



BRIDE

FOR THE BIKERS

REVERSE HAREM ROMANCE

STEPHANIE BROTHER

BRIDE FOR THE BIKERS

AN MC REVERSE HAREM
ROMANCE

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LIGHTNING

IT'S AN UGLY WORLD WE LIVE IN, AND GOD SURE AS FUCK didn't put the four of us in it to make it any prettier.

The Diamond Oasis, a towering casino hotel made of glass, steel and white marble, looms over us like a monument to some rich asshole's dick envy. Which, if you ask me, is exactly what it is.

From the front, it gleams like Vincent Mesner's got people fucking handwashing the thing every night. The alley behind it, however, is another story. I kick my heel into the dumpster I'm leaning against, and the dull, metallic rattle is immediately followed by surprised squeaks and rustling. I wonder if Mesner's guests know all this fancy shit is just a paper thin veneer on top of the same rat filled world the rest of us live in.

"Relax. Always in such a fucking hurry," Thunder grumbles, glaring at me. "Right from your first breath."

I grin. "You were right behind me, dickhead." I'm the older brother, but only by minutes.

Shadow checks his phone. "Shut up, both of you. The door should unlock in three, two..."

The latch clicks right on time. "Fuck yeah, let's do this. Mesner's lucky Indie's not dead or we'd be doing a lot more than just crashing his fucking party."

Outlaw nods, murder in his black eyes. On the surface, Mesner keeps his hands clean. Hotels, the casino, some kinda crypto shit, but underneath, he's got his fingers in all sorts of pots he wouldn't want the public to know about. Like the dirty fucking

drugs that hit South Side—our turf—last month, killing two people and putting a dozen more in the hospital. Indie, one of the regular sluts, who should've fucking been safe at the club party, was one of them, though she's recovering.

When we first noticed something was up, Eagle-eye—the president of our club, the Screaming Eagles MC—sent a warning that should've had Mesner backing up, but apparently he didn't take it seriously.

He will after we're done.

“Good to know the info's solid,” growls Shadow, as he follows Thunder through the open backdoor. He loosens his shoulders with a shake, like he's prepping to jump into a fighting ring. Then Outlaw, making sure his piece sits easy in his belt. The goal isn't to get to shooting tonight, but if it comes down to it, we're fucking ready. I'm the last man in, closing the door behind us and hiding that anyone ever passed through.

“That's the trouble with fancy-ass security,” says Thunder. “Only takes a greedy person or two, and it all fucking falls apart.”

“Or it's a setup,” notes Outlaw, glancing up at the little black camera dome in the ceiling over us.

“Well, it either is, or it isn't,” I say with a grin and a shrug. “Nothing we can do about it now. Let's get in, fuck shit up, and get the hell back out.”

Thunder gives the stairs a look. “How many floors did you say?”

“The whole building? Forty-two.” Shadow takes the lead up the first flight.

“Jesus fuck. You sure there isn't a service elevator or something?” Even bitching, Outlaw doesn't hesitate to follow.

“We're only doing seven,” I say with a laugh, giving him a nudge right in the center of his Screaming Eagles back patch. “You're the fucking youngest. You should be running up these stairs.”

“Only by two years, asshole.”

“Shut it,” says Thunder from above, always business. We might be twins, but I’m the one who got the fun gene.

A door slams open a floor ahead, and a hotel staffer rushes down the stairs, pausing when he sees us coming up from below. Obviously, a bunch of MC members isn’t what he expected to run into. We step to the side and I put on my prettiest smile. From the terrified look on the guy’s face, my dashing good looks are wasted on him. “Come on, hop to it. Time’s wasting.”

He skitters by, more worried about his job than whatever we’re doing in the stairwell, but only barely. I twitch my leg and he jumps about a foot, rushing down to the next floor and escaping into wherever the door goes.

“Was that necessary?” asks Thunder, rolling his eyes at me.

“Oh come on, it was funny. It’s not like I actually tripped him.” The other guys chuckle, but Thunder just shakes his head. “You’re the one who told me to relax, remember? If that stick was any further up your ass, you’d be spitting toothpicks.”

He flips me off without a word.

Finally, we get to the door to the seventh floor. The sign says “Staff only,” but we push through. I half expect cops to be waiting on the other side, but it’s empty, just as promised. So far, so good.

“Over here.” Shadow motions to a door labeled “Dome Maintenance”. We slip through, closing it behind us.

It’s a good thing I’m not scared of heights, because the door puts us right on a platform overlooking the casino seven floors below. The building’s designed around a central column, like a straw standing on its end, with the hotel rooms wrapped around a large central column that extends up from the casino on the first three floors. Filling the base is a huge ballroom, with black and white checkered tile floor, burgundy walls, and a gigantic gold-plated white marble fountain in the middle of it. Fat baby angels spurt water outta their mouths into a pool filled with the biggest fucking koi fish I’ve seen in my life.

And right in front of us hangs the crowning glory of the whole fucking palace, Mesner's pride and joy. The largest chandelier in the world, tens of tons of crystal, diamonds and steel. It stretches from where it's anchored on thick steel girders on our level, down past the next few floors. I can't even guess how much this shit cost him, but it's his baby. The thing that put him on the cover of architecture magazines, and what he uses as the logo on everything from the website to the fucking napkins. The lights inside pulse like candles, making the whole thing shimmer.

I point. "Should we get something like that installed in the clubhouse?"

"Nah," says Outlaw, grinning through his beard. "We got class."

Thunder snorts.

Fucking it up is a perfect metaphor for what we'll do to him if causes trouble in South Side again.

There's a wedding about to start, and in about ten minutes the space will be packed with guests in tuxes and fancy dresses. We knew that, of course. It's the whole fucking point. Mesner's daughter's getting hitched, and we're gonna make sure it's a day he never fucking forgets.

Nitro, one of the boys back home, gave us a little package designed to go boom, and Shadow pulls it from his jacket. It's compact, wrapped in brown paper and looks completely fucking harmless. You'd never think something that small could do the kinda damage it's designed to.

I gesture at him. "Toss it here. I'll go place it."

Shadow looks at me like I'm a fucking idiot. "I'm not tossing shit. If any of us are going to do it, it's me. I don't want the supports to give out under you."

"If the dome can handle the fucking chandelier, it can handle me. I'm not gonna make a fuck of a difference." If anyone's the actual wrecking balls in team Wrecking Ball, it's Thunder and me, but it's not like I'm Godzilla, for fuck's sake.

I snag the package before he can open his trap again and step onto the metal catwalk that provides access to the top of the chandelier. My first steps are cautious, testing its strength. In theory, I have no fucking doubt it's strong enough, but the lizard brain wants to know.

"If you're going to talk the talk, then walk the fucking walk," Thunder says in a low growl.

"I'm going, I'm going. Jesus."

From up here, the ground floor feels a mile away. If I look down, I can see straight to the fountain below, and while I don't have a fear of heights, there's a damn surge in my gut like I'm coming down on a roller coaster. Still, I keep going. We need to time this so it makes a huge, expensive fucking mess and scares the shit out of people, instead of tearing the wedding guests to shreds.

At the center of the catwalk, there's a round metal platform, and a maintenance ladder that descends into the core of the chandelier. It's so fucking monstrous that it's got the room for it. I slip the explosives into my vest and climb down so I'm outta sight.

With all the bulbs on, it's like being inside the fucking sun. I unwrap Nitro's little package, then start attaching the C4 exactly like he showed me. If I do this right, the whole fucking thing's gonna come crashing down when we hit the button. I want a good view when it happens, because it's gonna be fucking glorious.

Music starts up below. The wedding's about to start. I find a space between the bulbs to peek down into the foyer.

There's the man himself, Vincent Mesner, and on his arm... holy shit.

We knew this was his daughter's wedding, but he must've had her hidden away because nobody knows who the fuck she is. I figured she'd be hot, but I thought it would be in an artificial boob and nose job for her sixteenth birthday kind of way. I wasn't expecting to see a gorgeous girl next door with the kind of figure that makes you want to sin, over and fucking over.

Cleavage I want to slide my dick through, and the kind of hips I'd dig my fingers into as I slam my cock into her. I bet that ass would jiggle just right as I put her on all fours in front of me and showed her exactly what I'm fucking good for.

She looks up, and if I didn't fucking know better, I'd think she could see me, like she just heard my thoughts. For a moment, I swear we lock eyes, before she looks away.

