of not thinking about my cancer and yet it's the only thing I've been able to think about because now that everyone knows, no one will look at me the same. They will whisper behind my back or look at me as if I'm some fragile flower that can break at any time."

I walk behind the woman and wrap my arms around her waist.

"I have an idea," I tell her. "But I don't think your parents are going to like it very much."

"I'm in," she laughs. "Even if it's taking a walk until my legs no longer work, I'm in. I just need to do something other than sink deeper into the fear that's threatening to drown me."

"It's been many years since we've been to a convention," Ghost says. "I never really cared for them. How about instead of spending the day with stinky bikers we go to a party? My club, The Cage, is hosting a special event tomorrow. My brothers and I will be there with you, at a distance if you want, so nothing bad will happen."

"What kind of event?" she asks.

I cringe. I haven't met her father but keeping his daughter safe is the first thing on his mind. Just as it's quickly becoming the most important thing in mine as well.

"It's called The Cage because it's fighting," I admit. "Up top, the club is a party atmosphere where people go to hang out and get drunk in a safe place. But, down below, people from all over come to face fierce components in the cage."

"Well, if you're all about keeping your customers in the club safe maybe hosting an illegal fighting ring in the same building at the same time isn't the smartest thing to do."

Ghost smirks but doesn't respond.

"If I go, can I fight someone?" she asks, a mischievous glint in her eyes.

I growl in response, "Hell no. We're not even going to take you down below."

"Why not? I'm as fierce as they come." She flexes her arms, attempting to showcase her fierceness.

Steel can't help but tease her, saying, "You're cute as a button, so fierce that all the puppies will run away from you."

She quickly reconsiders, admitting, "Okay, so maybe cage fighting isn't for me. But, I'll have you know that my dad and uncles taught me how to

defend myself under any circumstances. I may not be able to fight in the cage, but I can bring a man down to his knees in three seconds flat.”

Steel chimes in, “That I don’t doubt. All it took was a single look for you to have my smitten brother practically begging.”

I shoot my brother a glare but can’t help but smile. He’s not wrong.

Bitsy, bubbling with enthusiasm, bounces on her toes with her fists clenched in front of her. She starts bouncing back and forth, playfully punching the air.

“Alright,” she says with a smile, “Let’s go watch strange people kick some ass.”

“Damn right,” Steel shouts. “But tomorrow is just a celebration before the fight begins in the next couple of days.”

Shrugging, she bounces over to Steel and starts punching his chest in mock battle.

My brothers all holler their approval while Ma laughs heartily.

“She’s a keeper, brother,” Blaze remarks.

“Definitely a keeper,” I agree with a grin.

“I am not being kept,” she huffs, causing everyone to burst into laughter once again.

“Come on, little one,” I tell her. “Let’s get some sleep so that you have as much energy tomorrow to dance and have fun.”

“I’m not sleeping with you,” she tells me as I guide her to the stairs.

“Of course not,” I agree. “I’ll be sleeping with you.”

“That’s the same thing, Viper.”

Careful of her head, I scoop her into my arms and make my way to the guest room where we’ll be staying tonight.

“Do you have to use the restroom?” I ask.

“No,” she answers easily. Usually, people stare at me like I’m a freak if I ask simple questions like that.

Reaching the bed, I hold Bitsy tightly with one arm as I reach down and pull the blanket back. Gently laying her down on the bed, I pat her legs silently asking for her to raise them so I can cover her up.

“Do you need any light or sound in order to sleep?” I ask.

Bitsy smiles.

“Usually, I sleep with some sort of sound machine,” she admits. “But I think I’ll be fine. My mind won’t shut up long enough for there to be silence.”

Tucking the blankets around her snugly, I walk to the other side of the bed and lay on top of the blankets.

“Is it safe for me to sleep now?” Bitsy asks in the darkness.

Reaching over, I find her hand and hold it gently in mine.

“I think it will be alright,” I answer. “If Doc was concerned, he would have already pushed Venom to the back and taken control. I don’t understand how that whole system works, but I guess now that Venom is more in control, everyone can be present the entire day and just watch as my brother lives his life.”

“I’m jealous, in a way,” she says. “I would love nothing more than to just fall asleep and let everyone else deal with this cancer crap. I hate doing it alone.”

“You’re not exactly alone, Bitsy,” I say. “You have one hell of a family who will fight right alongside you.”

“I guess that’s true.”

“And, you have me,” I continue. “When you’re starting to feel weak and tired, I’ll be right here to lend you my strength. We’ll get through this together. And, when we get to the other side, we can celebrate.”

“Before I tear that apart layer by layer, can I ask you a pretty personal question?”

Intrigued, I turn to my side, not letting go of her hand.

“You can ask me anything,” I tell her. “Nothing it too personal.”

“You say that now,” she mutters softly. “Okay, are you a Daddy?”

“No, I don’t have any kids,” I answer fully aware that wasn’t the context of her question.

“Oh boy. No, I mean, like DDLg type of Daddy. A Daddy dom.”

Chuckling, I squeeze her hand and decide to give the poor girl a break.

“I’ve never been in a situation where I had to decide one way or another if living that lifestyle was something I would be interested in,” I admit. “But I do realize that I take on some of those characteristics. Why do you ask? Are you a Little?”

“No,” she says softly. “I have been in situations where I’ve thought about it, though. But, in the end, calling someone Daddy apart from my own father doesn’t seem to interest me. I’m not a Little, but I do know that I’m an age regressor. My mom and I talked about how I sometimes don’t act my age but don’t really realize I’m doing it. Mom says I’m just playful but when we did some research, we found out it’s age regression. Do you think I’m weird?”

“Not even a little, Bitsy,” I answer honestly. “I’ve only known you a few short hours and I have seen you in such a regression multiple times already. Why did you ask if I was into the lifestyle?”

“Because you’re bossy,” she laughs. “But it’s more than that. You have a natural caregiver quality to you. You’re nurturing without even trying to be.”

I smile. “I like to take care of people,” I admit. “Especially those who mean something to me. And, you mean something to me, Bitsy. I can’t call it love. Not yet. But it is something deep and true. So, even if you try and push me away, I won’t be going anywhere unless I know for a fact that you have no interest in me being a part of your life. I will always do what’s best for you.”

“And you think what’s best for me, is you?” she teases.

“You’ve got it wrong, little one. I’m not what’s best for you. You’re what’s best for me. Now, sleep, Bitsy. I need rest if I’m going to take you to my brother’s club tomorrow. I’ll have to keep my wits if I’m going to kick the ass of every male who looks at you with lust-filled eyes.”

She laughs quietly, but I’m not lying. If one fucker so much as glances at her in a provocative way, I’ll break their fucking face.

Opening my eyes, I’m instantly aware of someone watching us sleep.

“If it weren’t for the fact that you’re sleeping completely clothed and on top of the blanket I would have slit your throat the second I walked into this room and saw you in the same bed as my daughter.”

“Can I ask you a question?” I respond quietly, glancing to make sure we’re not waking Bitsy.

“If you must,” Cap responds just as quietly.

“Did you know that Bitsy’s mom was meant to be yours the moment you met her?”

“Woah, going straight for it, huh, son?” he says instead of answering. “I’m not sure I know how to answer that question when your reasoning for asking is because of my precious little girl.”

“Honestly would be nice,” I say, turning to sit on the side of the bed facing the man leaning against the wall. “I’ve been in situations before where the potential for a lifelong relationship was there, but it never seemed right. Even after spending months getting to know the person.”

“And you think there is potential with my daughter?” he asks curiously. I thought for sure that I would have been dodging flying objects by now.

“No, sir,” I answer respectfully. “It’s passed potential. I can’t comprehend the feelings blasting through my body when it comes to your daughter. It took several hours for me to fall asleep as I tried to digest them enough to understand.”

Cap sighs, running his hand down his face. “Damn it,” he mutters quietly.

“It’s not meant to be understood, son,” he says. “It’s just meant to *be*.”

“You’re right, Sir. It’s like a force of nature, something beyond explanation or control. All I know is, I’m willing to do whatever it takes to make her happy and keep her safe. I hope you can understand that no matter what, I will fight to remain by her side. I’ll go head-to-head with whoever it takes. Even her. Even you, sir.”

“I’ve killed men for less,” he warns.

“Of that, I have no doubt.”

Cap moves to the bottom of the bed and stares down at Bitsy.

“She’s just told us that she has cancer,” he reminds me. “Her bio mother also had cancer. It’s what killed her. As much as it pains my old heart to say this, there is a good chance that this could take her away from us. Why would you want to tie yourself to someone about to go through something like that?”

“I think you understand, Sir,” I tell him. “I think you can picture yourself the day you met her ma and remember those immediate feelings. If she told you she was going to die, would you have walked away?”

“Not a chance in hell,” he growls. “As a matter of fact, her life was in danger and I focused on nothing other than keeping her, and the baby she carried within her, safe. So, while I’m not happy that those feelings you have are directed towards my little girl, I do understand them. And, if you’re being honest about how you feel, I also know that you’ll stop at nothing to keep her safe. So, and it kills my soul to say this, you have my blessing to pursue her.”

I smile. Fuck yes. Already, I know how much Bitsy’s family means to her so this means everything to me.

“I will warn you,” he smirks. “Bitsy is hard-headed, stubborn, and fiercely passionate about her bike. You don’t have an easy path ahead of you, son. I wish you the best of luck. Just know that if you harm her, physically or emotionally, you won’t ever see the light of day again.”

“If I harm her, or any woman,” I respond. “My brothers will kill me before

you even find out.”

With a satisfied nod, Cap turns and walks out of the room.

“Well, that was dramatic,” Bitsy says sleepily. “I don’t know how you’re not bleeding from your face.”

“Because your pops likes me,” I smile, laying back down and pulling her into my arms. “How did you sleep?”

“My headaches gone,” she says, snuggling into my chest.

“Good.”

We lay there for several minutes in silence before Bitsy speaks again.

“We really need to get up,” she says. “My dad isn’t a patient man and I have a feeling he’s threatening your entire family.”

She pushes off of my chest and I reluctantly let her go.

“Where’s the bathroom?” she asks. “I can’t remember.”

“Two doors down,” I tell her, gesturing for the bedroom door.

Deciding to give her some space, I wait by the staircase until she’s finished.

“Holy crap,” she gasps. “That’s freaking huge.”

“What is it?” I ask, rushing to the bathroom and shoving open the door.

“Dude,” she says, eyes wide. “Why didn’t you tell me that my face was this bruised? It looks like I lost a fight with a bear.”

“Not a bear,” I inform her. “Just the pavement. Are you ready to head downstairs? Sounds like there’s a party going on.”

“Great. Let’s get this over with.”

Chapter Five

Bitsy

“I’m going to have Axe take over for a while so that we can stay down here with you,” Daddy says, his voice filled with concern. “According to Michael, this doctor has an abnormally high success rate with his cancer patients.”

The weight of the conversation has been pressing on me for hours. We’ve been in the Obsidian’s clubhouse, discussing my cancer. It was supposed to be a trip to forget for a little while, but the only thing anyone seems to talk about is that dreaded C word.

“Shouldn’t this decision be mine?” I ask, feeling overwhelmed. “We’ve been talking about this for hours, and I’ve had about as much as I can take.”

“Of course, honey,” Mom says, her eyes showing the depth of her love. “We just want you to know that if you do decide to go with this doctor, we’re going to be right here with you.”

I admit, “And that means everything to me, Mom, but can’t this conversation wait a few days?”

“Unfortunately, not, sweetheart,” Robert interjects. “There is only one more spot open, and the waiting list is usually several years long. You’re a prime candidate for this trial because of how early they caught your cancer, and if you choose to do so, he needs you on the schedule as early as tomorrow. Otherwise, he’s going to have to go with the next person on the waiting list.”

“Tomorrow?” I shout, my frustration boiling over. I stand and begin pacing back and forth. “What about my trip? What about the energy to go dancing? What about eating or laughing? What about the rain on my skin or the wind in my hair?”

I know I’m freaking out, but my last few days of freedom have just been shattered.

“I’ve got you, baby,” Viper says, his strong arms pulling me to his chest, wrapping me in warmth and security.

Everything hits me at once, and I just lose it. I scream until my throat is

raw, and when I can no longer scream, I hit Viper's chest with my fists over and over.

"Fuck," I hear my dad say, his voice as broken as my own.

Viper's arms tighten around me just in time as my legs give out, and I collapse. With nothing left to give, I just hang there, trusting Viper to keep me standing.

The appointment is set. I go for my preliminary visit to see Dr. Sebastian Stone tomorrow morning. He already has my medical files and is confident in a successful treatment.

I, however, feel like I've just lost everything. I know it seems silly. I still have my family and my friends. But everything about who I am is about to change.

The treatments this doctor uses are basically stronger, more potent versions of Chemotherapy. He calls it Targeted Chemotherapy. The side effects will be more intense, but the results will be much faster.

According to Dr. Stone, typically, someone with early-stage lung cancer, such as myself, can be hopeful for remission in as early as three to six months. He is confident that we can reach that stage in less than two months. But it's going to be tough on my body.

"I'll have Missy call in and reserve a hotel for us," Daddy tells mom.

"Nonsense," Viper insists, his voice carrying an air of determination. "The entire basement of my home has been converted into a guest floor. You're more than welcome to stay there for as long as necessary. It has everything you could possibly need."

"We couldn't impose, Viper," Mom responds, her tone polite but hesitant.

Viper is quick to reassure her, saying, "It's no imposition, ma'am. Please, accept my offer. It has everything a house needs to run smoothly. You wouldn't even have to go through the main floor to enter the basement area. It has its own entrance from the outside. However, I would be lying if I said my offer wasn't out of greed."

I hear my Daddy chuckle, but I don't bother looking. I'm sitting on a chair next to a window, my knees tucked against my chest, and my arms wrapped around them, lost in my thoughts.

My head is telling me to stop acting like a freaking idiot. My attitude

towards this isn't going to help me any. I need to have positive thoughts and a positive disposition to help my mind through everything.

Movement catches my eye and I look up to see Venom leaning against the wall on the other side of the window pane, looking outside.

He looks different but I can't quite put my hand on it.

"Did you sleep alright?" I ask quietly, remembering his story from yesterday. Reliving all of that had to have messed with his sleep.

"A little," he said, his voice softer than what I remember from yesterday. "You?"

"I don't remember falling asleep," I admit with a soft smile. "I think I might have just passed out and regained consciousness this morning. Don't tell Viper though, I have a feeling that he might freak out a bit if he knew."

"Most definitely," he smiles back.

We're silent as the conversations continue in the background. I spend that time just watching Venom as he seems lost in his own thoughts.

"You're not Venom, are you?" I finally ask.

He looks at me and smirks.

"And you're not Doc."

He shakes his head.

"So, that leaves Miles or Xander."

He doesn't say anything, just maintains eye contact.

"I think you're Xander."

"Why Xander?" he asks.

"Yesterday, when Venom was explaining each of the alters personalities, I got the feeling that Miles was very loud and outspoken while Xander was more relaxed. I don't feel as if you're Miles. I knew you weren't Venom because you're standing differently and you aren't acting the same as he was last night. Doc has an accent so he's easy to tell apart. Therefore, I think you're Xander. Am I wrong?"

His smile widens and he nods.

"You are correct," he says, each word spoken so clearly that I can practically hear each letter.

"You have a slight accent as well," I say. "Well, I don't know if accent is the right word. You enunciate your words perfectly. Almost like Doc, but without the accent."