Never mind her figure, her face...

Big eyes, cute nose, rosy lips and artfully styled blonde curls pouring down over her shoulders from under a crown of diamonds. Fuck, I know she's all done up for a wedding, but you can't fucking paint that beauty onto a face if it's not there to start. I shouldn't be distracted by this shit while I'm busy planting a fucking bomb, but here we are. Jesus fucking Christ. Her man's gonna be lucky. I'm jealous of that fucker already. I almost feel bad for what we're about to do.

But that's not the face of a woman on the happiest day of her life. Fucking wedding day, she should be beaming, but she looks miserable. Her expression is blank and fragile, like one wrong move and it could shatter just like this chandelier is about to. What the fuck kind of wedding has the bride looking like she'd rather be anywhere else but here?

Whatever. It's none of my fucking business. And I can't make it my business. I've got a fucking job to do.

Still, it makes me wanna smooth her hair back and kiss her senseless until she forgets all about what's bothering her. And from how tight my jeans feel, I'd be happy to comfort her in some other ways too.

With a resigned sigh, I give the explosives a last check. Need to get this over with so I can have one of the sluts take care of business and clear my fucking mind. I can't be letting some crooked billionaire's brat get to me so much that I can't do my fucking job. I shimmy back up to the ramp and across back to the guys. "Job's done."

Shadow pulls out his phone and flips up an app with a big button on it. "Time for the fireworks?"

I throw a last glance over my shoulder. We're out of time. In a minute, the doors are going to open and Mesner and his hot as fuck daughter will start the walk. I nod. "Start the timer."

HARPER

“YOU’RE SO BEAUTIFUL!” THE STYLIST EXCLAIMS AS SHE PUTS the final touches on my hair and makeup, shaping my eyebrows like Michelangelo finishing the Sistine Chapel.

Am I?

The face staring back at me from the mirror is a shell shocked stranger. A week ago I was so excited to meet my father for the first time. A man who hardly seemed real after a lifetime of imagining who he could be, and then building him up in my head as some kind of big hero for accepting me as his own and literally saving Mom’s life by paying for the experimental gene treatment that was our only shot at keeping her alive.

One moment, I was barely making ends meet while watching Mom fade before my eyes, and the next, I’m in a designer wedding dress about to get married to a man I’ve seen *twice*.

Like... what?

I smile at... Cate? Christy? No, Cassandra. “Thank you.” She’s just doing her job. I bet my father paid her a lot to be here, but I just feel numb.

In the mirror, the door opens behind me and the man himself comes in, dressed in a perfectly fitting black tuxedo that I bet never saw a rack. “You look beautiful, darling.”

“Doesn’t she? Your daughter is a little nervous I think,” Cassandra says with a satisfied grin, spinning my chair around.

“Could you give us a minute before we go out there?” he asks her.

The stylist nods. “Sure, I’m all done anyway. Congratulations, Harper. I hope you have a wonderful wedding.”

I stand, the heavy silk wedding dress swirling around my legs. It’s the most beautiful thing I’ve ever seen in my life, and probably cost enough to pay off the college debt that’s still hanging over my head from my two years of studying before I had to drop out to take care of Mom. But I don’t want it. I don’t want any of this.

Vincent—I can’t bring myself to think of him as Dad—smiles. I hate it. The familiar way he treats me feels disingenuous. As much as I want a relationship with him, we just met. I barely know him any better than the man he wants me to marry for reasons of his own. I’m a convenient pawn in whatever game he’s playing.

And I can’t help the small niggling doubts about why Mom always refused to tell me anything about my father or her life before I was born. I always thought she was disowned and embarrassed about getting pregnant or something, but what if it was more serious than that?

I wish I could talk to her, but the pain medications she was on when I found the old picture that brought me here made it impossible to ask. She’s improving now at the rehabilitation facility, but the doctors told me any stress could jeopardize her recovery.

“Mr. Mesner—” I start, but he cuts me off.

“Please. I’m your father. That sounds so formal.” His smile widens, and his bright white incisors look uncomfortably sharp.

“Um... yeah. Listen, I know I agreed to this, but does it have to happen today? It’s not like Devin will be heartbroken or anything. He doesn’t even know me. I’m *so* grateful for everything you’ve done for Mom, for us, but I need more time.” I look up at him hopefully. Maybe we just met, but I’m his daughter, right?

I search desperately for a glimpse of myself in his face. His hair is closer to brown while mine is light, but that’s not

unusual. But Mom's a brunette too, though I've definitely got her jawline and nose, so I was hoping to see something. Like where I got my blonde locks from. Maybe it's from a grandparent.

His smile doesn't budge. "We discussed this, Harper. I've done so much for you, haven't I? Eileen's treatment, her rehabilitation. You more than anyone knows how much of an investment that is. I've asked for nothing in return but your trust. This is all a legal formality, something that will help make sure my business runs smoothly. I hate to seem like the bad guy here, but delaying could mean my money is tied up and it would be difficult to continue—"

"Right, right. I know. I'm just nervous." Two years. He told me I only had to stay married to Devin for two years and then whatever legal tax game they're playing would be done.

Two years in exchange for my mother's life. Not that he's been crude enough to phrase it exactly like that, but it doesn't take a genius to understand what he's implying.

"Harper. You're a sweet young woman. This isn't the end of the world. I'm looking forward to taking this time to get to know you. I don't know why your mother left without telling me she was pregnant, but I assure you, if I'd known then things would have been very different. You coming into my life at a time where we can both be there for each other is nothing short of a miracle." He straightens his cuffs. "And you never know. Devin is an attractive, well off man. Maybe sparks will fly."

I seriously doubt that, but he's right. There's no way I could ever pay him back for everything he's done. He's saved Mom from at worst death, and at best a lifetime of debt. I couldn't even pretend to afford the place she's staying at now, even for just a few months. What are a few years compared to that? All I have to do is sign some papers and pretend to be a happy wife to a man I barely know.

Many women have done worse for less. It seems like such a dumb little thing in the big scheme of things, but at the same time it's big for me. Not that I've had much time for dating

lately, but it's strange knowing that for at least the next couple years, I'm giving up on finding the man of my dreams.

Mom is going to kill me when she finds out about this, but she'll be alive to do it.

Steeling myself with determination, I put my hand on Vincent's arm. He's my father. The DNA test he'd insisted on said so. I have to trust that even if he's not what I imagined, he wouldn't do anything to hurt me. "You're right. It's just so sudden. I'm sure this will all work out."

Gentle piano music swells as we emerge into the antechamber to the ballroom. In my stomach, a swarm of butterflies threaten to burst right out like the scene from *Alien*. Not exactly the fluttery feeling I expected to have at my own wedding.

We step onto the red runner that leads into the gaudy entranceway and then to the ballroom where the guests are waiting. I never imagined my wedding needing security, but guards stand at every door, looking exactly like what they are, with shades, suits and curled wires sticking out of their ear pieces. They could be taken straight out of any movie that involves the line, "Get down, Mr. President!"

My father raises his hand. "Go guard the front. No one goes in or out until this is done." They nod and slip away. Then he looks at me. "Smile."

I do, even if I'm sure it isn't fooling anyone.

Not for the first time, I wonder what my father really does to live this kind of lifestyle. Internet searches just told me he's a businessman, but does a casino owner really need this much security?

We pause at the doors, waiting for the wedding march to start. Right ahead is the ballroom antechamber, with a marble fountain in the center. It would be centerpiece enough, but it's almost an afterthought underneath the massive chandelier hanging above it that stretches multiple floors upwards.

Movement near the top catches my eye. It could be a trick of the light, but is there someone up there? I peer harder, but I

don't see anything now. Just my imagination. What am I expecting? A masked crusader to come swinging in on a rope to pull me out of this mess?

The doors on the other side of the chamber open and the crowd turns to watch. I don't know a single one of the faces staring back at me. "Why are they all here?" I whisper.

"They know what's good for them," he says in a self-satisfied growl. "Now let them see how beautiful you are. Look at the photographer and smile like you mean it."

I do my best. I really do, but the idea that there are going to be pictures to commemorate this moment makes me feel a little queasy.

I can do this.

The first notes of the Wedding March start up, but just as we start to move, a massive explosion shakes the whole building. Smoke and bits of debris billow down from above, but more terrifying than that is the painfully loud scream of twisting metal right before the glass of the chandelier starts clinking together like an enormous wind chime.

We stare up in horror as it swings to one side, crashing into the wall. Metal shrieks again, and the entire glistening structure plummets from above.

"Fuck," Vincent swears, diving away and leaving me standing there alone in my wedding dress, watching what's simultaneously the most beautiful and terrifying thing I've ever seen in my life.

HARPER

THE CHANDELIER HITS WITH A CRASH THAT ONLY THE shattering of tons of crystal, diamond and steel can make. The floor shakes under my feet. I throw my arms up in front of my face and close my eyes as I turn away, trying to get back behind the cover of the entryway. I can feel that I'm screaming, but can't hear it over the thundering of each tier of the chandelier landing one after another.

Tiny slivers of glass tear over my skin like a blizzard of razor sharp ice crystals. Something lands over me. A blanket? No, a jacket that smells like leather, cloves and motor oil.

“Move!” a deep voice yells. One of the guards?

Everything happens so quickly. Whoever helped me shoves me out of the way and back into the antechamber. The jacket is ripped away, and I see two men, but they're definitely not guards. Not unless some of them are undercover in leather, denim and motorcycle boots.

“This is fucked,” growls the first one, his voice raspy and as hard and dark as his expression.

He's built like a brick wall—tall, broad and unbreakable. His black T-shirt struggles to keep his massive physique contained. His jeans struggle too, stretched tight over his powerful thighs and—oh God, I rip my eyes away but the information that he hangs to the right is seared forever into my brain. His dark brown hair is cut short, and so's his beard, clinging to a strong jaw. The big muscly type was never my thing, but I'm willing to reconsider.

And apparently they come in twos, because the other man looks just like him, and by that I mean almost *exactly* like him. But his expression is lighter, more playful. He's looking me over in a way that has nothing to do with checking to make sure I'm okay. On a man like him, it's the kind of look that makes a girl's ovaries go *wheeee!*

"I don't know," he says. The smirk on his short-bearded face is roguish and confident. He winks. His eyes are deep brown chocolate pools I could go skinny dipping in. "It could be worse."

"Keep it in your fucking pants. She's getting married and we don't have fucking time," the first man snaps as he shakes out his jacket and puts it back on.

The words snap me out of my daydreams. This wedding might be a sham, but other people aren't supposed to know that, and these aren't the kind of thoughts a bride-to-be should have about two random guys, even if they happen to be ridiculously hot in a screw you within an inch of your life, then gone in the morning kind of way.

God, what am I even thinking? There might be people hurt in there! "Someone go check on the photographer. He was right on the other side!"

"Security!" roars Vincent, right behind me. Apparently he didn't go far. He puts a possessive hand on my shoulder and glares at the new arrivals. "Who the fuck are you? Are you responsible for this?" His voice is tight with barely controlled fury.

The expression on the playful one's face goes stone hard in an instant. "Yeah, and you're fucking lucky we weren't here to do worse. Next time the Screaming Eagles want to talk, pick up your fucking phone."

"I don't know what you're talking about," my father growls, but the brief pause before he answers makes me certain he's lying.

"The fuck you don't," growls the serious twin. The sharp glare he levels at Vincent would slice him in half if it could. "Your

business is no longer welcome in our territory. Next time we even get a fucking sniff that you're supplying to our people, that's it, Mesner."

A door on the opposite side of the room slams open, spitting out one of Vincent's black-clad security guys. He tumbles limply, landing in a heap. Two more guys in leather jackets and motorcycle boots pop out. This time I double check, but at least they're not twins.

The one in front stops so suddenly the man following close behind almost runs into him. His sharp jaw is covered in a ten o'clock shadow. A vicious scar leaves a pale line slashing through it on the left side of his face, making him look dangerous. Unlike the twins, he's built like an endurance athlete. Muscular, but in a sleeker, more deadly way. The twins could break down a wall, but he's the death lurking in the shadows of your house without you even knowing he's there. Deep hazel eyes under dark brows widen when he sees me. If our eyes weren't so closely locked that there's no doubt who he's looking at, I'd think there was something going on behind me.

The last of the four has a thick, auburn beard. He might be the last one in, but he's not the least by any means. His jacket is ripped off at the shoulders, baring muscular arms covered in black ink that stretches up and over his neck. A blood red t-shirt is underneath his jacket vest, pulled tight over the kind of V-shaped torso a boxer might have. His black eyes scan over me quickly then case the room. There's already a gun in his hand.

Oh my God, it's a gun.

Everything goes crazy all at once as more of Vincent's guards come piling in from the main hall with weapons drawn. "Get them!" my father yells, his voice shrill with fury.

Fast as lightning, the biker with the scar—the one who seemed so deadly—wraps his thick arm around my throat as he presses something hard against the side of my head. I don't need more than one guess to realize what it is. I try to scream, but his arm is too tight.

“One step closer, and the bride fucking gets it,” he snaps.
Oh shit.

HARPER

“WHAT’S THE FUCKING PLAN?” GROWLS THE SERIOUS TWIN AS they pull me backwards.

I’m so screwed.

Vincent and his men watch us angrily, but they keep their distance. As long as there’s a gun to my head, I’m guessing they won’t try anything. I hope so, at least.

“Your message has been delivered. Let her go,” my father snarls from safely behind his guards.

“Please,” I whimper. “I don’t know anything about what’s going on. I don’t want to die.”

The biker’s hard, chiseled body is flush with mine, and his grip is like iron. He’s not choking me hard enough to keep me from breathing, but with his arm wrapped tight over my throat and his gun at my temple, I’m not going anywhere. I have no chance against strength like his.

“Behave yourself, and you’ll be back to saying ‘I do’ soon enough, got it?” His low, gravelly voice in my ear might be comforting in another situation, but right now it sends terrified shivers racing down my spine. This is the kind of man who does what he wants and takes what he wants, and right now, that means me. “We don’t wanna hurt you, but we’re not gonna let your Daddy’s goons use us for target practice either.”

My throat works against his tattooed arm as I swallow hard. I shouldn’t trust him, but what choice do I have? “Okay,” I whisper shakily. God, I sound so helpless. If I get out of this, I’m signing up for self-defense classes.

“That’s right, be a good girl,” he whispers, and my stupid body melts.

There must be something wrong with me that the first people I’ve reacted to on this sort of level are criminals. This man has a gun to my head and hearing him call me a good girl is making me all warm and fuzzy.

“You’ll never get away with this.” Vincent is furious, his voice wound tighter than a hangman’s noose. “Your dirty fucking biker gang just destroyed millions of dollars’ worth of my property. If you shoot her. What’s stopping me from utterly destroying you?”

The serious twin growls, like a freaking animal, a gun in his hand, aimed right at Vincent. “You don’t want to fuck with us, Mesner. Tell your guys to stand down and she’ll walk away safe and sound. But if anything happens to us, the Eagles won’t stop until this whole fucking place is a pile of rubble. Now, back the fuck off, we’re leaving.”

My dress makes it hard to keep up as they drag me down sweeping marble steps towards the lobby. Last week I stepped through those doors for the first time, in awe of the fact that Vincent—my father—owns this whole place. The white marble steps, the glass and chrome railings, and everything plated with gold. Gaudy, sure, but no more so than any of the other temples to greed and vice that this city is based on. Nobody would be impressed by a modest, tasteful casino. I thought all my problems would be solved, and maybe, just maybe, I would finally have a complete family.

I was angry and a little tipsy when I sent a note to the email address scribbled on the back of Mom’s old photo. A part of me had been ready to blame him if he was really my father, but when I realized that Vincent never even knew about me until I contacted him, I didn’t know what to think.

I obviously don’t know everything about him. Hearing him smoothly threaten bikers who have a gun to my head just confirms what I was already starting to believe. Vincent Mesner isn’t just a businessman and investor. There’s

something dirty about him, and there is probably a reason Mom made the choice she did.

Vincent watches us from the top of the stairs as we reach the bottom. He's furious, but keeping his distance. One of his security guards starts to lift his gun, and Vincent stops him with a curt gesture. Devin finally appears, rushing to my father's side, face dark with rage.

The staff are all pressed against the walls and taking cover behind whatever they can find. Nobody here is going to risk their own neck to save me, and I don't blame them. Even if they wanted to, the chance of getting to me before at least one of the bikers starts shooting is miniscule.