"Steel says it's because I think I'm better than everyone else," he smiles. "I just happen to speak properly and Steel is a backward hillbilly who is

dialectically impaired.”

“Hey, I heard that, you fucker,” Steel laughs.

Xander winks at me before shrugging his shoulders.

“I hear we’re going to the Cage tonight,” Xander says. “I’ll be sure to have Ghost sit us in the VIP section. I don’t think Venom will be coming back out tonight. His mind had a rough go of it. I don’t do well at the party scene but I don’t think staying home is the right thing to do.”

“I’m sorry that I’m the cause of Venom having a hard time with memories,” I say. “It’s all my fault.”

“Hush now,” Xander says. “You are not to blame for his past. He will be fine. That’s why I’m here. That’s why all of us are here.”

He points to his head and I nod my understanding.

I turn away from the window and rest my head on my knees. I watch as Viper says something that makes my mom laugh and my dad glare. I couldn’t stop smiling even if I wanted to.

I know their hearts are so sad right now, so I’m extremely grateful the Viper is doing what he can to make them forget. Even if just for a few seconds.

I’m to blame for my parents’ tears and that tears me up. If I could have gone through this whole thing without telling them, I would have in a heartbeat.

“The lower cage is closed tonight,” Ghost tells the room. “The club is open but there aren’t any fights scheduled until this weekend.”

“No fun,” I pout. “But we still get to go, right?”

“Steel and Blaze are pulling the vehicles around now,” Viper smiles. “Are you ready?”

“I mean, it’s not like I have a sexy outfit to change into or anything,” I glare down at my ruined pants.

Last night, someone must have washed my clothes because they’re clean, but my jeans are showing a bit too much leg.

“I’d rather you not go to clubs wearing anything sexy. Ever,” Daddy says.

“Agreed,” Viper growls. “Now, let’s go before I change my mind.”

I don’t say anything, but with the look on my Daddy’s face, he knows for a fact I would have just snuck out and found my own way there.

I giggle before standing.

“Xander, want to ride with me?” I ask my new friend. “You get shotgun.”

“What in the world would I need a shotgun for,” he asks, eyebrows raised.

“Trust me, Ghost has that whole building secured. Even the bodyguards carry concealed firearms.”

“It means you can sit in the front,” I laugh.

“I think I’d prefer to take my bike but thank you.”

“Load up,” someone calls out. “I want to get there before it gets too crowded.”

“Have fun, honey,” mom says. “I’m going to hang out here with Mrs. Victoria and the men. They’re going to lead us to Viper’s house. I don’t know what time you’ll be getting home but don’t over-exhaust yourself. Tomorrow’s a big day.”

I smile and hug my mom but inside, I’m cringing. The C word. Again. I just want to forget all about it for tonight.

“Love you, mom,” I say before pulling out of her hug and accepting the one Victoria offers. “You ladies have fun tonight and don’t let these men take away your fun. Make them order you pizza.”

They laugh and something inside of me clicks in place. Seeing these two woman and their glaring husbands standing behind them, all here together feels right. Like these two families, separated by miles, were meant to combine.

Looking back at Viper, I watch as he softly smiles at the two couples before connecting with my eyes.

There’s something there. A change in his expression. Shaking my head, I walk towards the door.

“If so much as a single hair on her head is hurt tonight, I’ll...”

“Yeah, yeah,” I interrupt. “You’ll break his fucking face.”

With a quick kiss and an innocent smile tossed to my Daddy, I walk out into the evening air.

Chapter Six

Viper

The night was ablaze with the unmistakable energy of The Cage. My brothers and I were in attendance, and everyone knew it. Ghost had us sitting in a section where we could watch without being interrupted by the guests.

Bitsy, her vibrant spirit undiminished by the challenges life had recently thrown at her, was the center of attention on the crowded dance floor. The colorful lights and the pounding music created a surreal atmosphere as she moved with a grace and sensuality that captivated everyone around her. I couldn't take my eyes off her, a mixture of desire and protectiveness coursing through my veins.

Ghost leaned over to me, a knowing grin on his face saying, "Viper, it looks like you've found yourself a handful there."

I nodded, unable to tear my gaze away from Bitsy's mesmerizing dance.

"Yeah, brother. She's something else, that's for sure."

Xander chimes in, "If she plans on sticking around, just make sure she knows what she's getting into, brother. Our world is no walk in the park."

I appreciate his concern, but something about Bitsy tells me she is tougher than she looks. "Don't worry, Xander, she grew up in a world similar to ours. I'm sure she can hold her own."

"We always knew bringing women into our lives was going to be risky," Blaze chimes in. "If Viper can convince Bitsy to stay with him after she's cancer-free, we will just have to be extra cautious when it comes to the *not-so-legal* activities we get up to."

"Well, right now she needs to be focused on her treatments," I say. "I don't want her stressed out more than necessary. I just hope that if she does agree to be mine, her father won't give us too much hassle."

Steel, our silent but observant brother, finally speaks up, his voice low and gravelly. "Just remember, brother, we got your back. No matter what."

Their words warm me, and I know I can count on my brothers to support me through whatever lay ahead with Bitsy.

As the night progressed, a growing crowd gathered around my beautiful enchantress, drawn to her magnetic presence. She laughed and danced, her body an embodiment of life and vitality. However, amidst the admirers was one man who pushed the boundaries way too fucking far, grinding against her, with his hands landing on her hips.

My jaw clenches in anger and I move to stand to tear his fucking arms off. But before I can make my move, Bitsy takes matters into her own hands.

“I told you to back off,” I hear her yell.

Bitsy twists her body to the side and raises her foot with precision, targeting his dick.

There was a sudden gasp from the onlookers as the man’s eyes widened in shock and pain. He staggers back, clutching his lower abdomen, a look of agony contorting his face.

But Bitsy wasn’t finished. With determination, she advances on the fucker, her eyes blazing with a mixture of anger and self-assuredness. With a quick, fluid motion, she brings her knee up again, this time aiming for his nose.

The impact was swift and brutal. There was a sickening crack as Bitsy’s knee connected with the man’s face. Blood spurted, and he cried out in pain, stumbling backward and crashing to the floor.

Bitsy stood her ground, her chest heaving with a mixture of adrenaline and satisfaction. She had defended herself with a combination of swift and well-executed moves. Her father taught her well.

The crowd around them fell into a stunned silence, some with wide eyes and others with grins of approval. Bitsy’s message was clear: she would not tolerate disrespect, and she could more than handle herself in a confrontation.

She turns and continues dancing as if nothing ever happened, leaving the man nursing his wounded pride and aching nose, a memorable lesson learned on the dance floor of The Cage.

Ghost leans over again, a grin on his face. “Looks like she can take care of herself, Viper.”

I nod, a newfound admiration for Bitsy settling in.

“Yeah, Ghost. She’s something special,” I smile. “But I still want that mother fucker out of this building.”

Ghost nods, “Already done, brother. My men are taking care of it.”

My brothers exchange knowing glances. They understand my protective instincts, but they also recognize the strength and resilience that radiated from Bitsy. She was no fragile flower, and tonight, she was determined to

experience life to the fullest.

As the night wore on, I watched over Bitsy from a distance, making sure she was safe, but also giving her the space to enjoy herself. the Cage may be a haven of chaos and temptation, but with Bitsy in my life, I feel like I have found something worth fighting for, something worth protecting.

And so, under the neon lights of the Cage, amidst the pulsating music and the wild dance floor, my connection with Bitsy deepens. I may have just met her, but my instant obsession with her is undeniable, and I am determined to be the man who stands by her side, no matter what challenges lay ahead.

Hours pass by and I can't help but notice that Bitsy is starting to slow down. The adrenaline from the earlier confrontation on the dance floor, and her many hours of dancing had drained her, and I can see the exhaustion in her eyes.

Bitsy slid back into the corner booth where my brothers and I were sitting. I wrap a protective arm around her, offering silent reassurance that she was safe with us. Her presence against my side feels right. Like it's always meant to be this way.

We continue to chat and exchange stories, but the weariness is taking its toll on Bitsy. She leans against the booth, her eyes fluttering as she tries to fight sleep. I can't blame her; it has been an eventful night.

With her eyelids growing heavy, she rests her head on my shoulder. I look at my brothers, sharing a silent understanding that Bitsy needs rest.

Deciding it was time to leave the Cage, I carefully lift Bitsy into my arms, her delicate frame fitting perfectly against mine. My brothers nod in approval as I secure her in the backseat of Blaze's car.

"To your place?" he asks quietly.

I nod from my place beside Bitsy.

Upon our arrival, I carry Bitsy inside, my heart filled with a mix of protectiveness and tenderness. I take her upstairs to the guest room knowing her parents won't be too happy that I didn't take her downstairs to the guest floor instead.

I smile, knowing Cap is going to give me hell for this tomorrow.

I tuck Bitsy into the soft bed, ensuring she is comfortable and warm. Her peaceful face in the dim room tugs at my heartstrings, and I know that I can't

bear to ever be separated from her. So, I decide to sleep in the uncomfortable chair in the corner of the room, just in case she needs me during the night.

With a gentle kiss on her forehead, I whisper, "Sleep well, Bitsy," before quietly exiting the room to grab a beer.

"Why is she up here?" Cap asks from the kitchen door leading down to the basement.

"It's where she belongs," I answer.

He sighs but doesn't argue back.

"Did she have fun?"

"She did," I smile. "Some man was grinding his fucking dick into her ass but she didn't give me a chance to break his face before she did it herself."

Cap laughs and I notice that his eyes shine with pride.

"Yeah, between me and her uncles, she didn't have a choice but to learn how to defend herself. Remember that when you piss her off."

"I sure as hell hope that she stays with me long enough to piss her off," I admit, handing him a beer as we both take a seat at the round kitchen table.

We sit in silence for a long while before Cap finally breaks it.

"I knew from the moment I saw you that you would be the one to take my baby girl away from me," he says, his gaze piercing.

I meet his gaze steadily, understanding the weight of his words.

"Sir, I care about Bitsy deeply, and I would never do anything to hurt her."

He nods slowly, his expression softening with a mixture of resignation and something akin to acceptance.

"I can see that, Viper. It's just... you know how it is. As a father, you want to protect your daughter from anything and anyone that might bring her harm."

I leaned forward, my tone sincere. "I get it, Sir. I really do. But I promise you, I'll do everything in my power to keep Bitsy safe. She means the world to me."

Cap lets out a heavy sigh, his shoulders relaxing slightly.

"You know, I've been where you are now, with her mother. I couldn't imagine my life without her. And I see that same look in your eyes when you look at my daughter."

I nod in acknowledgment, grateful that he seems to be opening up to the idea of our connection.

"I won't take her away from you, Sir. I want to be a part of her life, to protect her and cherish her. Not to become her only life."

Cap's gaze softens, and he extends his hand across the table. I shake it firmly, a silent understanding passing between us.

"Just promise me one thing, Viper," he says with a small smile.

"What's that, Sir?" I ask.

"Don't ever let her forget where she comes from. She's a fighter, just like her old man. Keep her safe but let her be herself too."

I nod in agreement, appreciating Cap's wisdom. "I promise, Sir. I'll do my best to make sure she stays true to herself."

"Good," he chuckles. "And for fucks sake, stop calling me sir. Names Cap, boy."

"Is it too early to start calling you Daddy?" I ask with a grin.

Cap tosses his head back and laughs.

As we sit there, two men with a deep love and concern for Bitsy, I feel a sense of unity and shared purpose. We might have our differences, but our common goal is clear: to protect and support the remarkable woman who had captured both our hearts.

Chapter Seven

Bitsy

I'm sitting in the cold, sterile waiting room of the cancer clinic, surrounded by my mom, dad, and Viper. The room is filled with the low hum of conversations and the soft rustling of magazines. My heart races and anxiety gnaws at me as we wait for my first meeting with the cancer specialist, Dr. Sebastian Stone.

Viper had insisted on coming with us, even though I had told him he didn't have to. But I'm glad he demanded his presence because it's a source of comfort that I didn't know I needed. He holds my hand, his strong fingers entwined with mine, grounding me in the moment.

The door to the doctor's office opens, and a tall, gray-haired man in a white coat emerges.

"Tiffany Williams?" he asks, looking right at me. I nod as I stand to greet him.

"My name is Dr. Stone," he introduces himself with a firm handshake, but his eyes hold a warmth that puts me at ease. "You must be Mr. and Mrs. Williams."

He shakes both of my parents' hands before turning to Viper.

"Ethan Knight," Viper introduces himself, shaking Dr. Stone's hand.

Ethan Knight. I smile, filing his name away.

We all follow the doctor into his office and I take a seat on one of the chairs directly in front of his desk. Mom sits beside me and Daddy and Viper stand behind us.

"I have more seating," Dr. Stone says, gesturing to several more chairs.

Daddy and Viper don't move. For which I'm grateful. I need the close support of all three of them.

The tension in the room is palpable as Dr. Stone pulls out a file. Not wasting any time, he dives straight into the discussion.

"Bitsy, I understand you've been through a lot already," he says. "I've reviewed your case, and I believe we can proceed with a targeted

chemotherapy treatment.”

I nod, my throat dry. “What’s targeted chemotherapy?”

Dr. Stone leans forward, his expression serious. “It’s a more focused approach than traditional chemotherapy. We’ll be using higher doses of medication, which can be more effective against your type of cancer. However, it also means the side effects can be more intense.”

My mom squeezes my hand, as Viper places a hand on the back of my neck.

“How long will it take before we see results?” Viper asks. Again, I’m grateful he came because I can’t seem to think of a single thing to ask.

“I don’t like to make guesses, but I’ll make an exception. With Ms. Williams’ type of cancer, and the level at which it is, I’m going to guess that the tumor will be nearly gone in roughly six months,” he answers. “But we should see significant shrinkage in about two months. I’ll have a much clearer answer for you after her first scan.”

“What side effects should we be concerned about?” Daddy asks.

“If there comes a time when you can’t hold any type of food or liquids down, Ms. Williams, I will need you to go to the emergency room immediately. It’s extremely important to keep your body as strong as possible while going through these treatments. Any more questions?”

“Will I lose my hair?” I ask, a tear silently falling down my face.

Dr. Stone’s expression softens and a sad smile graces his face. “Unfortunately, that’s almost guaranteed to happen with this treatment. You most likely won’t notice anything until after the third treatment, but it will eventually happen. The drugs are just too potent and that’s one thing your body can’t protect.”

“Will I be able to have children one day?” I ask, the room growing quiet.

Mom starts to cry and I know it’s because she’s remembering her best friend. My mother. She wasn’t able to have kids after her chemo treatments and that’s why mom agreed to be their surrogate.

“I’m going to be really honest with you, Ms. Williams,” Dr. Stone says. “Some chemotherapy drugs can affect the ovaries, potentially leading to temporary or permanent infertility. There is a chance that you won’t ever be able to have children but there is also a chance that you will be able to have many children. With your lung cancer being at such an early stage, you won’t need as many treatments and that could very well play in your favor when it comes to your fertility. Now, you can take measures to ensure you’ll be able

to have kids. We can do something called Oocyte Cryopreservation. More commonly known as freezing of the eggs. This technique allows individuals to preserve their eggs so that they can be used for fertility treatment at a later time. Is that something you would be interested in?"

"Could that be done today?" Daddy asks.

"I'm afraid not, Mr. Williams," Dr. Stone answers. "The process itself takes several weeks."

"I've always wanted a big family," I whisper, not bothering to hide my tears. "But I guess if all else fails, there's adoption."

"We will have so many children that our home will never hear a moment of silence," Viper whispers into my ear. "If you can't have them yourself, we will adopt them and love them as if they grew in your beautiful body."

I laugh at the idea of having all of those kids with this stranger I've known for less than two days. But, somehow, that future blooms in my mind's eye and I desperately want it. It's not something I'll be able to have if this cancer kills me.

"I'm ready to start the treatments," I say, trying to sound brave.

Dr. Stone smiles kindly. "That's the spirit, Ms. Williams. We'll start the treatment today if that's alright with you. It'll be an IV infusion, and it usually takes a few hours. I'll explain everything as we go along."

I nod, accepting the paper the doctor is reaching forward.

"I'll just need you to go over these and initial your agreement before signing the bottom," he tells me. "It's just confirmation that you understand what's about to happen and the risks that it may pose."

I read through and sign that I agree with everything.

"This one gives us permission to treat you," he says, handing over another paper.

I sign it and return it just as the doctor hands over another one.

"This last one asks if you have a last will and testament," he says. "And if not, would you like to have one made up while you're here today?"

Okay, so that one hit hard and Viper must have known because he leaned down and kissed the top of my head, giving me his silent strength.

"I don't think I need one," I say, signing where it says I don't want one.

With a nod, Dr. Stone picks up his office phone and hits a number.

"Gemma, would you please have treatment room two prepped and ready for Ms. Williams? We'll be there shortly."

Hanging up the phone, he stands and gestures to the door.

“Just follow me, Ms. Williams, and we will get this started.”

I enter the room and instantly relax a bit. It’s not as sterile-looking as you would expect. There’s not even a bed. There are several comfortable-looking chairs around the room, a mini fridge, a bathroom, and a tv. The colors on the walls are a light purple and the windows allow for natural light to enter. It’s welcoming.

“Have a seat right here, Ms. Williams,” Dr. Stone says. “I’m just going to do quick work of your IV. Are you okay with needles?”

I nod and sit in the chair next to the IV stand. The bag hanging on the stand makes me smile. I can’t really see the liquid medication because it’s in a bag with monkeys decorated around it.

Dr. Stone sees what caused me to smile and he returns one.

“We do what we can to bring even the smallest smile to our patients,” he explains.

“I think it’s wonderful,” I say as he tapes down the IV in my arms.

“If you need anything, just press this button,” he tells me, showing me the button on the chair arm. “We’re in this together. Whatever you need, I will be sure you get it. Before you leave here today I will have a prescription of everything you need to manage the side effects. You’re not alone in this Ms. Williams.”

“Thank you,” I whisper, trying to smile but knowing it’s no good.

With a nod, the doctor releases the clamp and starts the drip.

As the treatment begins, I can’t help but feel a sense of vulnerability. The medication drips into my veins, a stark reminder of the battle that rages inside my body. Viper remains by my side, his unwavering presence a source of strength, while my parents sit in the chairs next to the window, watching me the whole time. I can feel their love giving me strength, but I can also feel their pain. Which only increases mine.

Hours pass, and we leave the clinic, the weight of the first treatment settling in my chest. I tried to put on a brave face, but even as we were leaving the clinic, the side effects started to kick in.

We arrive back at Viper’s house, and he helps me up to the guest room. My parents were staying in the rooms in the basement, but Viper insisted, practically begged, that I be closer to him.

So, I agree without hesitation. I want to be closer to him, too. He tucks me into the soft bed, his eyes filled with concern.

“We’ll be downstairs if you need us, baby girl,” Daddy says, kissing the

back of my hand.

“We love you, Bitsy,” mom says as they leave.

I love you, too, I want to say but my throat isn't working.

“Are you okay, Baby?” Viper asks, his voice gentle.

I nod, even though the nausea is already starting to churn in my stomach. “I'll be fine, Viper,” I manage to say. “Just need some rest.”

He brushes a strand of hair from my forehead and leans down to kiss me softly. Our first kiss and it happens when I feel like throwing up.

“I'm right here if you need anything, okay? Don't hesitate to wake me up.”

As he settles into the uncomfortable-looking chair, I feel a mixture of gratitude and fear. The road ahead is uncertain, and the battle against cancer has just become more daunting. But with Viper by my side lending me his strength, I just know that I can face this head-on.

I had a total of four treatments during the first week. If I thought the nausea after the first one was bad, nothing compares to how I feel now. I get tomorrow off, but the day after starts week two of four treatments a week.

I'm already over it.

Daddy's pacing back and forth in Viper's living room as he talks to Uncle Axe over the phone. I'm catching glimpses of what they're talking about and it doesn't look good.

“Bitsy is sick, Axe,” he growls. “Is this not something you can deal with on your own?”

Viper places a heating pad on my stomach and I smile up at him. He's been so kind and just freaking amazing this past week. I feel so bad that he's placed his life on pause to take care of me.

“Fuck,” Daddy shouts. “Damn it all to hell. I'll be there soon.”

Glancing at me, his expression torn between duty and concern, Daddy kneels down in front of me.

“Bitsy, we need to head back,” he tells me. “Axe says it's urgent.”

“She's in no condition to travel,” Viper growls. “She's not going anywhere.”

I sigh. Between these two, I'm never going to get to do anything ever again. But Viper's right.

“I know,” Daddy says, shocking me. “But your mom and I have to get

going. Shits gone down and Axe needs my help. I'm so fucking sorry, baby girl. I'll get things sorted and get back here as soon as possible."

I nod, my voice filled with understanding. "I get it, Daddy. I know how important your business is. We'll figure things out from here, and I'll stay in touch."

Mom leans over and hugs me tightly, tears glistening in her eyes. "We'll be back as soon as we can, sweetheart. You take care of yourself."

I hug her back, trying to hold back my own tears. "I will, Mom. Don't worry."

"I promise to keep you updated on everything," he tells my parents. "I will protect Bitsy with my life and I will make sure she is as comfortable here as possible."

Daddy shakes Viper's hand firmly, a silent understanding passing between them. "Thank you, Viper. I trust you. Besides, I don't think my little girl will be moving out of these walls for years to come."

"My treatments aren't going to take years, Daddy," I say.

Viper and my dad share a look and laugh.

I shrug my shoulders and pull the blanket closer up to my chest. I always seem to be cold these days.

As my parents prepare to leave, I feel a mix of emotions. Sadness tugs at my heart as I watch them go, knowing how much I'm going to miss them. But I also feel a sense of pride in my dad, who carries the weight of our family legacy on his shoulders. They save lives and I'm so proud of my whole family.

"I'm going to miss them," I admit, my voice trembling.

Viper pulls me off the couch and onto his lap, wrapping me in his comforting embrace. "I know, Baby. But they'll be back soon, and we'll get through this together."

I go to nod but have to jump off of his lap and rush to the bathroom. As I'm throwing up everything in my body, Viper is right behind me, holding my thinning hair back.

"What a way to start a relationship," I joke, leaning my head against the toilet seat. Luckily, Viper has made sure this bathroom is only used for this exact purpose.

"Right now, may not be the best moment of our lives," he tells me. "But, one day when we're experiencing that moment, we'll be able to look back to this time and smile. Because my woman is so fucking strong that she fought

for her life. She fought for that moment. Baby, right now, you're fighting for us."

"Great, now I have to throw up and I'm crying," I snifle.

Viper chuckles as he settles beside me knowing this is going to take a while.

Chapter Eight

Bitsy

In the days that followed my parents' departure, Viper and I settled into a routine. The house felt quieter without them, but Viper's unwavering presence brought a sense of stability to my life. We made it a point to update my parents regularly about my condition and the progress of my treatments, keeping them in the loop as best we could.

The targeted chemotherapy was taking its toll on my body, and I found myself grappling with the relentless side effects. Nausea, fatigue, and hair loss became my daily companions, and it was Viper who stood by me through it all. He would hold me when the sickness overcame me, offering soothing words and gentle comfort.

When the day came that I had to shave my head, I was inconsolable. I know that it's just hair and I can't really explain why it hurt so much to shave off the last few strands I had, but it was hard. The evening that Viper shaved my head, we got a visit from Ghost, Steel, Blaze, Venom, Ma, and Pops. They all walked into the house with a huge smile on their faces and completely bald heads. Even Viper shaved all of his hair off.

Never in my life had I cried so much as I did in that moment. Even Ma had her beautiful locks completely shaven. I'll never forget that day for as long as I live. I even demanded a picture of all of us together to hang on the wall.

It hangs proudly over the fireplace.

One evening, as I lay on the couch, feeling weak and exhausted, Viper sat beside me. His fingers traced patterns on my bare scalp where my hair once flowed. "You're beautiful, Bitsy," he whispered, his voice filled with admiration and love.

I managed a weak smile, grateful for his unwavering support. "Thank you, Viper. I'm lucky to have you."

He leaned in and kissed my forehead gently, his lips warm against my skin. "I'm the lucky one, baby."

As the days turned into weeks, Viper continued to be my rock, providing

emotional and physical support. He would cook comforting meals for me, and we would share quiet moments together, finding solace in each other's company.

One evening, I sat on the porch, staring out at the stars, lost in thought. Viper joined me, his strong presence a comforting anchor. "What are you thinking about, baby?" he asked, his voice soft.

I turned to him, my eyes filled with emotion. "I'm thinking about how much my life has changed since I met you, Viper. You've been my strength through all of this."

He took my hand, his gaze unwavering. "We'll get through this together, Bitsy. You're not alone in this fight."

I leaned in and kissed him, the connection between us deepening with each passing day. In that moment, I knew that no matter what challenges lay ahead, I had found something worth fighting for, someone who would stand by my side through the darkest of storms.

As we watched the stars twinkle in the night sky, I felt a renewed sense of hope, knowing that with Viper's love and support, I could weather any storm that came my way.

"Lost in thought, little one," Viper asks, pulling me from my memories.

"A little," I say softly. "I've been thinking about the good memories these past weeks. I don't want to ever forget."

"We will have so many good memories that it will be impossible to remember them all," he smiles.

"I'll take that challenge," I say.

I'll never take my good memories for granted again. If cancer takes away my body, my life, I want to go out remembering everything about Viper and his family.

"Come on, baby," he says, lifting me into his arms. "You're sleeping with me from now on. No more sleeping in the damn guest room. You are mine, this house is ours, and you will sleep in our bed."

I sigh and lean into his comforting arms.

I don't argue. I don't want to. I want Viper to be mine. I want my future to be his.

"I love you, Viper," I admit for the first time. "But please don't say it back. Not yet."

"Why?" he asks, sounding genuinely confused. "Why should I wait?"

"Because I want you to get to know me without the sickness," I admit. "I

want you to see me for me. Not for this frail version of myself. I want you to look at me when the cancer is gone and know without a shadow of a doubt that you love me before you say it.”

He doesn't say anything as he walks us up to his bedroom. After putting me on the bed he leaves and returns with my nighttime medication. Without a word, he hands me the pills and a glass of water.

When I'm finished, he grabs the glass and takes it to his dresser, placing it on top before opening a drawer.

“From the moment I met you, before I knew you had cancer, I just knew that we were meant to be together,” he says from his dresser. “I could tell within an hour that you were a strong-willed, stubborn, hard-headed woman. But that made me crave you even more. This cancer isn't causing my feelings for you to grow, you are, baby. I don't take care of you because I feel sorry for you, I take care of you because I love you.”

“Viper,” I sigh, tossing my hands over my eyes. Why can't he just understand?

“Less than a week after I met you, your mother and I went shopping for this.”

I feel Viper sit beside me on the bed, but now I'm afraid to open my eyes.

“I knew instantly you were the one for me, I just needed to make you realize that I was the one for you. I hadn't planned on asking you this until your parents came for a visit next week, but I don't want you thinking for a second longer that my feelings for you are anything but what they are. Open your eyes, baby.”

Reluctantly, I listen. Viper has his hand stretched out with an open black velvet ring box sitting there. “Your Ma and I spent hours searching for this,” he tells me. “But, when we both saw it we instantly knew that it was meant for you.”

The ring is beautiful. The centerpiece is a brilliant-cut diamond that seems to catch the very essence of starlight. However, what makes it truly unique is the band—a delicate blend of white gold and black obsidian.

“Bitsy, this ring... it represents us,” he says, his voice a little unsteady. “The diamond is like the brightness you've brought into my life, the light that pierces through the darkness. The black obsidian, it's a reminder of our strength, our ability to overcome anything together. A reminder that the family you're coming into will always be your strength. Please, Bitsy, marry me.”

I reach out and touch the ring. The diamonds seem to come alive, casting prismatic reflections on my hand.

“Viper,” I say. “I love you so much that I don’t even understand it. But if I agree to marry you I’m afraid that it will only end in heartache. Let’s say that these treatments kill the cancer. What if it grows back? What if it ultimately takes me away from you and you’re left here alone? What if it doesn’t happen for years down the road and I leave you with kids to take care of? It just isn’t fair.”

Viper places the ring on my chest and crawls over my body, using his arms to hold his weight above me.

“Baby, if this cancer took you away from me tomorrow, I would be devastated. But I know for a fact that the time I spent with you up until that moment would be the happiest of my life. I wouldn’t change a thing. If you walked out of my life at this very moment, I still wouldn’t change the past we’ve had so far. I cherish every single second. So, yeah, what if this cancer takes you away from me? I’ll be fucking broken. But, if we have kids, I will live on to teach them how strong their Ma is. If we don’t have kids, I’ll mourn your loss and find some way to keep going. But, do you want to know what’s even more devastating than having you in my life only to die?”

“What?” I whisper.

“Not having you in my life, at all. So you are going to marry me. And it’s going to be soon.”

“You can’t demand me to marry you,” I laugh.

Viper leans his weight on one arm and picks the ring from the box with his other hand.

He doesn’t say a word and just looks into my eyes, waiting for my answer. He’s looking at me with so much love that it hurts.

So, I do the only thing in this world that makes sense.

I nod.

“Fuck yea,” he laughs, practically shoving the ring on my finger. “Thank you, baby.”

Leaning down, he kisses me softly.

“One day, I’m going to worship this body of yours,” he tells me, kissing my shoulders.

“I’m looking forward to that day,” I say.

“For now, let’s sleep. Tomorrow is another treatment day.”

Lovely. More treatments. My tri-monthly scan is next week and I’m so

freaking scared that we're going to find out the treatments aren't working.

Trying not to think too much about it, I close my eyes and fall into a restless sleep.

Chapter Nine

Viper

“**B**rother, we have a major fucking issue. We need to have a meeting.”

“I’m not leaving this house,” I tell Ghost. “Bitsy isn’t well enough to be making multiple trips in a day and we’ve only just gotten home.”

“Would it be alright if we came over there?”

I glance at the couch where Bitsy is fast asleep. I fucking hate what these treatments are doing to her.

“Yeah,” I say. “Just don’t get too close to her. She has a weakened immune system right now and can’t afford to catch so much as a sinus cold.”

“We’re heading that way now. Is there anything she needs that we can pick up on the way?”

“Maybe some saltine crackers,” I answer. “That’s always her go-to these days and we’re down to a single pack.”

“You got it, brother. We’ll be there soon.”

“She’ll be glad to see you all,” I tell him. “She’s been asking to come and see everyone.”

“Can’t wait to see my little sister, too,” Ghost says. “Love ya, brother. Be there in a few hours.”

Bitsy bounces with excitement when the doorbell rings.