"You're doing good," the biker whispers harshly in my ear. "Just fucking perfect. Keep it up, and you'll be back to loverboy in no time."

"I don't care about him. Just don't shoot me," I whisper honestly.

I don't want to be a hostage, and I really don't want this gun pointed at my head. I'm terrified to imagine what they might do to me, but... being returned to Vincent so I can marry Devin doesn't exactly fill me with any kind of joy, either.

"Everyone just keep your fucking distance!" the playful twin shouts, his voice echoing off the cavernous room. "We don't need any fucking heroes." He and the bearded guy with the vest and tattoos pan their guns around the room, while the serious twin covers Vincent. They work together seamlessly, like they've done this a million times.

A moment later, we're outside in the crippling summer heat under the carport where the limo waits to whisk me and Devin off to our honeymoon. The shocked expression on the driver's face is almost comical, even in my position. She takes one look at us, decides she's not getting paid nearly enough to be a hero and runs, leaving the car door open.

"The cops are already on their way," Vincent yells, him and his men coming down the stairs, but slowly and keeping away. "Let her go."

“Please,” I say, even though a small, guilty part of me feels relief at the idea of being stolen away from my own wedding. How messed up is that?

“You’ll be fine. Just a little further,” the biker holding me says.

“Bikes are too far,” growls the serious twin. “We can’t drag her through the whole damn city.”

The man holding me barks out a laugh. “We’ll take the limo.”

“You fucking kidding me?” the serious twin groans.

“Do it.” And I guess if this guy says so, then they’re all in.

I expected to leave the wedding in the limo, but this wasn’t how I pictured it—at gunpoint with three violent bikers in the back and the fourth one behind the wheel. They push me in first, putting me in the seat that faces backwards. I reach for the door handle, but the serious twin grabs me before I can even try it, squeezing in next to me. The one with the scar that was holding me sits across from me, with the auburn-bearded biker next to him. The playful twin gets behind the wheel and floors it. The limo shoots out with surprising power.

The sudden lurch throws me right out of my seat and into the lap of the biker who dragged me here in the first place. He catches me with a laugh and holds me.

“You so eager to get your wedding night started that you don’t even wanna wait for the groom? What’s your future husband gonna think?”

I try to push away, but he’s too strong. “Let go of me.”

The limo corners hard, and only his grip keeps me from rolling right over into the other biker’s lap. “Gonna keep you safe right here, babe.”

I dig my nails into his thighs, holding on for dear life as we careen through the city streets. Sirens sound in the distance, but are they close enough to follow? What happens if they catch up? What happens if they don’t? When the bikers don’t have any reason to keep me alive anymore? I shut my eyes hard and squeeze as a wave of panic comes over me, making me shiver like I’ve got some kind of fever.

“Shh. You’re gonna be fine,” says the guy under me, pulling me closer against him. He puts my back flush against his broad chest and his arms close around me, comforting instead of constricting. Powerful. Warm. “Easy, easy. I swear it. Hey, what’s your name?”

“Huh?” The unexpected question distracts me, if only for a moment.

“I’m Shadow. What’s your name?”

“Ha—Harper,” I get out through my chattering teeth.

“Nice. It’s a pretty name. Pretty name for a pretty bride.” I shudder against him. Pretty bride? I’m still not ready for that, kidnapping or not. “Hey, we’re not gonna hurt you, okay. Now, the big bruiser over there is Thunder, and the asshole driving the car that looks just like him, but without the common sense, is Lightning.”

“Fuck you,” snaps Lightning.

Then he gestures next to us. “And pretty boy over there is Outlaw.”

Outlaw smiles, and in spite of how terrifying he looks with all those tattoos, it’s one heck of a smile, I’ll give him that. He flicks his tongue, and a piercing sparkles at me.

“Um... nice to meet you?”

“Honey, we know you don’t mean that,” Shadow says. “But we didn’t have much choice. This wasn’t exactly the plan, but the timing got fucked up and we couldn’t exactly let you get fucking crushed on your wedding day, right? We’ll let you off as soon as we’re clear so you call your Daddy and get a cab back.”

We corner again, the wheels screaming, and Shadow’s arms tighten. Why is it that a man like him makes me feel safe, when a hug from my father does the opposite? What if... what if I didn’t call Vincent? What if I just went home and put all of this behind me? It’s a stupid fantasy, because they could still execute me and leave me in the desert somewhere, but... maybe not? They’re obviously dangerous, but they don’t seem like monsters.

We leave the Strip behind, along with its fancy hotels and casinos, and head into much rougher looking neighborhoods. You don't think about stuff like that when you think about Vegas, but I guess every city has them, even the ones famous for their glitz and glamor. This feels much more like where Mom and I live, to be honest, a bit more like home. Poor neighborhoods, full of ordinary people, who don't have billions of dollars to spend on a chandelier that literally no one other than Vincent cares about.

I don't hear sirens anymore, so does that mean that we got away? Relief floods me at that for some reason. The sensible thing would be to actually want the cops here.

"We need to ditch this thing. A limo sticks out like sore fucking thumb," growls Thunder. I'm not sure he communicates in any other way.

"Pull over there," says Outlaw, pointing at a strip mall that looks like it's been closed for years. "Around the back."

We come to a stop behind the building. Thick strips of paint are peeling off the walls and the asphalt is pocked with wispy, brown weeds growing through it. Outlaw pops open the door and a dry, hot gust of wind rushes into the car, making the AC kick into overdrive. "C'mon."

A moment later, it's me and four giant bikers in an abandoned loading zone, and I'm hugging myself despite the heat. "What happens now?" I ask nervously.

Lightning stretches, showing off not just his powerful chest and arms, but also the grip of his gun sticking out of his belt. "You got a phone?"

"Yeah," I admit reluctantly. What if they take it? "If my luggage is in the trunk like it's supposed to be. We were supposed to go straight to the airport and fly to Hawaii for the honeymoon."

"Lucky you. Nothing that fancy waiting for us," says Outlaw. "But with a daddy like that, I'm guessing there aren't many places you haven't been."

I snort. “This is the first time I’ve even been on this side of the country.” I shake my head. “I haven’t been... been anywhere! Just home with Mom and—”

“This isn’t a fucking tell us your life podcast,” interrupts Thunder. “Get your phone, call yourself an Uber or something and go home to Daddy. We’re getting the fuck outta here.” In spite of his growly demeanor, I swear he’s giving my cleavage just as much attention as his twin.

“You’re seriously going to leave me here? A single woman alone wearing... this?” I gesture up and down my dress, where my little train has taken on a distinctly gravelly tinge, even if the rest is still beautiful. “I’m going to get mugged or worse before anyone gets here.”

Maybe I shouldn’t have drawn their attention to the dress that shows off my breasts and snatches my waist perfectly, since the way all four pairs of eyes follow my hands up and down makes me wonder if I might be in trouble faster than I thought. The thought doesn’t scare me as much as it probably should.

“Sorry, babe,” Lightning says, sounding almost like he means it. Like he regrets giving me back. “We can’t stick around. We got some things to figure out, a limo to ditch, and I’m pretty sure that when your ride comes, there’s gonna be a fuckload of the city’s finest coming with it. I don’t really want to be here when that happens, you know?” He adjusts the gun in his belt.

With a thick swallow, I glance down, then yank my gaze right back up, since I don’t want him getting the wrong idea. From the way he smirks, I wasn’t nearly fast enough.

I was ready to marry Devin for Vincent’s sake in spite of not knowing him, but now that I’m not there, under their control, what’s stopping me from just leaving? Mom’s treatment is done. They can’t undo it. Sure the rehab place is nice, but I’m used to caring for her myself, and I already owe an impossible amount to my student loans, what’s more after a certain point? Just bigger numbers.

On the other hand, my father might not be the white knight I imagined him to be, but I don’t know if I’m ready to completely give up on ever having a relationship with him.

But if I'm someone's captive, it's not my fault that I'm not at the wedding. He can't fault me for that, right?

I lick my lips and draw my fingers across my breasts, giving them the biggest, most innocent, pleading eyes I can. "Take me with you."

All four of their gazes snap up from my boobs to my face, where they look at me with confused expressions. It'd be funny if my situation wasn't so serious. "What?"

"Don't give me back. Take me with you." They look between each other, confused. "Please. I'll do whatever you want. Just don't take me back. Not yet."