Chuckling, I open the door and stand aside as she hurtles herself toward each and every one of my brothers, hugging them all as tightly as her frail body can.

“So much for weakened immune system,” Ghost laughs.

“I didn’t breathe and I’m going to go wash my hands,” she says, stepping back with a bright smile on her face. “I’ve missed you all so much.”

“We’ve missed you, too, sis,” Blaze says. “So much so that when we stopped to pick you up some crackers, we also got you this.”

Blaze moves his hand from behind his back and holds out a large basket.

“It’s a self-care basket,” Steel says beside Blaze. “We’ve added a soft blanket, some slippers, a journal, Mandela coloring books, and markers, as well as some snacks that will be easy on your stomach.”

Bitsy sniffs before hurtling herself, once again, to each of my brothers and hugging them.

“You guys are so kind,” she says when she steps to my side with her new basket. “Thank you so much.”

“Why don’t you go and relax on the couch, baby,” I tell her. “We need to talk club business.”

Without a single complaint, she walks to the couch with her basket and turns the volume up on the tv.

“I wasn’t expecting that,” Venom chuckles. “I guess growing up in the MC life has ingrained club rules into her head.”

“Let’s go, brothers,” Ghost says, his playful candor now gone.

“What the fuck is all of this about?” I ask once everyone settles at the table.

“We’re being targeted by someone who can’t take a loss,” Venom answers.

“I’m going to need some more information,” I quip. “What the fuck happened?”

Ghost sighs before pulling out his phone and handing it to me.

“I got notified this morning that The Cage was broken into.”

I watch the video as several people wearing black masks break the window to the Cage and completely wreck the place.

“By the time we got there, they were already gone,” Venom says. “We don’t want the police in on this because it’s too close to the lower Cage. But we might want to consider calling in some allies in case this shit goes any deeper.”

“How do you know it was someone who lost money on a fight?” I ask, handing Ghost back his phone.

“They left a message,” Ghost answers. He fiddles with his phone before handing it back to me.

On the bar table of The Cage, is a message written in what appears to be black marker.

“You bastards lost me money. Now, I demand to be compensated. Someone will die. T”

“Has anything else happened? And who the hell is T?” I ask, suddenly too

aware of possible breeches in my house.

“Nothing yet,” Ghost answers. “And we have no idea, but we know how this works. Something is bound to happen sooner or later.”

“Fuck, brothers,” I say, rubbing the back of my neck. “I need to make sure Bitsy’s safe. Help me check the house and property?”

“Absolutely,” Blaze says. “I’ll start downstairs with the basement.”

“Alright, Ghost, you check out back, Steel, upstairs, Venom, the shed. I’ll secure this floor.”

With a plan, everyone disperses to do their task.

“What’s going on, Viper?” Bitsy asks when she notices we all leave in different directions.

I want to tell her that it’s nothing, that she doesn’t need to worry about anything.

“Don’t even try it, mister,” she says. “My dad, uncles, and cousins try pretending like everything’s fine when someone clearly isn’t. I’m not new to this world, Viper. I know bad stuff happens. I also know that it’s better to be informed than left in the dark. Mistakes can be prevented with a little bit of knowledge.”

I hate that she’s right.

“Someone has made threats to the club,” I admit. “Someone bet on the wrong person during a fight and lost some money. Now, they’ve broken into the Cage, destroyed it, and left a threat on the table.”

“Was anyone hurt?” she asks, her eyes wide.

“No, baby,” I say, sitting beside her and holding her small, cold hand in mine. Each treatment takes a little more of her warmth. She’s still so fucking beautiful that it hurts, but she’s slowly withering away. I just hope that everything she’s going through will be worth it. “They broke in after hours. No one was there.”

“Do they know that the Cage is affiliated with the Obsidians?” she asks.

“Yeah,” I say. “Everyone knows it’s owned by the President of the Obsidian. That’s why it’s so popular. Bunny wannabes.”

“Don’t tell me that you guys have Bunnies,” she says. “The Phantoms don’t degrade women like that. Women are to be respected, loved, and cherished. Even if they don’t do so themselves.”

I smile. Such a kind, sweet woman. Bunnies are usually women who volunteer to hang around a club to pleasure the members when the need arises. We’ve never been interested in that type of atmosphere.

“I agree,” I say. “We don’t have bunnies. Not at our club anyway. But, that doesn’t stop the women from flocking to the Cage trying to catch our attention.”

“Can’t even respect themselves,” she mutters. “Anyway, so what is everyone doing?”

“Making sure our home is secure,” I tell her. “I want to make sure you’re as safe as can be.”

“You guys are so sweet,” she yawns. “I think I’m just going to trust you all to know what you’re doing while I take another nap here on the couch.”

“Get some sleep, baby,” I say, leaning forward to kiss her perfect lips. “I love you so fucking much, Bitsy. I will tell you a thousand times a day until you get sick of hearing it. Then, I’ll tell a thousand more.”

“Such a romantic,” she laughs. “Go do your man things. Oh, and Viper. I love you, too.”

It doesn’t take her but a few seconds to drift off to sleep.

Making sure not to go too far away, I spend the next while making sure all the doors and windows are locked tight.

Chapter Ten

Bitsy

We're finally back home after my three-month scan. We won't hear back from the doctor for a few days about the results. I'm going to lose my mind during that time.

The doorbell rings, but I make no move to answer it. I'm sure Viper is close by and I just don't have the energy to even care about visitors.

"Can I help you?" I hear Viper say.

"I have a delivery for Viper," someone says.

"Someone sent me flowers?" he asks.

Curious, I lean up and look over the back of the couch. Viper is standing at the door with a bouquet of roses in his hand looking the most confused I've ever seen him. If I had the energy, I'd laugh.

But a nap sounds better.

*****Viper*****

"Lockdown."

I look down at the note in my hand and then at the group text Ghost shot out.

Fuck. How the hell am I going to get my sick woman over to the clubhouse without stressing her out?

While she naps, I rush to our room and pack our bags. Thankfully, her Ma shipped over a good portion of her clothing and personal items. I pack what I think she'll need, along with her medications, favorite pillow, blankets, and any items to help her relax.

Rushing outside, I toss our bags into the back of my car and rush back in. I don't want to wake her up, but when the President calls for a lockdown, he means right the fuck now.

"Baby," I say gently. "I'm going to carry you to the car. We need to head to the clubhouse for a few days."

“A few days,” she mumbles. “Why? What’s going on? Is it the threat?”

“Yeah, little one,” I say, pulling her into my arms. “More have been made. Except for this time they’ve sent the message to our home. I’m assuming the other’s got one as well. Ghost has called in the entire club for a lockdown.”

“I can’t go into lockdown, Viper,” she says. “I’m halfway through my treatments. I can’t miss any.”

“Don’t worry about that, baby. I’ll make sure you make all of your appointments. Now, try and go back to sleep. I’ll wake you up when we get there.”

“I’m not sure sleep is in my future,” she says as I buckle her into the front seat.

I smile when I get behind the wheel. In the time it took for me to get from her side of the car to mine, she fell asleep.

I was concerned at first with the number of naps a day she took, but Dr. Stone assures me that it is completely normal. Her body shuts down in order to preserve the energy it’s taking for it to fight back.

As I pull into the Obsidian Clubhouse, I carry Bitsy inside and lay her down gently on one of the many couches we have around the room.

“Everyone is on their way,” Ghost says. “I’ve even called in the prospects. A couple of them had flowers and threats sent to them as well.”

“We need to figure out who the fuck we’re dealing with before someone gets hurt. Where’s Ma and Pops?”

“They’re already here,” Ghost says, walking next to me as I go collect our things. “He’s thinking we should call a code one.”

I want to complain, but I know it’s the best decision. Code one lockdown means everyone is locked inside the clubhouse, even families that live close by. No ins or outs unless you’re a club chair member. Which means, me, Ghost, Venom, Blaze, Steel, and Pops.

“I will have to take Bitsy out every other day for her treatments,” I tell him. “We need to make a plan for the trip there, the three-hour visit, and the trip back.”

“Do all of our notes say the same thing?” Venom asks as he dismounts from his bike.

“Let’s get everyone inside and assign rooms for the prospects and their families,” Ghost says. “Then we’ll have a meeting.”

It takes an hour before everyone is locked inside and settled into their rooms. Luckily, we built this clubhouse to hold many families.

“I have my security team from the Cage on watch outside,” Ghost says. “I have no doubt in my trust in them to keep our family safe. Let’s have that meeting. If you are family, please make your way to your rooms for a little while. All brothers, including prospects, remain here.”

Our club has a total of eighteen members. Six chair members and the rest Obsidian brothers. With some of the men married with kids of their own, the clubhouse is packed.

Bitsy moves to stand and I place a gentle hand on her stomach, holding her firmly in place on the couch beside me.

“You don’t need to go anywhere, Bitsy,” Ghost says.

“Oh, thank god,” she sighs. “Alright, go about your meeting while I eat these crackers.”

“Does everyone have their messages?” I ask, pulling my own out of my pocket.

In total, seven small cards were attached to the roses.

The thorns of fate await, sharp and unforgiving.

Thorns will pierce them and roses will weep blood.

As each petal falls, revealing its thorn, so will your walls of safety.

Your future, a delicate petal amidst the thorns, ready to fall.

In the shadows, thorns of vengeance grow sharper.

The prick of a thorn will be your demise.

Your rose will wither and die while my thorn pierces your eye.

I lay mine down last, reflecting on the message sent. *Your rose will wither and die.* Are they talking about Bitsy?

“It looks like the messages have the same meaning across all seven,” Steel says. “But, what’s with the rose symbolism?”

Bitsy leans over my shoulder and reads each card. I want to keep her away from this part of my life, but I don’t think she would allow that to happen.

“I know that I’m not a member of this club,” she says softly. “But can I say two things?”

“You’re a member of this family,” Pops says. “Which means you’re a member of this club.”

Ma, sitting beside Pops, grins and nods her head.

Bitsy smiles and curls into my side, tucking her legs beside her on the couch.

“Okay, well, one, what’s with this lockdown? Why are we all here?”

“We come together to keep each other safe when danger is threatening us,”

Ghost says. "Is that not something your Pops does?"

"No," she says. "Not in the same way, anyway. For one simple fact."

"There was never any danger?" Blaze asks.

"Oh, no, there were tons of danger," she answers. "With their jobs, danger is always lurking around the corner. But think of it like this. For the sake of this conversation, let's say that my dad's club was the one threatening you. You don't realize that your danger is coming from another club that may have the same regulations most clubs do. Such as church meetings for members only, or the hierarchy of the club. Or, let's say, that when danger strikes, the clubs go into lockdown."

"Where are you going with this?" Pops asks.

"Think about it, Pops, if you guys were after a huge organization of evil-doers and wanted to take them all out, how would you do it? One at a time, over the course of months, possibly years? Or all at the same time? In, say, an explosion or gas leak while they were all asleep in the same building at the exact same time."

Silence.

"What better way to get rid of The Obsidian MC and their families, then to force them into a self-imposed lockdown that they thought was their choice in the making," she finishes.

"Damn it, she's right," Pops says. "Why the hell haven't we thought about that?"

"Daddy and my uncles were trained to think about stuff like that," she tells us.

"So, you think that the people behind breaking into the Cage and sending these threats is another motorcycle club?" Venom asks.

"No," she answers breathlessly. "But I think the person who did this used to be a member of a club before he was kicked out."

"What aren't you telling us, baby?" I ask reluctantly, knowing she's having to use a lot of energy to talk as much as she is.

"Last year," she sighs. "Daddy asked me to study the files of the people on our watch list so that I could help Missy with the behind-the-scenes part of the business. Something I was actually looking forward to. Let me tell you, there are a ton of files they had me read through." She pauses, catching her breath. "Anyway, the second thing I wanted to ask was if anyone saw the significance between each note?"

"Just that they're all talking about the roses," Ghost answers.

“Exactly. Two years ago, a man named David Smith was kicked out of a club he was prospecting in. He beat and killed three of their women and for that, he was put on our list of potential future suspects. Before the police could arrest him, he disappeared. Only to reappear several months later, hours from his original location near my town.”

Bitsy clenches her stomach in pain and I reach into my pocket and pull out her pain meds.

“Take this, baby,” I say, accepting the water Ma’s holding out.

We wait patiently for Bitsy to take her meds and get resettled back against my side.

“Sorry about that, everyone,” she says, her face turning scarlet red.

“Nothing to be sorry about, sweetheart,” Pops says. “I just hate that you even have to go through it.”

Bitsy’s smile is a thankful one. She has such a sweet heart.

“Anyway, David’s name came up regarding a case my family was hired for a little less than a year ago. A child was kidnapped by the mother’s crazy new boyfriend. Daddy got the child back, but in the process, he learned that there’s a black market for illegal weapons trade right here in this area. Which is the main reason he didn’t want me to go to the biker convention on my own. Because it was in Harborbrook this year.”

“Yeah, we’ve had our eyes on them,” Ghost says. “So far they haven’t caused us any trouble.”

“That’s because they’re smart. They won’t cause trouble that will draw attention to them. Anyway, that’s beside the point. According to my cousin, Michael, who broke into some of their secure files, David goes by a new name now.”

Bitsy smiles.

“Out with it,” I say, poking her side.

“Rosebud,” she answers. “But everyone just calls him Thorn. Now, look at those notes one more time.”

*The **thorns** of fate await, sharp and unforgiving.*

***Thorns** will pierce them and roses will weep blood.*

*As each petal falls, revealing its **thorn**, so will your walls of safety.*

*Your future, a delicate petal amidst the **thorns**, ready to fall.*

*In the shadows, **thorns** of vengeance grow sharper.*

*The prick of a **thorn** will be your demise.*

*Your rose will wither and die while my **thorn** pierces your eye.*

“Too much of a coincidence, don’t you think?”

“Wasn’t the threat at the Cage signed with a T?” Ma asks.

“Fuck, your woman practically solved the case,” Venom cheers.

“My work here is done,” with a sigh, she snuggles in further and falls asleep. We spent the next while discussing plans on how to deal with this new, potentially dangerous, enemy.

Chapter Eleven

Bitsy

“You have everyone freaking the fuck out,” Viper says as he tucks me into bed. This time, we’re in his room at the clubhouse and not a guest room. “Pops and Ghost are making plans on buying safehouses for the next time we have to go into lockdown.”

“It’s not a bad idea,” I say. “When we go into lockdown at home, there are... Well, I probably shouldn’t say. I don’t think you all would attack my family, but that’s a big security secret.”

“And I respect that about you, baby,” he tells me. “I’m going to go and get these plans made with the guys before joining you for bed. We have to be up bright and early for your next treatment.”

“Maybe Dr. Stone will have the results from my scan,” I say.

“I hope so, baby. I love you, little one. Get some sleep.”

I’m not sure how long I slept, but something woke me up. It wasn’t a sound. My head doesn’t feel right. I don’t think I’ve been asleep too long seeing as how Viper still isn’t in bed.

I have a bad feeling and don’t think I should be alone, so I wrap myself in the blanket and leave the room. I have no idea whose room is across from ours and I don’t care. Right now, I just need to be with someone.

A few steps and I reach out and knock on the door.

“Bitsy,” Steel says half asleep. “Is everything okay?”

“Something’s wrong,” I say. “I don’t know what it is but some...”

Viper

“Is there a way we can have her treatments done here?” Ghost asks. “I agree with her statement about the lockdown but there isn’t anything we can

do about that tonight.”

“I’ve already tried to get the doctor to have her treatments done at home,” I explain. “He can’t legally remove them from the building without risking his license.”

“It’s fine, we’ll make it work,” Pops says. “I think we should move everyone to different locations in the morning. I have a few places off grid we could use. I was thinking we could...”

“VIPER, GET THE FUCK UP HERE. IT’S BITSY.”

Without hesitation, I’m up and running for the stairs.

“Damn it, Doc. Give me a fucking warning,” I hear Venom say roughly.

By the time I reach the bottom of the steps, Steel has Bitsy in his arms running down.

“What the fuck happened?” I demand.

I desperately want to jerk my woman out of my brother’s arms and into mine but have no idea if she’s hurt.

“I don’t know, man,” Steel says, his voice in hysterics. “She knocked on my door and said something was wrong seconds before she fell and started shaking. I think she’s having a fucking seizure.”

I meet Steel halfway on the staircase and that’s when I notice Bitsy’s whole body shaking.

“Fetch her down ‘ere.”

I pull Bitsy into my arms and rush to where Doc is waiting.

“Lay her on the floor and put this in her mouth.”

Doing as Doc demands, I grab his wallet and try to pry it between her clenched jaws.

“She is experiencing a grand mal seizure,” Doc explains. “We will have to transport her to the hospital. If it weren’t for her weakened state, staying here might have been an option, but it’s too risky now.”

“Should we call an ambulance?” Blaze asks. He’s standing behind everyone with fear coating his whole body. He’s always been sensitive, especially towards women.

“It would be quicker to take her,” I say. “Can someone drive? I’ll need to call Dr. Stone on the way.”

Blaze rushes to the door and waits while I grab Bitsy.

“Call us with updates,” Ghost says worriedly.

Nodding, I rush through the door and straight to Blaze’s car.

“You’ll be okay, baby,” I say against her head as I cradle her in the back

seat. "I won't have it any other way."

While Blaze speeds down the road, I pull out my phone and call Dr. Stone's emergency number.

"What happened?" I ask Dr. Stone as soon as he enters Bitsy's hospital room. "She was perfectly fine when I tucked her into bed. I wasn't even gone for ten minutes."

"It's common for lung cancer patients to develop something called syndrome of inappropriate antidiuretic hormone," the doctor says, checking Bitsy's scans on the monitor. "It can lead to low sodium levels in the blood which ultimately results in seizures. I'm going to put in an order for some blood work to confirm. If they come back normal then we'll go ahead with an MRI to rule out any brain abnormalities."

"Brain abnormalities," I mutter.

Bitsy's fast asleep but her shaking finally stopped. Blaze says he guesstimates that it lasted for two minutes but it sure as hell felt more like two hours.

"Shouldn't she have regained consciousness by now?" I ask.

"Not necessarily," he tells me. "She most likely already has but fell into a deep sleep before you even noticed. As of right now, all of her vitals are normal. If the blood work comes back as I suspect, I can easily give her an IV treatment and a new prescription that should prevent another seizure."

He tells me that the nurse will be in to take Bitsy to her scans in about thirty minutes, so I take the time to call Ghost.

"How is she?" he answers.

"Her doctor thinks it's something to do with low sodium levels," I say. "She's resting now. They're going to come and do some tests though and hopefully I can take her out of here in the morning."

"Good," he sighs. "We're all up and worried sick."

"How's Venom?" I ask.

Based on what I heard while rushing to Bitsy, Doc was forcing his way to *front*. When that happens, Venom usually has one hell of a migraine after.

"He's in pain," Ghost confirms. "But he's refusing to take anything that would make him drowsy until we heard the news of your woman."

"Well, tell him that she's fine and to take his meds or he'll feel like shit

tomorrow.”

“Will do. Don’t forget to call her parents.”

“That’s what I’m doing next,” I admit. “I hate to wake them up in the middle of the night but I know Cap would be pissed if I didn’t.”

When the call ends, drowsiness like no other hits me. I would never tell Bitsy, but I’m emotionally exhausted. Seeing her in constant pain and agony kills me. I try every single second to hide those feelings so she doesn’t notice, but I think I’ve hit my limit. Knowing that I need to take a second to collect myself I kiss her on the forehead and leave the room.

“Where can I get some coffee?” I ask the first staff member I pass.

“Just on the other side of the nurses station,” he tells me, pointing me in the direction.

Mumbling my thanks, I head that way. I need to drink a whole pot before I can deal with Bitsy’s dad. It’s going to take quick thinking to prevent him from leaving his house and coming straight here.

After downing a very hot cup of black coffee, I make two more and head back to the room just in time to see the nurse taking Bitsy out.

“We’re just going to radiology for her scan,” she tells me. “Dr. Stone decided to have it done first because the results come back quicker. I’ll have her right back.”

I nod, and lean against the door, watching until I can longer see her bed.

Fuck, I’m tired.

Downing my second cup, I take the last one and fall into a chair looking outside.

“Excuse me,” someone says from the door ten minutes later. “Is this Ms. Williams’ room?”

“She’s having scans done,” I tell the young man in scrubs.

“I’ll just leave these here. We received a delivery in the ER waiting room a couple of minutes ago asking to have these delivered to her.”

I don’t say anything as the young man brings in a dozen red roses and places them on the table.

“Have a nice night, sir.”

I don’t respond. I can’t. There’s no way this is a coincidence. Somehow, I make myself stand, walk to the flowers, and pull off the note.

“Wait,” I say, chasing after the man. “Did you see the person who delivered these?”

The man turns and nods.

“He said his name was David and that he was an old friend of Ms. Williams.”

I nod my thanks and read the note.

Hello, Obsidian scum. I hope you enjoyed your coffee. Your woman is now in my custody. You have one hour to deliver ten-thousand dollars to this address before I put a bullet between her eyes. Don't even think about contacting your brothers. I have eyes and ears everywhere. One hour. Not a second less. The clocks ticking. T.

My vision fades as I read the note a second time. The address listed below is only a ten-minute drive from here, but I didn't drive.

I rush from the room making plan after plan. I don't want to risk calling my brothers. But how the hell am I going to get ten-thousand dollars tonight when all of the banks are closed? I try and remember how much cash I have in my safe at home, but I don't think it's going to be enough.

Fuck it.

Pulling out my phone, I hit two and call.

“Did something happen? Is she okay?”

“Someone took her right out of the fucking hospital,” I tell Ghost. “They sent a dozen roses to her room with a note attached saying I have one hour to bring ten thousand dollars to the address listed. I think it's Thorn. Didn't Bitsy say his name was David?”

“Fuck. EVERYONE, GET THE FUCK DOWN HERE. Yeah, it sounds like Thorn. Meet us at my house,” Ghost says. “I have the cash here at home.”

Thank fuck.

“I'll pay you back tomorrow,” I promise.

“No, you won't. Because the second Bitsy is out of harm's way, we're going to kill this fucker,” Ghost says before hanging up the phone.

As I wave down a taxi, I can't help but feel a mixture of fear and determination. Thorn has made a grave mistake by taking Bitsy, and he's about to learn just how far the Obsidian Motorcycle Club will go to protect one of our own.

As soon as the first cab stops, I hop in the back seat and spout out Ghost's address. No sooner do I sit down, than the door locks and something pierces my neck. I manage to glance beside me only to see a man smiling.

“Nighty night,” he says. And then everything goes dark.

Chapter Twelve

Bitsy

To say I freaked the heck out when I woke up would be an understatement. I thought I had been buried alive. It turns out that I was just in an MRI machine. I'm almost positive that I'll have nightmares because of that.

Now, I'm back in the hospital room which I didn't even know I was at. I guess I had a seizure and Viper brought me here. But, where is he?

I've sat here for thirty minutes and haven't seen or heard from him or any of his brothers.

I press my nurse button.

"Yes," a voice calls from the speaker on my bed.

"Would it be possible for me to use the phone?" I ask.

"Certainly, Ms. Williams. I'll be right there."

Thankfully, a nurse arrives in less than a minute.

"Just dial star seven nine before the number to reach someone outside of the hospital."

"Thank you," I say, accepting the cordless phone.

As the nurse leaves, it hits me that I don't know Viper's number. It's in my phone but I'm assuming my phone is still at the clubhouse.

So, I call Daddy.

"Hello," he answers. His voice was rough with sleep.

"Don't freak out," I start. "But I'm in the hospital."

"What do you mean you're in the hospital?" he says clearly.

"I guess I had a seizure and Viper brought me in. I'm okay now. But that's not why I called."

"I'm going to kill that fucking man of yours," Daddy grumbles. "He's supposed to call me when shit like this happens."

"That's another thing," I say. "When I woke up, I was alone. Which isn't something Viper would do. I don't have my phone and I don't know his number. Will you please call him?"

"Yeah, hold on. Don't hang up. I'm going to use your mom's phone."

“Why are you not with my daughter? Call me back.”

“He didn’t answer?” I ask. I’m getting a bad feeling. “Do you have Ghost’s number? Or Pops?”

“Yeah, I have Robert’s number on my phone. I’m putting you on speaker baby girl.”

I wait with knots in my stomach.

“Robert,” Daddy says. “Where’s that boy of yours? What do you mean she’s missing? I’m on the phone with her right now. Say something, Bitsy.”

“Pops, what’s going on?” I ask.

“Shit. Hold on, I’ll put you on speaker. Okay, now she can hear you?”

“Bitsy, are you okay? Where are you? Did they hurt you?”

“Well, they scared me,” I admit. “I thought for sure I was buried alive when I woke up?”

“Buried alive?” Pops asks, his voice rising. “Is Viper with you?”

“Yeah, the MRI machine was so close to my face. And no. That’s why I called my dad so he could get ahold of someone. The nurse told me that he was waiting for me in the room but he wasn’t here when I got back. What’s going on?”

“You’re still at the hospital?”

“Yeah, Pops. Where else would I be? You haven’t answered my question.”

“Bitsy?”

“Ghost?” I respond.

“Thank fuck. Is Viper with you?”

“No, Ghost, he’s not.”

“We’re on our way. Don’t talk to anyone.”

“I’m coming, too.”

“I understand your concern, Cap,” Pops tells him. “Trust us to protect her. By the time you get here, everything will already be under control.”

“You better fucking call me if anything changes,” he says.

“You have my word.”

“Call me when you find him.”

“I will. Bye.”

“Find who? Who’s missing? Is it Viper? Why won’t anyone answer my questions?”

“Bitsy.”

“Daddy, what’s happened?”

“I don’t know for sure, baby girl, but I think Viper might be missing.”

“What?” I ask, feeling as if I’m about to pass out.

“Calm down, Bitsy. They will be there soon. Call me back when you know more information.”

“Daddy,” I whisper. “Will you please stay on the phone until they get here?”

“Absolutely. Everything is going to be okay, sweetheart. Trust them to find him.”

“I can’t lose him, Daddy. He means everything to me. I love him more than I ever thought possible. I won’t be able to survive without him.”

“I know, baby girl,” he says softly. “Trust your man to know how to take care of himself. Wherever he’s at, trust that he will do whatever it takes to get back home to you.”

Daddy keeps talking as fear overtakes my body. His voice is soothing and comforting as I wait for my new family to arrive. If something happens to Viper, I’m not sure I’ll be able to handle it. I fight every single day just to get the energy to get up in the mornings. I know for a fact that I will give in and stop fighting this raging battle inside my body.

If something happens to my love, I will let this cancer kill me. There is no doubt in my mind. Viper is my strength. He’s my rock. My protector. My shield. My body fights each day so that I can see him smile. Without him, cancer will win.

“Bitsy?”

“Thank heavens.”

“You’re here. How?”

“Did they return you?”

“Someone please explain to me what’s going on?” I ask as Ghost, Venom, Steel, and Blaze rush into the room.

Steel walks over to the table beside my bed and picks up the vase of roses that I never noticed.

“You were taken for a scan when these were delivered,” he tells me. “The card read that Viper needed to bring ten thousand dollars to the address attached to the note in one hour or they would kill you. They said they took you from the hospital.”

“And he believed them?” I ask. “Where is he?”

“We don’t know,” Ghost says. “He was supposed to meet us at my house but he never showed up. We were just about to wake up some people who might be able to help us track you both down.”

“Does he have him?” I ask, tears running down my face.

I so desperately want to jump out of this bed and run to Viper. I want to scream my rage but I hardly have the energy to hold this phone up to my ear.

“We think so,” Blaze says.

“Daddy, do you remember a man named David Smith?” I ask, locating the speaker button on the phone.

“Of course. He’s the reason I didn’t want you traveling to that damn convention. He was last seen up there.”

“Well, we think he’s the one who has Viper,” I explain. “He’s been threatening the club because of a bet he lost at the... Uhm, well, I’ll let Ghost talk to you about that.”

Ghost sits on the side of the bed and wipes my face with a tissue, drying my tears.

“Go ahead, sweet girl,” he smiles.

“The illegal fighting matches Ghost hosts in his nightclub?” Daddy asks.

“How did you know about that?”

“You don’t think I didn’t have that whole damn club researched before agreeing to let you stay with them? I know everything there is to know about every single member.”

Ghost laughs. “I would have been more surprised if you hadn’t. But yes. The man bet thousands of dollars on a contestant who lost. Now, he’s pissed and wants his money back.”

“I don’t think it was his money he lost,” Venom says. Except, his voice is a little different. Maybe it’s one of his alters. Doc has a British accent and always sounds like he’s in a foul mood. Xander has his own calm way of speaking and Venom has the same accent as the rest of us. This accent sounds like Venom but his voice is slightly higher. More confident.

“Miles?” I ask.

He smiles and bows his head.

“Pleasure to meet you, Ms. Bitsy.”

“Miles is the best hunter we have,” Blaze explains. “He usually fronts when shit hits the fan.”

“What makes you think he lost someone else’s money?” Ghost asks.

“Last night, after Bitsy told us Thorn might have been the one to break into the Cage, Venom did some digging into the security. After obtaining an image of David Smith, aka, Thorn, he searched the feeds until we found the man in question. As soon as the match was over, Thorn looked terrified and

immediately made a phone call. Whoever he was betting for most likely wasn't expecting a loss."

"Who did he bet against?" Ghost asks.

"The Bulldog and Rhino match," Miles says. "Almost every bet was on Bulldog that night. Including Thorns."

"The only reason Rhino won was because Bulldog brought a woman and she distracted him," Blaze says.

"What was his bet?" Daddy asks.

"He had a two-thousand-dollar slip for Bulldog," Miles answers. "Plus, an extra three thousand dollar bet that he would knock Rhino out in under two minutes. But Bulldog had too much of his attention on the half-naked woman against his side of the cage. The damn idiot was out in thirty seconds."

"That fight pissed a lot of people off that night," Ghost says. "But it made us a shit ton of money. However, that was like six months ago. Why now?"

"Do you know where their base of operations is located, Cap?"

"Sending you the information now," Daddy says. "It's coming from my nephew's number ending in eight, three, six, nine. He says to call him and let him know if you need more info and he'll get it for you. His name is Michael."

"This isn't too far away."

"It's not, Ghost," Daddy says. "But trust me when I tell you that the people he works for are no fucking joke. They sell unmarked guns to criminals and won't hesitate to put a bullet between your eyes. Or the eyes of my daughter."

"I already have my best men on their way here," he answers. "Bitsy will be safe. Of that, you have my word. They won't let so much as a doctor or nurse in her room until we return."