Shadow cocks his head. "The fuck?"

THUNDER

I FUCKING HATE COMPLICATIONS.

Taking a hostage was fucked up enough in the first place, but now *we're* the fucking hostages until we can get clear of this girl. She might not have a gun to our heads, but those big blue eyes are nearly as bad. There's a knot in my gut telling me we need to cut ties fast or we're going to find ourselves balls deep in trouble.

"We should leave her here, go get our bikes and get the fuck out of town." I feel like an asshole saying it, but it's the fucking truth. This shithole hotel isn't gonna hide us for long, but it gives us a few moments to figure out what the fuck to do next.

Shadow nods. "No shit, but at this point cops are going to be crawling all over town. We might as well lay low until morning."

The door slams open and there's three guns pointed before we register it's Outlaw. "Fuck, man. Ever heard of knocking? I'd hate to put a bullet through a brother."

He rolls his eyes. "Who the fuck else would it be? Everything's good. I ditched the limo on the highway. Hopefully it looks like we got picked up and we're already long gone."

"Which leaves us with one major problem," Lightning says, gesturing to the second bed with the butt of his gun as he slips it back under his vest.

Harper.

She's sitting there with her legs hugged against her, looking like we just stole her off the cover of a bridal magazine. She hasn't said a fucking word since begging to not get left behind, just stares at us like we're the fucking bad guys and she's reconsidering how good an idea it was to hitch her train to the four of us.

Don't fucking blame her. We did blow up her wedding.

Shadow crosses his arms over his chest. As the officer in our group, he's the one that has to report back to Prez, and his word's final. "What do you say, babe? The door's right there. Don't suppose you want to use it. Because I'm gonna be real fucking honest here, you're a big fucking liability and I don't see what the fuck we're getting out of this arrangement."

"Yeah. Ass, grass or gas, sweetheart. Pick your poison," Outlaw says with a grin.

Harper's eyes turn into big fucking saucers and her knuckles go white as her delicate hands clench her dress like a safety blanket. "I know—Oh, God. I... I did say I'd do whatever you want, but..."

I know exactly what they're doing, trying to scare her into getting the fuck out of our hair, but I gotta admit, I'm no boy scout, so I'm not sure what I'd do if she said yes. She looks fucking amazing in that dress, all done up like a princess with those perfect pink lips just made to wrap around my cock. I have to adjust myself at the thought, and of course she fucking notices, looking even more terrified.

"Drop the act. An hour ago you were about to say 'I do' to some fucking goon in a suit, then you were begging to go with us and now you're thinking about fucking the four of us?" my twin asks with a snort. "Damn, girl. That's cold. I mean, you're fucking gorgeous and we'd make it *real* good for you, but I'm glad I'm not the one marrying you."

"Give her a break, Lightning—"

Shadow holds up a hand. "No, let her answer. If the cops come busting through the door, she's not the one whose pretty ass is

on the line. I want to know exactly what pile of shit I've stuck my boot in."

"Like I would marry you, anyway" she snaps, blue eyes sparking with the first real sign of spirit since she begged to come with us. Nice. Hot. "I didn't want any of this. Not that any of you care, but marrying Devin wasn't my idea. I barely know him."

"Then why the hell were you?" I ask. "Don't listen to these assholes. Nobody's going to make you do shit, but we're not running a fucking charity here. From where I'm sitting you look like a grown ass woman who can make her own fucking decisions. Last I checked, it's still a free country."

Her face falls. "I know, but... it's complicated."

"Girl, if you were trying to make it less complicated, this wasn't the way to do it," Outlaw says, shaking his head.

She stares down at her pink, manicured fingers, fidgeting with her dress and looking so lost it makes me want to fix whatever the fuck is going on in her life that made us seem like a good option. "I know. What am I doing? I should go back. I just needed to get away from there so I could breathe again. I didn't mean to cause trouble. I didn't know what else to do. I swear I'm not usually this useless. I keep waiting for my alarm to go off so I can wake up."

Lightning has the decency to look a little guilty. "So what's your deal? Is someone forcing you to marry that guy? Mesner?"

She licks her lips, and trust me, we're all fucking watching. "Yes... No... Not exactly, but I owe him a lot. It all made sense when he explained it, but there hasn't been time to think, you know?"

"Fucking rich girl problems." Outlaw sits down at the desk in the corner, and pulls out his gun to check it over. He might not have used it today, but he takes his gear seriously. He gestures at her. "Look at you. If you don't wanna fucking marry someone, then don't. It's not like you don't got options."

Harper blinks at him like she can't quite tell if that was an insult or a compliment. Knowing Outlaw, it was both. He's a touchy jackass, but not a bad guy at heart.

Shadow nods. "Your luggage is right there. Change clothes, get on a fucking plane and don't look back."

Her whole body slumps until her chin is resting on her knees. "I wish it was that easy. Even without Devin or my father, there are other people I can't walk away from."

"Look. As far as anyone knows, we're still holding you hostage right now," I say. "I'm not going to pretend to know your life. I don't understand why you'd agree to marry someone you don't seem to give a shit about, or why you got cold feet, but we're not going anywhere tonight. It's not much, but you said you need time to think. Stay here and figure your shit out."

"Really?"

Shadow runs a hand over his short, cropped hair and sighs. "In for a penny, in for a pound, right? Go change into something that makes this look a little less like the start to a porno and give us a minute to talk."

Harper's face flushes bright red and her jaw drops before she scrambles off the bed and rummages through the honeymoon luggage she hauled outta the limo, grabbing a bunch of shit and escaping to the bathroom. Damn she's cute when she blushes.

"This is a bad fucking idea," Outlaw says in a low, serious tone once she's out of the way. "She's Mesner's daughter. We're here to hit him in the wallet and go home, not start a fucking blood feud."

"No shit, Sherlock, but what is it we shoulda done exactly? Dumped her out of the fucking limo?" I drop my ass onto the bed she was sitting on. "She fucking begged us to take her. I thought she'd be gone the second she got the chance."

"Same," Shadow says with a nod. "We keep our heads down tonight, get our bikes back before the city wakes up and get

the fuck out of this town. I don't care how good her tits look in that dress. Harper isn't our fucking problem. Agreed?"

The shower turns on in the bathroom, and it's impossible not to imagine her in there. Naked with wet, silky rivers of water running down those tits we aren't supposed to think about, dripping off her ass and sliding between her legs.

"What about out of the dress? Lightning asks with a shit eating grin.

"A-fucking-greed?" Shadow bites out.

"Yeah, yeah..."

"If I hear any of you fuckers jerking off tonight, I'm going to fucking lose it," Outlaw growls. "Girls like her are traps. She looks all sweet and innocent, but she was wearing a dress paid for with Daddy's dirty drug money and, last minute jitters or no, she was all ready to marry whoever the fuck he pointed at until we gave her an easy out."

I wanna jump to her defense, but fight the urge. Lightning's my kin by blood, but every man in here is my brother, and Outlaw ain't wrong. My gut's telling me she's not fucking with us on purpose, but that doesn't mean getting messed up with her shit won't drown us all the same.

HARPER

I'M IN SOOOO MUCH TROUBLE.

I pull my phone out from under my boobs, where I shoved it earlier for safekeeping and turn on the shower to cover any noise. Can someone trace my location if I make a call? Or is that just a movie thing? Maybe I shouldn't risk it, but after the day I've had, I need to hear that Mom is okay. I hit the contact number for the rehab center and someone answers after a few rings.

"Lillyglade Medical Center, Penny speaking. How can I help you?"

"Hi, I'm calling to check on Eileen Simmons? This is her daughter."

"Oh! Harper! How are you, hun? How is your trip going?"

I look down at myself and a slightly manic giggle slips out. "Fine. It's great. Everything's fine."

"Good! Your mom's in great hands so take this time to recharge your batteries. Her recovery is right on schedule. We're dialing back the medications so she's starting to be more alert, but still sleeping most of the time. Her friends come to visit every day and talk to her. Don't you worry about a thing."

Something inside unwinds a tiny bit. Everything else might be messed up in my life right now, but Mom's safe. No matter what happens, all this has been worth it. She took care of me by herself my whole life and I didn't appreciate how hard that must've been until I had to do the same for her. "You'll tell her

I called if she asks for me, right? Tell her I'll be back as soon as I can."

"Of course, honey."

I finish the call and glance at the mirror over the sink. The woman that looks back isn't me. I don't even recognize her.

I've got to get out of this dress. No matter how beautiful it is, it doesn't feel like mine.

I nearly fall into the tub as I dance around contorting my arms to get at the hook between my shoulder blades. Once the hook is off and I'm working the zipper down, I'm nearly frantic as I pull it off, and rip out the bobby pins holding my hair in place, desperate to be free. I throw them aside, not caring where they go and ignoring the clatter of them bouncing around. The hotel bathroom looks like it hasn't seen an update since the nineties, but as soon as the hot water hits my face, I let out a breath I feel like I've been holding since I first laid eyes on Vincent Mesner and got a sinking, sour feeling in my stomach.

After scrubbing until my skin is flushed pink and my fingers wrinkly, I put on the silk pajamas that my father's stylist bought for me, along with all the other fancy clothes I was supposed to wear on my "honeymoon" with Devin. A guy I don't even know well enough to hate. If the criminals—hot criminals, but come on, let's be real—in the other room hadn't shown up when they did, we'd be finishing the reception and heading to the airport for our flight to Hawaii right now, probably.

What happened after they drove me away? Is my face all over the news? Are the police looking for me?

I could check my phone and answer that question myself, but I don't really want to know. I want to live in this bubble for just a little bit longer.

Someone bangs on the door. "Yo! Harper! Everything good in there?"

"I'll be out in a sec!" I give myself another pass in the mirror. I'd throw away the pajamas too if I could, but it's the only nightwear I've got. Other than that, I'm already feeling a lot

more like myself. The eyes looking back at me are bloodshot and strained, but with the war paint scrubbed off and my hair down, I suddenly see me again.

With my massive wedding dress in my arms like a shield, I leave the bathroom and meet four very curious stares. Someone must have gone out to a gas station or a convenience store, because there's a couple six packs of beer and bags of snacks spread out over the dresser.

"Fuck," the one called Shadow, who seems to be in charge, whispers under his breath. Mossy eyes with flecks of gold and green rake over me.

I thought feeling more like myself was a good thing, but I hadn't considered that without the makeup and dress, they are seeing *me*. Just me. Not Mesner's daughter, the kidnapped bride, but a twenty-one year old college drop-out, who's now very trapped in a hotel room with four very dangerous men.

They are all so different. Lightning is rougher than my usual type, but seems like the kind of guy I could meet at a bar, while his identical twin Thunder seems way more serious and intimidating. Outlaw, with his hard, black eyes and tousled red-brown curls, stares at me for a long moment before shaking his head and taking a swig out of the bottle in his hand. He's the one that makes me the most nervous. If all four were like him, I would've hopped out of the car at the first opportunity and never looked back.

"Sorry. I didn't mean to take so long," I mumble.

"We talked about it while you were in the shower. You take the bed by the wall and we'll rotate using the other one tonight," Shadow says, nodding towards the bed I was sitting on earlier.

"Are you sure? It's a double," I volunteer out of politeness before thinking about what that would mean. "Just to sleep. I didn't mean—"

"If you wanna share, ain't nobody here going to argue," Lightning says with a sparkle in his warm chocolate eyes. "One at a time or you think you can handle us all?"

“Why would you want to? I thought I was a cold bitch who left her fiancé at the altar. Maybe I’ll stab you in your sleep or something,” I grumble as I climb onto the bed.

Before I know it, my back is pressed into the mattress and there’s a whole lot of man staring straight down at me, Lightning’s face is close enough that I can smell the sweet, hoppy scent of beer on his breath. The lighthearted joker is nowhere to be found. “Was that a threat?”

“Search her,” Shadow snaps.

“I was joking!”

Thunder pulls the dress out of my arms and tosses it in the corner. Stone faced, he and the others watch as Lightning’s hands skim my body, not leaving an inch untouched. He’s fast and professional. In spite of the crude jokes, there’s nothing sexual about the way he pats me down. Obviously there’s no knife, but he does find the phone I have tucked into the waistband of the pajama pants. He hands it over to Shadow.

I curl up, shrinking away from Lightning. “It’s just a phone. There’s nothing to find there.”

Shadow holds it out. “Unlock it then.”

“Fine.” I’m telling the truth, but my hands still shake as I punch in my code and hand it back.

He frowns and puts the phone up to his ear. I hear Penny’s voice answer again, but he hangs up quickly without saying anything. “Why did you make that call?”

“None of your business. It had nothing to do with this.”

“Wake up! Everything you fucking do right now is our business. We aren’t playing a fucking game,” Outlaw snaps. He shakes his head with an angry growl. “She’s gonna get us killed with this bullshit and then go right back to her cushy little life.”

“You don’t know anything about me! That’s the place taking care of my mom! I check on her every day and I hadn’t called yet today. Are you happy? Keep the phone if it makes you feel

better. I might owe you a lot, but I don't owe you my life story."

"Harper, you have to see this from our side," Thunder starts.

"No, she's right. Leave her alone. We'll split up in the morning anyway," Shadow says, interrupting him. "The sooner we can all get the fuck out of here the better."

HARPER

THE ROOM IS PITCH BLACK, BUT SOMETHING WAKES ME UP. Maybe it's just because I feel like I'm pressed under a weighted electric blanket, solid and close against my back. It's holding me close, and it's such a nice way to slowly wake up. Warm breath skates over my neck in time with the sound of slow, deep breathing.

Sometime during the night one of them must have taken me up on the offer to share the bed. I don't know which of us snuggled up to the other, but as nice as it feels, I don't want to give anyone the wrong idea. I slide my hand between us, trying to make a little room. It's not until my fingers hit bare, warm skin that I realize exactly how much trouble I'm in. That I don't snatch my hand back right away must be because I'm still half asleep. It's definitely not because there is just no way that what's pressing against my palm could be what I think it is. Do they even come that big?

The few fumbling experiments I've done with boyfriends in the past did *not* prepare me for this.

His breath hitches, and I've never pulled my hand back as quickly as I do just now.

Oh.

My.

God.

I just touched...

“Well, that’s one way to say good morning,” comes Thunder’s voice from behind me, rough with sleepiness.

Oh no. I squeeze my eyes shut and try to turn back time. He’s going to think that... that I... “I didn’t mean to!”

“Didn’t realize what?” Lightning asks from across the room. He shines his phone flashlight our way.

“Some of us are fucking sleeping,” groans Outlaw.

It’s a good thing we’re going our separate ways today, because I don’t know if I can look any of them in the eyes after this. Especially Thunder.

He laughs behind me, a low sleepy chuckle that makes me flutter in places it probably shouldn’t. His hand comes to rest on my hip, but outside the covers. “As flattered as I am that you can’t keep your hands off me, I don’t think we have time for that kind of shit. What time is it?”

“I didn’t do it on purpose!”

“Keep telling yourself that, sweetheart.”

My face burns like it’s on fire. A little hotter, and maybe it’ll just melt me away so I don’t have to face him. The bed next to us creaks and the overhead light flickers on.

“Time to move,” Shadow says, voice still rough. “According to the girl at the desk last night, their laundry service should show up in about a half an hour.”

“Why would she tell you that?”

He looks at me with the kind of smirk that tells me the answer without words. All he’s wearing are boxer briefs, and the view has me swallowing hard. These guys might be bad news, but that doesn’t change the fact that he looks sculpted for pleasure. His broad chest tapering to a tight V, covered in scars and tattoos, with long, strong legs. “I’m going to take a quick shower.” It’s impossible not to watch as he pads with panther-like grace to the bathroom.

Lightning laughs out loud. “Guess one cock’s not enough.”

Thunder chuckles, and even Outlaw snorts in spite of clearly hating me.

“Don’t be gross,” I grumble.

“Nothing gross about being human,” says Thunder, not hiding the amusement in his tone. “Look all you want. Shit, I’d let you do more than that if we had the fucking time. I gotta ask, Harper. Tell me to fuck off if it’s none of my business, but we gotta wait for Shadow to get outta the shower and you don’t seem like the kind of pushover that would just do whatever the fuck she was told. What the fuck is going on?”