"I'm trusting you on that," he says. "Michael is tapping into the hospital's security feed as an extra precaution. Baby girl, I need to go and wake up your mom and let her know what's happening. I'll call you back here in a little while. I love you."

"Love you too, Daddy."

I hang up the phone and release the tears that I tried my best to hide from my dad. I feel safe to cry in front of him, but I know he's already worried and I didn't want to add my feelings on top of that.

"It's okay, sweetheart," Ghost says, wrapping me in a gentle hug. "We're going to find him for two reasons. Do you know why?"

I shake my head, still buried against Ghost's chest.

"One, your Pops already gave us an about location of where he could be," he tells me. "And, two, because of these."

He releases me and I look up. Every single person pulls out a chain necklace from beneath their shirt. It's a solid black cross. It's beautiful, yet simple. And, Viper has one identical to it.

"Viper has one of those," I cry.

"When we were younger, Blaze was kidnapped. It took Pops and his crew at the time several days to locate him. Turns out it was someone who had beef with Pops. But, that's not why I'm telling you. Pops got so anxious that something like that was going to happen again to one of us kids, so he had these made."

"As you know, we go to church every week and everyone knows it," Blaze says. "Pops wanted a way to track us without drawing attention to our potential kidnappers. No one is going to question a cross necklace. So, Pops had these made. Each one has a small tracker embedded inside. Pops is on his way to his house to grab his laptop. He hasn't had to check on our trackers for years so he might have to call in help to get it figured out."

"What if it no longer works?" I ask.

"I'm sure it does," Miles says. "Once all of this is said and done with, we'll have them updated and then I'm sure Viper will want one made for you, too. Are you religious?"

"I mean, my parents weren't avid churchgoers. But we did go on the holidays. I do believe, though."

"Good. Now, let's call Pops and see what he's got."

"No need," Ghost says. "Pops sent me the website and login information. Here he is."

He turns his phone and a bright red dot sits on the screen with *Viper* typed above it.

"Bring him back to me," I demand. "I need him more than my next breath."

"You have my word," Ghost says.

"And guys," I say as they start to leave. "Don't leave there without shedding someone's fucking blood."

"Hell yeah," Blaze grins.

"Viper is one lucky bastard," Steel says.

"Of that, have no doubt," Ghost says.

As they exit the room, several men I've never met block my door while one more enters the room and stands next to the window. None of them say who they are. They don't so much as smile in my direction.

I know that they're Ghost's men because I recognize some of them from the Cage, but dang. A hello could go a long way.

With a sigh, I close my eyes and pray. Viper needs to be safe. My heart depends on it.

Chapter Thirteen

Viper

The room is a stifling dungeon, shadows dancing cruelly across cracked, peeling walls. The stench of fear and despair claws at my senses, choking me with every breath. I'm bound to this damn chair, my wrists raw from my struggles, my body bloodied in shades of the torture from these masked cowards.

These men, these monsters who hold me captive, they revel in their cruelty. They've seen the fire in my eyes, the unyielding resolve that defines me. And now, they're determined to break it.

Good. Fucking. Luck.

They tell me that Bitsy is dead, taken from me because I dared defy them by calling my brothers. But I don't believe them. I just know, deep inside, that she's still alive.

Bitsy, my love, my heart. The mere possibility of her being killed because of me, tears at me. My chest aches, and tears threaten to spill from my eyes, but I can't let them see my weakness.

Bitsy will always be my greatest weakness.

Time stretches cruelly, hours melding into an endless night. I clutch onto a flicker of hope, knowing that my brothers, my club, will hunt for me without rest. They won't stop until they find me. In this abyss, my love for Bitsy and the unbreakable bond with my club are the only things that keep me sane.

My captors underestimate the storm they've unleashed by taking me. I'm determined to survive, to protect the woman who holds my heart. And if what they're saying is true, and she's really dead, nothing will stop me as I seek my revenge.

As I sit there, battered and bruised, in the dimly lit room, I hear the ominous creaking of the door. The masked captors, the shadows of my torment, the fucking cowards, return. They step into the room, their footsteps heavy, their intentions darker than the night that surrounds us. Three in all. I can't see much, but I memorize everything I can about each of them.

“Well, well, well, Viper,” the first man says, speaking in a cold, menacing tone. “Still clinging to hope, are we?”

I raise my head slowly, meeting their cold, unfeeling gazes with defiance. I refuse to let them see my fear.

“You won’t break me,” I say, my voice rough. “I won’t give you the satisfaction.”

Mocking laughter echoes in the room.

“Oh, Viper, you’re as stubborn as they come. But we have ways of making you talk.”

One of the other captors steps closer, a glint of malice in his dark eyes. He brandishes a wicked-looking blade, the metal gleaming in the dim light.

“You can threaten me all you want, but you won’t get what you’re after.”

My club. They want to know where the members of my club are. The truth is, I have no fucking idea. After we left for the hospital, Ghost informed me that he was moving everyone to different safe locations. That’s probably why he wanted to meet at his house and not the clubhouse.

The captor with the menacing blade inches closer, the glint of malice in his eyes intensifying. His masked face hides any semblance of humanity, leaving only a cruel, twisted smile visible.

“You seem to think we’re asking for your cooperation, Viper. We’re not. We have other ways of getting the information we need.”

My heart races as I search for a way out, a plan, anything to protect my brothers and Bitsy. The room feels like a pressure cooker, each passing second an eternity of my emotions and strength being compressed.

Gritting my teeth, I say, “You can do whatever you want to me. But you’ll never break me. I won’t betray my family.”

The captors exchange glances again, their silent communication unnerving. They seem confident in their methods, but I’m equally determined to resist.

“We’ll see, Viper,” the closest one says coldly. “We have all the time in the world.”

As they step back, leaving me alone with the ominous threat hanging in the air, I know the battle is far from over. It’s a race against time, a test of wills, and I’m resolved to protect my club, my brothers, and the woman I love, no matter the cost.

Even if the price is my life.

Days. I've been here for days. Each time the masked cowards come into the room they ask the same question. Where are the Obsidians? And each time, I tell them to go fuck themselves.

I don't know how many more visits I can take. My body is streaked with my blood. I know I have some broken ribs because it hurts like hell to breathe. But I hold onto the hope that my beautiful Bitsy is safe and my brothers are on their way.

I look down at the chin against my chest and just stare at the cross hanging around my neck. I smile. No matter how long it takes, they'll find me. I might be dead, but the second they find my body, every fucker here will be as well.

I fall happily into the black void.

"It's time for our little chat again, Viper."

I've become a broken record, refusing to give them the satisfaction of answers. But their methods are relentless, their cruelty unyielding.

"You know the drill," I say, my voice strained. "I won't betray my brothers."

They circle around me, their masked faces void of humanity, and I brace myself for what's to come. One of them carries a length of thick, knotted rope, a cruel tool of torment.

"Perhaps you need a little more persuasion," the one I've deemed the leader says coldly.

I grit my teeth as they release me from the chains on the wall and I fall to the floor. I'm lifted and slammed into a wooden seat where they then bind my wrists tightly behind the chair. The rope digs into my already sensitive skin, but I won't give them the satisfaction of hearing me cry out.

They won't break me. I have no idea why they're looking for my brothers. I'm not even sure if this is the man who got pissed because he lost money in the Cage. I have no fucking clue what's going on. Only that they want to know where my family is and that is not fucking happening.

They laugh, a chilling sound that sends shivers down my spine. The captor with the rope begins to twist it, adding to the pressure, and I can't hold back a grunt of pain.

"You're a stubborn one, Viper," the leader says. He's the only one who ever speaks. The other two never say a word.

“Thank you,” I groan.

My vision blurs with agony, but I refuse to let them see my weakness. The room becomes a chamber of torment once more, and I endure, clinging to the hope that my club, my brothers, will find me soon.

By the time their whip hits my chest for the seventh time, I once again, fall into the welcome arms of darkness.

But I don't tell them a single fucking thing.

Chapter Fourteen

Venom

“I think we need to call in some favors,” I tell Ghost.

We’ve been sitting outside of Lead and Lovers for over an hour trying to find a way inside. Lead and Lovers is the local weapons shop here in Harborbrook. We’ve known for months that it houses the location where weapons are stripped of their serial numbers and sold to criminals.

As of this moment, it also houses our brother.

“Blaze is meeting someone right now to get a thermal imaging camera so we can see how many people we’re dealing with,” Ghost reminds me. “That place is packed full of weapons and ammo. If we go in half-cocked then we’re all going to get killed.”

“*He’s not wrong,*” I hear Xander say.

“*Let me front. I’ll go in, kill them all, and free Viper.*”

That was Miles. He would be the one to go in half-cocked.

“*None of you are fronting right now,*” I tell them. “*I have everything under control.*”

Having Dissociative Identity Disorder has its perks. When I’m not in the right mindset to handle life, I can take a step back and let someone else do it. But it also has its disadvantages. Like, right now. Every single alter wants to front so they can go and save Viper. Well, not Doc. He’s just waiting until he’s needed.

We all have the same goal but different ideas on how to achieve that goal. Right now, I win.

“Is Miles wanting to run in?” Steel laughs. “That man is going to be the reason you get shot, one day.”

I chuckle.

“*Again, I say. He’s not wrong.*”

“*Shut it, Xander. You’re just pissed because I have bigger balls than you.*”

“*Both of you, pipe down. I’m trying to get some sleep. Wake me when we’re heading inside. If Viper’s in need, I would like to be rested and*

prepared. Did you pack my gear, lad?"

"Yeah," I sigh. Doc has always called me lad and no matter how many times I tell him to stop, he won't. So, I gave up.

"Right then. The lot of you, shut your bleeding traps."

Surprisingly, they do.

"Blaze is calling," Ghost says. "You're on speaker, brother. What's the news?"

"We're on top of the building straight across from Leads and Lovers," Blaze says over the phone. "Stupid ass name, by the way. Anyway, I finally figured out how to work this damn thing. It looks like there are ten people inside."

"Is there any way to tell which one of them is Viper?" I ask.

"Normally, no," he answers. "But right now, there are nine people in one location moving around, and one stationary person in another location. I'm assuming that one is Viper."

"Can that thing tell if he's dead or alive?" Ghost asks.

I hold my breath.

"This thing is telling me there are ten bodies beneath that building that still have heat in them," he answers. "But I can't say for sure if that lone dot is alive or dead. He could have just died and would still have enough heat in his body for this camera to pick up. However, considering that this person hasn't moved so much as a finger since I spotted them, is concerning."

"That's Blaze-speak for, yeah, he's most likely dead."

"Shut the fuck up, Miles. He needs to concentrate and you're not helping him any."

"I'm just stating facts, Xander. Blaze is too nice. Next time, send his twin. Steel is a fucking jerk."

I sign, rubbing my temples.

"Are you going to be okay to do this?" Ghost asks, looking concerned.

"I'll be fine," I tell him. "Xander and Miles are arguing... Again."

If it came down to it, I would ask the alters to shut down the system for a while. They don't ever truly go away. I can always feel them. But, sometimes, when I need to be the one fronting and I need to concentrate, my system will go into a sort of standby mode. They're still there listening and watching. But no one says a word.

As strange as it sounds, I don't like when we have to do that. I've only ever done it twice before and I felt so scared and so alone.

“We’re sorry, Venom. We’ll be quiet.”

“Thank you, Miles. You too, Xander.”

Xander didn’t say anything, but I *felt* his nod.

“Fuck, three of them are heading towards the lone person.”

“Okay, that leaves six left in the room,” Steel says. “We can take them out. Let’s go.”

“We don’t know what kind of weapons they have,” I remind Steel. “We have no idea about the security inside.”

“I don’t fucking care, Venom. They’re most likely killing our brother. I’m going in.”

“Is anyone in the shop, Blaze, or are they all beneath it?”

“Shops clear.”

“Alright, here’s what we’re going to do. We can’t afford to make any mistakes. Viper’s life is on the line, and we’re not leaving him behind. So, listen carefully. First, we need a complete layout of the interior of Lead and Lovers. Blaze will keep us updated with real-time information from his thermal imaging camera.”

“Already working on that,” Steel says. “It’s as simple as getting the blueprints.”

“Good,” Ghost praises. “Our priority is to secure the perimeter. Venom, call the clubhouse and send out some patched members. I want them positioned strategically around the building. Their job is to keep watch and ensure no one escapes.”

Nodding, I pull out my phone and text one of the brothers I know who can handle the task and get a team out here in ten minutes.

“Steel, your role is crucial. Create a diversion by cutting the power supply to the building. Darkness will be our ally.”

Ghost pulls out the night vision goggles from his bag, handing each of us a pair.

“Venom and I will approach the entrance cautiously. I’ll take the lead. We’ll have flashbang grenades at the ready in case they’re needed. We’ll systematically clear each room, taking out any threats we encounter. Blaze’s intel will guide us to Viper’s likely location. Our primary objective is to extract our brother safely.”

“You ready, Doc?” I ask.

“I’m right here, Venom. Whatever we lay eyes on, I’m right by your side. You get us there, and I’ll manage the business of getting him out in one

piece.”

“Once we’ve secured Viper, our exit plan is vital. Steel and I will cover our escape route while Venom...”

“Doc,” I interrupt. “Doc will be the one getting him out. He’s adamant.”

“Alright,” Ghost nods. “We’ll cover you while Doc gets Viper out. Once he’s out, the rest of the brothers can go in to make sure no one is left alive. Communication is key. We’ll all be equipped with earpieces to maintain constant contact and relay information. And remember, we have an emergency protocol. If things get out of hand, Blaze will have another alley club on standby for support and to ensure our escape.

We’re a brotherhood, bound by loyalty and determination. We’re going in together, and we’re coming out with Viper. There’s no room for doubt or hesitation. Let’s do this, brothers.”

Fire surges through my veins as I patiently wait for our brothers to get here. The second they’re in place and Blaze has our allies on standby, I’m out for blood.

Chapter Fifteen

Viper

Hell.

I'm in hell. This has to be it. No other place could be this painful. Not just physically, but deep in my heart. My beautiful Bitsy fought so hard to get better so that we could have a future and I died before we even had a chance.

But she's a fighter. And her father will not let her give up. Of that, I have no doubt.

"I don't think you can handle one more beating," the masked man says from the corner of my eye.

Damn. So, this isn't hell.

"You're on the verge of death, Viper," he tells me.

My eyes are so swollen that I can only make out his shadow as he walks by. He's right, though. There's no way my body can handle one more swing from one of their toys. I'm surprised I still have blood in my body to bleed.

"Just tell me where your fucking president is," he demands.

He's never just asked for Ghost before. It's always been, where's your club? Has he been after Ghost this whole time?

I smile, knowing I have blood coming out of my mouth, I spit in his direction.

"You fucking coward," I laugh, my voice coming out gruffly. "You can't take a loss? Don't bet so much money next time."

"IT WASN'T MY MONEY TO BET," he screams. "I borrowed five grand from a loan shark a few months ago, got ripped off by the person I bought guns from, and now I can't pay him back. The money I lost in that fight was what I had saved so far to pay him back. He's going to kill me if I don't pay back what I borrowed. With interest."

"It's not our fault you bastard," I slur.

"That fight was rigged," he sneers. "Your president made sure Bulldog lost knowing he'd make a shit ton of money. Now, I want my money back. I want all of your fucking money. Where is he?"

“I’m right here, motherfucker.”

I hear weapons fire, but I’m too far gone. For the final time, I close my eyes and fall into the darkness, my spirit unbroken until the very end.