Ugh. I sit up, running my finger through my hair to comb out the tangles from letting it dry overnight. Last night, I couldn’t imagine spilling all of this to my kidnappers. Maybe it’s having gotten some sleep, or just wanting someone to listen, but today I suddenly have a hard time keeping it in. “It’s a long story. I never knew my father. Vincent. No matter how many times I asked, Mom wouldn’t say a word. All she ever told me was that it was another life, best forgotten. We didn’t have any other family that I knew about, so I figured she must’ve been disowned when she got pregnant with me. She was young. I never wanted her to feel sad about it, so I stopped asking eventually.”

“So Mesner was the one that tracked you down?” Lightning asks.

I shake my head. “No. A couple years ago Mom had a stroke. The doctors thought it was a random thing, but she kept having these episodes, and they couldn’t figure out what was going on. She... she kept getting worse and the doctors ran out of ideas that our crappy insurance would cover.” Even knowing she has a good chance at recovering now, it’s hard to talk about it. About dropping out of school to take care of her and work longer hours when she couldn’t anymore. About knowing there were potential treatments available but a computer somewhere didn’t think my mother was worth it. “A couple months ago, she was in the hospital. I was scared she wasn’t going to make it, so I started going through her things and found an old box full of stuff from when she was a teenager. There was a picture of her with this guy...”

“Mesner?”

“Yeah, but I had no idea who he was. There was just a V with a heart on the back, and an email. I wasn’t really expecting anything, but I was sad and alone, and this was someone who—even if he wasn’t my father—was a part of Mom’s past. Maybe it would at least be someone who could mourn with me after she was gone, you know?”

Shadow picks that moment to come back out, skin glistening and still only wearing his boxer briefs. “So you sent him an email and he just claimed to be your father?”

“The fucker’s worth hundreds of millions, if not more. No fucking way,” Outlaw says dismissively. “I bet he’s used to bitches claiming their kids are his.”

“Don’t be an asshole,” Lightning growls.

I shake my head. “It’s probably true. We wrote back and forth a couple times before I asked if he knew of anyone that could be my father. He was the one that arranged for me to do a swab kit. A week later, the doctors were planning Mom’s new treatments and he was arranging for me to come out here to meet him once she was out of the woods.”

Shadow looks disgusted. “Life doesn’t mean shit unless it’s worth cold, hard cash, apparently.”

“Wait. If your mom’s still recovering, how long have you been here?”

“A little over a week I guess?”

“So you’ve known this fucker for months, max. Only met him in person a fucking *week* ago and you were walking down the aisle with some random asshole he wanted you to marry? What the ever-loving fuck is that about?” Thunder spits out. “This is some daytime TV level shit.”

“I know! Why do you think I asked you to take me with you?” I throw my arms in the air, forgetting that I’m not wearing a bra, and then slap my arms back over my chest. But not before they all get a good look at my girls swinging free with the headlights clearly visible under the thin silk. They pretend it didn’t happen, but Lightning’s really bad at hiding his smirk.

“Look, I came out here thinking my father was just some rich business guy. Real estate, investments, I don’t know and so long as it paid for Mom’s treatments and the fancy rehab place, I didn’t ask questions. The day after I got here he introduced me to Devin as his second-in-command or whatever, and then the next thing I knew, he was talking about how it would be so much easier to make sure Mom and I were taken care of if he could move money around. I’m not a lawyer, but he made it sound like if Devin was family, then they could do taxes differently, or... I have no idea.”

“That sounds shady as fuck,” Thunder growls, so deeply I can feel the vibrations through the bed. “He’s using you, Harper.”

It’s both hard and a little gratifying to hear someone else say what I’ve been feeling. “But he’s my father, right? He said it would only be for two years and it would just be for show. He saved my mother! Even if he’s a horrible person, isn’t putting my life on hold for a couple years still worth it?”

“That’s fucked up.” Thunder slips out of bed to pull on his clothes. It’s like watching a mostly naked mountain move. He barely seems real, and there are two of them! Lightning isn’t any less impressive.

“I know...”

“I get it, though,” Shadow says softly. “My mother raised me by herself, and if she’d been fucking dying? I’d do a lot worse to keep her breathing.”

Outlaw stands. His build is leaner than the others, but nobody would call him weak. His tattoos ripple and sway as his muscles move, and they’re everywhere. Almost everywhere below his chin has something inked on it, different colors, different styles, different everything, like a living patchwork. And studs through his nipples, I realize when he turns my way before pulling on his shirt. I’ll freely admit it’s really hard not to stare at so much masculine perfection, each mouthwatering in their own way.

“This is all touching and shit, but we’ve gotta move.”

“You’re coming back, right?” I know we can’t stay together forever, but the idea of being alone and having to decide what to do terrifies me.

Shadow and Thunder exchange a serious look and Shadow shakes his head slightly. “We have to get out of town, Harper. Your asshole father won’t cooperate too much with the cops, but we still did a lot of fucking damage yesterday and our pictures are probably all over the fucking place. The longer we’re away from the club, the more dangerous it is for us.” His tone is gentle, but crushing.

“Right. Of course.” They’re in a club, or a gang or whatever. They have somewhere to go that will protect them. People waiting for them.

“Look, nobody knows you’re here,” Lightning says. “You can take time to think and figure your shit out. Just go back and be with your mom maybe. She’s already getting better, right? What’s Mesner going to do?”

Thunder sends a smile my way. “Unless you want to come with us? Find yourself a good biker or two and settle down.”

“More like three or four,” Lightning says with a laugh.

“I hate to interrupt the goodbyes, but the van just pulled up,” Outlaw says, pulling the curtain back just a tiny bit. “That’s our ride.”

The room feels like a vacuum when they leave. The four of them took up so much space, both physically and with their sheer presence. I flip the lock behind them and sit on the empty bed where the pillow is still dented from Thunder’s head. Shadow turned my phone off last night, but he left it for me and I turn it back on. As soon as it starts up, a cascade of missed call and message notifications scrolls across the lock screen. I swipe them all away. I’m not ready to face it. Not yet. So I turn on the TV and start flipping channels instead.

“...is still missing after last night’s shocking events at the Diamond Oasis Hotel and Casino. The LVMPD are on the case, with checkpoints on all roads out of the city. The investigation is ongoing, and if you have any information, the

contact information is on the bottom of the screen. It's hoped that the kidnappers are still within city limits, but no ransom demands have been made public as of yet. Mr. Mesner is appealing to the public to help return his daughter, and is offering a million dollars to any tip that results in her safe return. In other news—”

I turn the TV off.

A million dollars?

I don't know whether to be flattered that he's willing to pay so much to get me back, or to be bitter that he's willing to throw that much money at the problem while trying to manipulate me into a two year marriage contract for tax purposes.

A knock on the door sends my heart rate through the roof. Maybe the guys left something important behind? As quietly as I can, I slip off the bed and sneak over to the door to peek through the little spy hole. There's a man out there, with a short wheat-colored beard, wearing a dark trench coat.

And flanking him is a small army of police officers.

OUTLAW

“THANKS,” SHADOW SAYS UNDER HIS BREATH, SLIPPING several large bills to the laundry service worker as we climb into the back of their van. The limo was a better way to travel than hiding out with dirty sheets, but about as subtle as a brick to the face.

“You look like someone just shot your fucking dog,” Lightning says, giving me a nudge. It’s tight quarters in the back of the delivery van, especially for the four of us. “I thought you’d be glad to get out of there and leave Harper behind.”

“I am, but this whole situation’s fucked. It’s not like I *want* her to go back to Mesner. I just didn’t want her to look at us like she just fucking did. Like we can fix it. Her fucked up life isn’t our problem. Twenty-four hours ago we didn’t know she existed.”

“No shit.” Thunder’s holding onto a bar half covered in clothes hangers for support. “But now we do. Doesn’t matter anyway. We’ll be back on our bikes soon.”

“She’s Mesner’s daughter, for Christ’s sake. Stop feeling sorry for her.”

Shadow snorts. “Like fuck she is. He might be the man who contributed the DNA, but he had fuck-all to do with who she is today. Trust me. My real father is the man who taught me how to be who I am and I’ve got exactly zero of his blood. Shit, Eagle-eye is more my father than the asshole who knocked up my mother. Fuck him.”

I have no right to judge. Neither of my parents gave enough of a shit to stick around, but maybe that's why I don't trust Harper's sad act. Even if what she's said is true, she's a grown fucking woman and even if Mesner's a human shit stain, he fucking claimed her. "She'll run right back to him. Mark my fucking words. You're all just soft because you want to fuck her."