*****Doc*****

I maintain my silence as we cautiously navigate through the dimly lit building, the weight of our mission pressing heavily upon us like an insurmountable burden. Ghost, our steadfast leader, guides our small band with unwavering focus. We’ve successfully infiltrated the enemy’s stronghold, determined to rescue our brother, Viper, from the clutches of those who have subjected him to torment.

The air is thick with anticipation, yet there is no eruption of gunfire, no chaotic skirmish. Instead, we proceed with the hushed precision of a surgical operation. Our objective remains crystal clear: eliminate the threats and secure Viper’s safe return.

Within the chamber where Viper lies, an aura of unease permeates the atmosphere. His bruised and battered form serves as a grim testament to the brutality he has endured, motionless on the frigid floor. My heart aches at the sight, but there is no room for despair; time is of the essence.

Ghost, Steel, and Venom move with calculated steps, dispatching the enemy silently, akin to shadows in the darkness. There is no margin for error, no time for hesitation. Our brotherhood’s unbreakable bond fuels our determination.

When we reach Viper’s side, Venom steps back, and I take the forefront. My medical expertise kicks in, and I quickly assess Viper’s condition, my hands working methodically to stabilize him. The room is charged with tension as we await any sign of life.

A faint, almost imperceptible gasp fills the room, and Viper’s eyes flicker open briefly before closing once more. But he is breathing. Relief washes over me, and I know our mission has been a success. Viper is alive.

With Viper safely in our custody, we make our way out of the building, our mission accomplished in silence. Those criminals who dared to threaten our brother have met their match.

As we leave that grim and eerie place behind, I can’t help but feel a profound sense of redemption. The Obsidian Motorcycle Club has weathered its fair share of adversity and emerged victorious, reaffirming that our bonds

of brotherhood and unwavering love for each other can conquer even the darkest of trials.

Chapter Sixteen

Bitsy

The hospital room feels like a prison. I have been waiting here for what feels like an eternity, my heart caught in a relentless grip of fear and hope. Viper, the love of my life, has been missing for too long, and the agonizing uncertainty weighs heavily on my heart.

Where are you? Please, be okay.

The hours drag slowly as I wait for news. Every passing moment feels like an eternity, each second a painful reminder of the void his absence had left in my life. The calls from Ma and Mom did their best to console me, offering reassurance that the men were doing everything they could to find him.

Finally, after nearly twenty-four hours of unbearable waiting, they come back with news. Relief and anxiety mix as they inform me that they have found him. My heart soars with hope, but the words that follow shatter me to my very core.

“He’s alive,” Ghost says, “But you need to brace yourself, Bitsy. He’s in rough shape and there’s a high probability that he won’t make it.”

“Alright, Ms. Williams,” Dr. Stone says as he waltzes into the room with a bright smile. “Your IV drip is finished and your latest test results came back normal. I think it’s time we get you out of here so you can go back home. I’m going to go ahead and administer today’s chemo treatment here and as soon as it’s done, you’re free to go.”

I lose all composure. The tears that I’ve tried to keep at bay over the last twenty-four hours just pour out of me. I feel the bed compress as someone, I assume Ghost, sits down and pulls me into his arms.

Conversations are going around the room, but I don’t hear anything other than the roaring of my broken heart.

“Sweetheart,” Ghost says, pulling me from my own torment. “The doctor needs your permission to administer your treatment. You need to take care of yourself so Viper can focus on getting better.”

Numbly, I lean over and sign the paper Dr. Stone is holding out. I already

know what it says. I have to sign the same damn thing before each treatment.

I hardly notice as they unwrap the crease of my elbow where my treatment IV always stays.

“I want to see him,” I say to no one in particular. “Just put me in one of those chairs with the IV stand and take me to him.”

I know by the sympathetic look in Dr. Stone’s eyes that I’m not going to like his answer.

“I’m sorry, Ms. Williams,” he says. “It’s just not safe for you to be in the ICU right now.”

“He’s in the ICU?” I ask, tears flowing down my face.

“He’s in surgery,” Ghost says, glaring at the doctor. “After the surgery, he’ll be placed in ICU for a few days until he isn’t so critical. Trust his strength, Bitsy. Viper will fight tooth and nail to come back home to you.”

“What about after his surgery?” I ask Dr. Stone. “Can I go see him then?”

“I’m sorry,” he answers.

“Okay, tomorrow, then. I can see him tomorrow, right?”

He shakes his head.

“When he’s out of ICU?”

I plead desperately.

“I’m so sorry, Ms. Williams. With your compromised immune system, it’s just not safe for you to be anywhere but the cancer ward inside of this hospital.”

“You mean, I won’t be able to see him until he’s discharged? What if he dies? I won’t get a chance to say goodbye. This isn’t fair.”

I’m in hysterics. I know this. I can’t even see properly because I just can’t stop crying.

“I’ll come back and check on her in a little while,” Dr. Stone tells Ghost. “These treatments typically take three hours and she’s going to need someone to help take care of her when she leaves. And, she has to leave, Mr. Knight. She can’t stay in this hospital any longer than what is necessary.”

“I understand,” Ghost says. “Don’t worry about Bitsy. We would never leave her to go through this on her own. She’ll be staying with me.”

Knowing I need to stay in this seated position for my treatment, I fall back against the raised bed, turn my head to the side, and pray with everything I have.

Please heal him, God. Please, don’t take him away from me.

As I was released from the hospital, Ghost was there to take me under his

wing. He had promised to help me through this difficult time, to take me to my treatments, and to ensure I wasn't alone. I couldn't have asked for a better friend or protector.

I desperately wanted to wait with the guys for news on Viper's surgery, but Ghost wouldn't hear it. He told me I needed to leave. Instead of taking me to his house or the clubhouse, he decided it would be better for me to be in an environment that I was already comfortable with. So, we're at Viper's house.

Ghost helps me up the stairs and to Viper's bed, and that's where I lay until Ghost walks in hours later with his phone in his hand.

His face is grim, and instantly I think the worst. He's dead.

"He's alive," he says causing me to release the breath I didn't realize I was holding. Sitting beside me on the bed, he holds my hand and I just know he doesn't have good news. "He's in extremely critical condition. He's not breathing on his own and he's lost a massive amount of blood. Doc got to him just in time to stop some of the bleeding. A few more minutes and he would have died."

"Oh god," I cry.

"There's more, sweetheart."

I bow my head and let my tears fall, silently waiting for the rest of Ghost's news.

"He has a brain bleed," he tells me. "They were able to stop it but we won't know if there is any lasting damage until he wakes up."

"*If* he wakes up," I whisper.

"*When*. You dishonor his love for you, Bitsy."

"It's not dishonor, Ghost," I tell him. "I'm trying to be reasonable. No matter how much he loves me, it's not going to prevent his death if his brain doesn't heal. Or, Lord forbid, he has another aneurysm."

Ghost reaches into his pocket and pulls out a necklace before leaning forward and sliding it over my head.

"Have faith, Bitsy," he tells me. "There's no way in hell Viper will stop fighting."

I look down and see the black and silver cross necklace that usually graces Viper's neck. I cling to the cross and once again, I pray. My faith hasn't always been strong, but if these prayers are answered I will be sitting right with the Obsidian clan each Sunday at church.

Now, it's a waiting game. One that, I know, will test the limits of my patience and resolve. But I'll hold on for as long as it takes, knowing, hoping,

and praying that Viper will pull through. He promised me a future together, and I will hold him to that promise.

My stomach churns, but this time, it isn't from my anxiety.

Ghost rushes to grab the bucket, but it's too late.

"I'm so sorry," I say, completely mortified that I just threw up all over the bed in front of Ghost. "I'll clean it up."

"You'll do no such thing, sweetheart," he tells me. "Ma would have my hide if she thought I made you clean something when you're feeling so sick. You lay back, and I'll switch your blanket for a clean one. Do you know where he keeps them?"

I point to the closet on the other side of the room. He used to have them in the hall closet, but this isn't the first time I've puked on our bed.

He pulls the soiled blanket from the bed before grabbing a clean one from the closet.

"I'm going to go and put this in the washer and then I'll bring you up your medicine."

He leans down and kisses the top of my head.

"Thank you, Ghost," I say.

His smile is all the response I need.

It's been a week since Viper was hospitalized and I feel worse than I ever have. I think it's a mixture of my treatments and my fear of losing him.

Currently, I'm sitting in the living room arguing with my father.

"It's not fair, Daddy," I say. "If I wear a mask, I should be perfectly fine to go visit him. Everyone else wears a mask when they visit him."

"Not happening, baby girl," he responds calmly over the phone. "For one, it's not safe. Regardless of whether you wear a mask or not. And two, Viper would lose his shit if he found out you risked your life just to see his mangled body."

"Really honey?" I hear mom say. "Don't talk about his body being mangled in front of his fiancée. Come on, we need to get going. How are the guys going to grill the steaks properly without you there yelling at them about how they're doing everything wrong?"

I laugh because Mom is spot on. That's exactly what happens every single time someone grills. Daddy just wants to always be in charge of everything.

“We love you, honey,” mom says. “Call us if anything changes.”

“I will, mom. Love you guys.”

I toss the phone on the couch and sigh when it rings, once again.

Dr. Stone’s name pops up so I reluctantly answer.

“Good morning, Doctor,” I answer. “Is everything okay?”

“Good morning, Ms. Williams. How is Mr. Knight doing?”

“His vitals are stronger,” I say. “He’s finally breathing on his own. The doctors are confident that he’ll wake up pretty soon.”

“That’s wonderful news,” he says, his voice light. “I’m calling because I’ve received the results of your last scan. Would you like to hear them?”

“No,” I say quickly. “I mean, yes, of course. But I want to wait until Viper is with me.”

“Alright,” he says. “I understand. In the meantime, continue with your treatments. How are you feeling?”

“Like I got run over by a stampede of dinosaurs,” I admit. “And, I have this massive headache that won’t go away.”

“The headache is likely from the stress you’ve been under regarding Mr. Knight,” he explains. “I can up the dosage on your pain meds and that should take care of it. How’s your breathing?”

“Nothing’s really changed there,” I tell him. “I’m fine as long as I’m not moving but get winded almost the second I stand. It’s not bad enough that I’m concerned about it, though.”

“If that changes, let me know,” he says. “Alright, Ms. Williams. I will see you tomorrow morning for your next treatment.”

“See you then, Dr. Stone. Thanks. Have a good day.”

“You too, Ms. Williams.”

Hanging up the phone, I toss it back on the couch seconds before it rings again.

The urge to pick it up and throw it across the room is strong. I just need a few minutes of quiet to collect my thoughts.

Instead, I answer it.

“Hello,” I answer, not bothering to see who it was.

“He’s awake, Bitsy,” Steel says. “He wants to talk to you.”

Chapter Seventeen

Viper

“Ouch,” I say as I try standing. “They didn’t even touch my legs. What the fuck is going on?”

“I see his mind is in working order,” Steel says. “Your legs are fine. You just haven’t been on them in a while.”

“Blaze said Bitsy is alive,” I say. “How’s she doing? I need to get home because she has a treatment tomorrow.”

“Why are you standing?” Ghost says as he walks into the room.

“I had to piss,” I glare. “Why isn’t my woman here?”

“The doctor said he woke up ready to hit the road,” Steel laughs. “He’ll be here for a few more days and then he can leave.”

“Your doctor came in here and told you that you were injured so extremely that you need to stay here for a few more days and yet you still think tomorrow is the day for Bitsy to have a treatment?”

“What? Was I out for the whole day? Who took her? Is she okay?”

“You might want to sit down, brother,” Ghost says.

“He didn’t give the doctor a chance to tell him anything,” Steel says. “He demanded a release form and told him to get his ass out of the room and to do his job.”

“If the doctor says you can’t go home for a few days then you’re not going home for a few days,” Ghost says. “If I have to pull President rank, I will.”

“Fuck you, Ghost. Where’s my woman?”

“Sit down and I’ll tell you everything.”

Fucking bastard.

I hobble to the nearest chair and sit.

“Out with it,” I demand.

“First, you need to know that Bitsy is perfectly fine,” he starts. “Right now, she’s at home with Ma, Pops, and Venom. She’s worried about you, but she’s fine. Now, you need to tell me what you remember. When Thorn and his men took you, did they say anything?”

“You mean when they tied me up and beat the shit out of me?” I ask sarcastically. “Yes, actually. They kept asking the same question over and over. They wanted to know where the rest of my club was.”

“Right,” Ghost mutters. “And I know you well enough to know that you just laughed in their faces. Well, the day Bitsy had her seizure and you rushed her to the hospital, I had Pops oversee the task of having everyone moved to different safe locations. Less than an hour before you were attacked, someone broke into the club. I was alerted but they left by the time we arrived.”

Ghost clears his throat and continues.

“They didn’t destroy anything or leave any messages,” he says. “It’s almost as if they saw that it was empty and then they just left.”

“They were looking for you,” I tell him. “I guess Thorn had borrowed money from a loan shark to buy some guns. The guns he received weren’t any good and he couldn’t resell them. He thinks the Bulldog fight was rigged for him to lose. He was supposed to use the money he bet as a partial payment for his loan so he didn’t get killed. From what I understood, he made additional bets to try and get an extra three grand. So, he lost five in total.”

“Well, he’s dead now. He gets a pass on his payment.”

“Maybe so, Steel,” I say. “But whoever this shark is that he borrowed money from is still going to want his money back. It’s something we need to deal with before it gets out of hand. Bitsy’s life isn’t to be put in danger because of some stupid ass idiot who made the wrong decisions.”

“I’ll deal with it,” Ghost says. “Now, you were dead when we found you. I didn’t tell Bitsy that. She doesn’t know and it might be best if she never finds out. Doc did his magic and brought you back. But it was a close call brother.”

“I feel fine for someone who was just dead yesterday,” I say.

“About that,” Steel says, moving to sit on the bed. “It wasn’t just yesterday. It was three weeks ago.”

“You’ve been in a coma for three weeks, Viper,” Ghost adds when I don’t say anything. “You had a massive hemorrhage in your brain. You weren’t breathing on your own and you lost a large portion of your blood. The first week they had you in a medically induced coma. After that, they took you off the meds and we’ve been waiting ever since for you to wake up on your own.”

Three weeks.

“I’ve been here for three weeks?” I ask, freaking the fuck out. “What about

Bitsy? Her treatments? What about my woman?"

"I took her back home to your place," Ghost says. "I figured it would be easier on her if she were there rather than at my home. I was staying with her for a few days alone but then everyone packed their shit and moved into your place. Now, it's the home of all of our brothers and our parents."

"We didn't want Bitsy to ever feel like she was alone," Steel adds. "She's been so scared and so sad. We all were."

"We were stronger together," Ghost says. "Bitsy's emotional well-being seemed to improve after that."

"Why isn't she here?" I ask.

"She can't brother," Ghost tells me. "Her doctor very adamantly recommended that she stay away from the hospital unless her health requires that she go. I've taken her to all of her treatments and then straight back home."

"She's fucking furious that she can't come and see you," Steel tells me.

"They told me she was dead," I admit, my voice breaking.

I explained about the delivery of the roses and the note attached. I told them what happened when I got into the taxi and everything that was said and done when those fucking cowards had me tied up by the time I came to.

"Well, they're all dead now," Ghost says coldly. "I'll dig and find the information about this shark and I'll get that taken care of. Right now, I want you to listen to your doctor so you can get home as soon as possible. That woman of yours won't rest properly until you're better."

"I need to talk to her."

Steel pulls out his phone and makes a call.

"He's awake, Bitsy. He wants to talk to you."

"Baby," I whisper when Steel hands me the phone. "I'm so fucking sorry."

"Viper," she cries.

It takes several moments before we're both composed enough to talk again.

"I'm sorry that I left you alone," I say.

"I'm not alone, Viper," she sniffs. "Our family is right here with me. I've never been alone. But I miss you so much and I was so scared. I was scared you were going to die. I would have followed you, Viper."

"Don't say that, baby," I say. "Never stop fighting."

"They won't let me come and see you," she says. "I miss you so much. How are you doing? Doc said that there was a chance your mind wouldn't be

the same when you woke up.”

“Doc needs to keep his fucking opinions to himself,” I mutter. “I’m fine, baby. The doctors say I can leave in a few days. I’ll be home soon. I love you, little one.”

“I love you, too,” she says, a smile in her voice. “Will you stay on the phone with me until I fall asleep? I’m so tired but I just haven’t been able to sleep without you.”

“Close your eyes, baby,” I tell her. “Just listen to my voice.”

I spend the next ten minutes telling her how amazing she is and how much I love her. When I hear her soft snores, I keep talking. I tell her how strong she is. How beautiful she is. I talk until my own eyes drift closed and I fall fast asleep on the chair.

Chapter Eighteen

Bitsy

Viper came home two days after he woke up. Because of my compromised immune system, he had to undergo basic tests before he came home to make sure he wasn't bringing any bugs along with him. The moment he walked through the door I cried harder than I ever have. Even when I thought he was going to die. Seeing him alive and healthy was overwhelming.

Now, the sun hangs low on the horizon as I walk beside Viper, our fingers entwined, our steps slow but steady. It has been a long and challenging journey for both of us, filled with pain and uncertainty, but today feels different. Today, we are heading to my next treatment, and there is a glimmer of hope in the air.

Viper's strong presence beside me provides unwavering support, a reminder that we are in this together, no matter what. As we approach the familiar doors of the treatment center, my heart flutters with a mixture of anxiety and anticipation.

Inside, we are greeted by the doctors and nurses who have become a part of our extended family over the months of my battle with this cancer. Their smiles are warm and reassuring as they prepare me for the treatment.

Dr. Stone approaches us, his eyes filled with a gentle kindness that has seen me through some of my darkest moments. He holds my latest scan results in his hands, and I can just tell that he is harboring good news.

"Ms. Williams," he greets, his voice steady, "I'm glad to see that you are home and doing well, Mr. Knight. Alright, I have some promising news for you today."

Viper squeezes my hand, his eyes locked onto Dr. Stone's, waiting for the verdict.

"Your scans are clear," Dr. Stone says, a smile tugging at the corners of his lips. "You're in early remission."

The weight of those words lifts from my shoulders, and I feel tears of relief welling up in my eyes. Viper's grip on my hand tightens, and he pulls me into

a tight embrace, his own emotions mirroring mine.

“After today, you can stop the treatments,” Dr. Stone explains, “but we’ll need to continue monitoring your progress with scans every three months, just to be sure.”

I nod, overwhelmed with gratitude. The journey has been arduous, but the prospect of a future free from the relentless grip of cancer fills me with hope. Viper and I have faced unimaginable challenges together, and now we can look forward to a life where our love can flourish without the shadow of illness.

As we leave the treatment center hours later, the world feels brighter, and the future holds the promise of endless possibilities. We have weathered the storm, me and this stranger, and a love grew between us that has sustained us through the darkest of times and will continue to light our way forward.

“Let’s go tell our family,” Viper says. “I love you so much.”

His tears match my own. But for once, they’re tears of happiness. Tears of a future we can now dream about.

I beat cancer.

I won.

*****Viper*****

I stood at the altar, my heart racing with anticipation. Before me stood the love of my life, Bitsy, looking more beautiful than ever in her wedding gown. Her eyes shimmered with happiness, and the radiant smile on her face made my heart skip a beat. Today, we were making our dreams come true, surrounded by our family and friends.

The Phantoms MC, Bitsy’s side of the family, stood proudly among our guests, a testament to the unity we had forged between our two clubs. Our love story was a testament to the power of love and resilience.

“I vow to love you with all my heart,” I began, my voice filled with emotion. “To cherish you, protect you, and be your partner in all things. I promise to stand by your side through every storm and every triumph, for as long as we both shall live.”

Bitsy’s eyes sparkled with tears of happiness as she recited her vows, her voice filled with unwavering love and devotion. The exchange of rings sealed our commitment, and the world faded away, leaving only us, ready to face the future as husband and wife.

Our family and friends cheered, celebrating our love and happiness. Laughter and music filled the air as we danced the night away, each moment a reminder of the incredible journey that had brought us to this day.

In the arms of my beloved Bitsy, surrounded by the people who meant the most to us, I felt an overwhelming sense of gratitude. Our love had triumphed over adversity, and as we looked toward the future, I knew that our love would continue to shine brightly, guiding us through the rest of our lives together.

“You are such a sap,” Bitsy laughs from behind my shoulder. “What are you doing?”

Smiling, I close the journal and turn to my nosey wife.

“I’m writing our story,” I admit. “I want our children to know how amazing and strong their mommy is.”

“Well,” she says, lying down on the bed. “Considering we just got married two hours ago and you still haven’t made love to me a single time since we’ve been together, I’m not sure children are going to be a possibility. Besides, how can you resist this?”

Bitsy lifts her beautiful white dress revealing her jean-covered legs and biker boots.

I laugh and toss the pen on the table.

“I don’t think that’s what normal brides wear under their dresses, my love,” I tease, pulling her up into my arms.

“Normal is boring.”

I run my fingers through her short hair. Her last treatment was two months ago and her hair has finally started to grow back.

Reaching back, I release the restraints of her dress, letting the strapless gown fall to the floor.

Standing before me is absolute perfection. Her breasts lay heavy against her chest begging to be sucked.

“Lay down on the bed so I can taste you,” I demand.

However, the little minx shoves me until I fall back onto the chair I was previously sitting on. With a smirk she slips to the floor between my knees, undoing the buckle of my belt with one hand and using the other to urge me to pull my jeans down.

She leans up, asking for a kiss. Gripping her neck, I force her lips to mine, owning the woman kneeling before me.

“What’s your plan, baby?” I ask. “What is it that you want?”

Without a word, she grips my engorged cock into her small hands. Knowing that if she even attempts to wrap her lips around my cock, I'll explode, I try to protest. But before I can even utter a word, she silences me with a flick of her tongue. Lapping up the drops of come that escaped my swollen tip.

"Fuck, baby," I moan. "You can't do this to me. I won't last."

Ignoring my pleas, she opens her throat and sucks me in deep.

Fuck it. I toss my head back and just feel. I feel the warmth of her mouth, the smoothness of her hands as she strokes the base of my cock that she can't fit inside.

"So good, baby," I moan. "So, fucking good."

I let her have her moment until the pressure starts to build, then I stand quickly, my cock shoved to the back of her throat, and I just freeze.

"So beautiful," I say, looking down at the goddess before me. "Those lips are perfect for sucking my cock."

I hold myself deep in her throat for a few more seconds before pulling out. Her eyes are watering but she looks so fucking hot.

"Bed, now," I order.

This time, she doesn't hesitate.

I stand there, my cock in hand, stroking myself as I just stare at her. Black jeans, black boots, no shirt, no bra. Her eye makeup and lipstick now smeared on her beautiful face.

"One day, baby," I say. "I'm going to have you laying just like this, watching me stroke myself to completion as I gaze upon your perfect fucking body."

"Such a romantic," she smiles, kicking off her boots and releasing the button of her jeans.

Now she waits. Waiting to see what I'll do next.

"Shall I straddle your face and let you suck my balls?" I ask. "Nah, not today. Shall I turn you over and fuck that tight little hole? Not right now. But, baby, know that I will be deep in your ass one day. I want to own every single inch of you."

"Then what do you want to do, Viper?" she asks breathlessly.

Releasing my cock, I grip the legs of her pants and jerk them off.

"Naughty," I smile. "Where are your panties, Bitsy?"

"I must have forgotten them," she smiles. "Oops."

Laughing, I grab her knees and force her legs apart.

“It’s a shame. I would like to have ripped them from your body. You’re taking away all my fun.”

“All of it,” she asks, reaching down to circle her clit.

“Mine,” I growl. I shove her hand aside, replacing those naughty fingers with my tongue.

The sweet taste of nectar floods my mouth. I hope she realizes that she’s going to be in this position a lot.

“Please,” she begs. “I need...”

I know what she needs, but she isn’t getting it yet. I’m a starving man who hasn’t eaten in a very long time.

Taking my time, I taste every inch of her pussy. Back and forth. Up and down. When I’ve tasted everything several times, I dive in for my prize.

“Yes,” she moans as I shove my tongue deeper into her pussy. “More, Viper. Please. I need more.”

“The first time you come will be with my cock buried deep inside of you,” I say against her pussy. “No coming, Bitsy. I fucking mean it.”

“How do you expect me to stop...oh, god.”

I dive back in, circling my tongue over every inch it can reach.

“Viper, I don’t think I’m going to be able to stop it,” she cries out.

Smiling, I suck her clit hard before popping it back out.

“Not cool, husband.”

“You taste delicious, wife. But now I think I’m going to fuck you. And, Bitsy?”

“Yeah?”

“I’m not going to be gentle. I’ve been craving you for fucking months now. I’ve jacked off so many times to the thought of your pussy that I lost count. So, virgin or not, hold the fuck on.”

She mentioned in passing once that she was a virgin. Her face had turned every shade of red. I remember smiling and letting the conversation go so as not to embarrass her. But that thought alone made me so hard. No one will ever claim this woman but me.

On my knees, I pull her until her pussy slaps against my dick. I lean down and circle her clit gently as I suck her breasts into my mouth. Being sure to give them both equal play.

“You are not to come until I’m buried deep,” I warn, circling her clit faster.

I bite down on a nipple, tugging it with my teeth while I work her clit even faster. I’m about to fuck her like I’ve never fucked another woman and I

don't want her to feel any pain.

"Not until I'm buried," I warn her again as she starts writhing on the bed.

"Viper," she cries. "Please."

When her little mewls become louder, I line my cock against her entrance, never stopping my ministrations of her clit.

"Now," I demand, shoving myself deep inside of my woman. I feel the small pop of her virginity giving way, but she doesn't notice a thing as her back arches and she screams my name in ecstasy.

Fucking beautiful.

"Hold on," I warn before I pull out and slam back it with a relentless pace. Over and over, I slam myself inside of her, my balls slapping against her little hole.

"So. Fucking. Good," I say with each thrust.

Feeling the pressure building, I grip Bitsy's hips and angle her so I'm hitting inside at a different angle.

"Oh," she cries out. "I'm... going... to..."

She pants each word not able to fully finish saying anything. I lift one knee so my foot can gain traction on the mattress, and I slam into her harder, this time, reaching down for her clit.

"With me, baby," I pant. "With me this time."

As soon as her walls contract and she's crying out her release, I slam into her a few more times before, finally, I scream out her name in the most intense orgasm I have ever had.

Tears stream down her face but I know, based on the look in her eyes, that it's not out of sadness or pain.

"I love you, my beautiful wife," I say, slowly pulling out of her.

Between her little winces of pain and the blood on my cock, I feel like the biggest male that has ever graced this planet.

"Please, don't write this part in your little journal to our future kids," she says.

Falling to her side, I pull her into my arms, laughing with so much joy that it's overflowing.

She doesn't know it yet, but I had her motorcycle fixed. She enjoys riding on the back of my bike, but I can see in her eyes that she misses being the one behind the handlebars. I don't plan on telling her until we get home.

Remembering the promise I made to her father, to not let her forget who she is, she also has a new cut with both Phantoms and Obsidian logos on the

back. With both president's approval, of course. I can't wait to see her face when I give them to her.

For now, I hold her close, tracing my fingers against her stomach as we bask in the glow of our passionate lovemaking. I'm not sure if her body is healed enough to carry children, but I dream that one day, our very own little one will be growing in her belly as I trace my fingers against the swell.

But, if not, that's okay, too. No matter how we have our children, I know she's going to be a good mom.

"Viper," she says softly.

"Yes, little one," I smile, loving the nickname I've always called her.

"I have to pee," she says causing me to laugh.

I help her stand and watch as she struts to the bathroom.

"Stop looking at my ass," she says, swaying that ass more than normal.

"I own that ass," I say. "I can watch it as much as I want."

"Hmm," she says, looking over her shoulder. "I seem to remember you taking ownership over my mouth and my pussy. So far, my ass is one hundred percent completely unowned."

Oh, that little...

Rushing forward, I toss my naughty bride over my shoulder and throw her on the bed.

"Viper," she laughs. "I still have to pee."

"Later," I growl. "I was going to be nice and work my way into that ass of yours. I'm not exactly small, am I, baby? But it seems as if my naughty wife likes a little pain, so buckle up, Bitsy. You challenged me on my wedding night. Prepare to be owned to your very fucking soul."

Her laughter fades to moans as I lean in and get to owning everything she offers.

The End

Dearest Readers,

Here we stand at the crossroads, the closing of one chapter and the dawn of another. Bitsy serves as the bridge that leads us into the enigmatic world of the Obsidian MC. Originally, Viper was slated as book one, but as I delved into the narrative, I witnessed its graceful shift from the Phantoms to the Obsidians.

Prepare yourself for a fresh odyssey, a new community of vibrant characters, and fresh avenues to explore the depths of love. In the pipeline, we have the captivating stories of Ghost, Venom, Blaze, and Steel, each waiting to share their unique journeys with you.

I'm brimming with excitement and can hardly wait to embark on this next adventure alongside you. Thank you for your unwavering support and for allowing me to be your guide through these tales of passion and camaraderie.

About the Author

Carol Dawn was born in Maysville, Kentucky, USA, under the name Carolyn Jacobs. Carol is a stay-at-home mom where she spends her days making pb&j sandwiches, picking up toys, and giving her kids more cuddles than they want.

At the young age of five, Carol received a reading medallion for reading over twenty-one books in an eight-week period. So, her literary journey began. She wrote poems, songs, short stories, and read many books.

Carol has a slight (MASSIVE) obsession with alpha male/insta-love romance books. If she isn't reading about them, she's writing about them.

When she isn't writing, reading, or playing mom, you will find her watching re-runs of Stargate SG1, Star Trek, cooking, coloring mandalas, or performing her favorite songs for her invisible audience.

Also, by Carol Dawn

Infernal Sons MC, Series

[*Bear's Forever*](#)

[*A Very Beary Christmas*](#)

[*Chains' Redemption*](#)

[*Hawk's Choice*](#)

[*Ma*](#)

[*Trigger's Light*](#)

[*Brick's Fight*](#)

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[*Wolf's Hunt*](#)

The Renegade Alpha Pack

[*The Alpha's Omega*](#)

[*The Alpha's Scarred Omega*](#)

Once Upon A Forever

[*Red's Protector*](#)

[*Dark Souls Bound By Blood \(Vampire Anthology\)*](#)

The Phantoms MC

[*Cap*](#)

[*Axe*](#)

[*Beast*](#)

[*Reaper*](#)

[*Shadow*](#)

The Drexonians

[*The Drexonian's Mate*](#)

Audible

Bear's Forever audio