"And you don't?" Lightning grins my way. "Unless your dick fell off and you didn't tell us, I mean."

Fuck. I give him the finger. Are we there yet? I fucking hate it, because of course I want her. She looked like something out of a movie all fucking made up in that dress, and even better out of it. If sex was all it was, I'd be happy to have those legs wrapped around me, but everything about her screams complicated. "Plenty of sluts to fuck at the club, without worrying about their drug lord fathers."

Shadow holds up a hand, cutting off our argument, while he puts the other one on my shoulder and gives it a squeeze. "Shut it, we're almost there. Keep your eyes open for trouble. We get our bikes and get the fuck outta here."

The laundry van slows down and finally comes to a stop. Without looking, the driver bangs on the wall separating us from the front. Lightning unlatches the back door and pushes it open. We're right near the garage where we stashed our bikes.

As Shadow pushes past me, I give him a nudge. "I can fucking take care of myself."

"I know," he says, then jumps out.

I roll my eyes, but go after him, then slam the door behind me before giving the back of the car a couple of whacks with the flat of my palm. The van takes off, leaving us alone in the city as it's just starting to wake up.

The bikes are right where we left them, lined up in a single parking spot with a tarp thrown over them. The way we did it, it could be anything under there. At least I don't think anyone's first guess would be four motorcycles, instead of

someone taking care of their sports car or some such shit. And no one's around. It's almost too fucking quiet.

Thunder looks around, then nods. "Let's fucking do this."

We get as far as pulling off the tarp when the door from the stairwell up to the higher floors slams open, revealing two cops in full riot gear with barrels pointed our way. And then it's like they're coming out of the fucking walls, from behind parked cars, behind the thick concrete posts that support the building, from fucking everywhere. We're surrounded.

"Freeze!" yells one of the closest ones, his assault rifle pointed right at us. "No sudden movements. Don't do anything stupid."

We look at each other, slowly moving our hands so they are visible. "Easy," whispers Shadow. "Not yet."

Fuck.

The cop that seems to be in charge lowers his gun, trusting his people to keep us covered, then pulls up his mask. "We're just looking to talk. Don't give us trouble and we won't return the favor. Got it?"

"So talk," growls Shadow.

"Not here. My boss is waiting back at your little hideout with the girl."

God. Fucking. Dammit. I knew she would cause more trouble.

"We can't fucking trust them," I hiss between my teeth, and Lightning nods. I never met a cop I liked. The best I got to say about them is that some of them are just uptight assholes, instead of complete fucking psychopaths.

"How do we know you're not gonna lock us up or shoot as soon as we agree? Who's your boss?"

"You don't." The cop's face is carved stone. "And if you don't come with us, you'll never find out, but you've got a chance to come out on top here. We'll get your bikes back to the hotel and if you don't do anything stupid, everyone stays happy."

Happy? Ain't nobody here happy.

“Do what he says.” Shadow’s voice is low, tight and fucking dangerous. I know the look on that face. If anyone so much as blinks, Shadow will break his fucking neck.

Riding back to the hotel in an unmarked car makes me miss the laundry van. He didn’t lie about taking us back, at least. We pull up near the room and get herded towards the door like sheep. Did she fucking sell us out?

The cop knocks a quick pattern, then pushes the door open. There’s a man waiting for us with Harper along with a few more cops. He’s not wearing a uniform, but everything about him screams police. Harper’s sitting on the bed she slept in, once again curled up against the headboard with her legs pulled close.

She looks up when we come in. “Hey.”

SHADOW

“ARE YOU IN CHARGE? WHAT THE FUCK’S GOING ON?” I demand.

His eyes widen a little, like he was expecting us to walk in with our tails between our legs. Fuck that. We’re here and not in cuffs at a station, so he needs something from us. I’ll play ball if I have to, but I’m not going to whine or beg and he needs to know that right from the fucking jump.

I don’t know if Harper called the cops or not, but if she did, I’m pretty sure she’s regretting it now because she’s looking about as happy with them as she did with us when we first brought her here. I cross my arms over my chest and grab her attention. “You okay?”

She nods, looking nervous as fuck.

“Nathan Carnell,” the plain clothes cop says as he takes a seat at the desk. He’d almost seem casual if there weren’t two cops in the room with us and more outside, all of them armed to the fucking teeth. “Special investigations unit. I hear you boys redecorated the Diamond Oasis.” He doesn’t sound sad about it.

Lightning shrugs. “Don’t know what you’re talking about. Do we fucking look like we’re into interior design?”

“Huh. Must have been four other Screaming Eagles then. What a coincidence.” Carnell scratches his short, blond beard. His eyes are almost as richly blue as Harper’s, but he’s a far sight from pretty. It looks like he ran into someone’s fist recently, with a bruised ring around his eye and a bandage

around his shoulder that's peeking out of his collar. Guess we aren't the only ones he's pissed off recently. "Luckily, there was a lot of property damage but nobody got seriously hurt, or I'd have to look more closely at the security tapes. But since they didn't, I'll just take your word for it and not drag you in for attempted murder."

"Oh, trust me, Nate. If we'd wanted to kill someone, this wouldn't be the conversation we'd be having. It's a good thing for all of us that nobody here was involved, right?"

He laughs. Straight up laughs. "Exactly. And you just happened to run into Mesner's daughter after she was publicly kidnapped from her own wedding."

"Enough bullshitting. What the fuck do you want?"

Carnell nods. "You're right. Let's get to the point. You and your friends here are nothing to me. It's Mesner I'm interested in." He looks around the room. "If I had to guess, she was just a convenient way out, and you had no intention of hurting her or holding her any longer than necessary, but good luck convincing a judge of that."

"She's fine. We didn't fucking touch her," says Thunder.

"I'm not the one you'd have to convince." He holds up a hand just as Lightning's about to argue. "She told me the same, and for what it's worth I believe her, which is why I had you picked up and brought here instead of brought in. If she'd given me a different story, this would all have played out very differently. So no, I'm not looking to pin kidnapping on you."

"So what do you want?" snarls Outlaw.

"You're going to help me nail Mesner's ass to the wall. The Screaming Eagles seem to have a bone to pick with him, and so do I, so think of it as a cooperative effort that will benefit us both."

I look at the others, and a whole conversation passes without saying a word. This guy has us over a barrel, so we're at least going to have to hear him out. "What do you want us to do? Kill him?" Wouldn't be the first time a law abiding citizen used us to do their dirty work. Or at least tried.

Harper gasps, but Carnell lets just the hint of a smirk touch his lips. “Nothing nearly that violent. Give us a minute, will you?” he asks his flunkies.

“You sure, sir?” the one that was in charge when they picked us up asks. He doesn’t look thrilled at the idea.

“I’ll be fine.”

“Yes, Sir. We’ll be right outside.”

And then it’s just the six of us. “Taking a chance aren’t you? We’ve already taken one hostage,” I note, working my shoulders to loosen them.

“I’ve gotten to be a pretty good judge of character over the years. Are you going to give me trouble?” He raises a questioning eyebrow. Fuck, this guy is annoying.

“Nah.” Thunder shakes his head. “Too much to lose, and you know it. If you don’t want him dead, what *do* you want us to do?”

“Wait.” Harper swallows nervously when we all turn to look at her, but she puts on a determined expression.

I don’t like that she’s here, listening to us ask if this cop wants us to ice her fucking father. She’s gotta be in her early twenties, but she looks so fucking young and vulnerable right now. I’m not sure why I feel so damn protective. Probably because she’s gotten a raw fucking deal growing up, and fuck, I can appreciate that. And now she’s right into the middle of this shitstorm when all she wanted was someone to talk to about her mother.

“You’re all talking like I’m not even here. I know he isn’t the nicest guy in the world, but what has my father done to deserve all this? Maybe he’s just misunderstood. I mean, he did step up and help make sure my mother was taken care of.”

“Harper,” I say, trying to keep my tone gentle. “Do you know how your dad makes his money?”

“Real estate? He owns the casino, right? I did some searching before I came out here to meet him. It seemed like pretty normal business stuff.”

Thunder nods. “Oh, he does all that, but that’s not how he got started, and it’s not what keeps the money flowing. Your daddy’s behind about a fifth of all the drugs distributed on this side of the country. His network is huge.”

Her eyes widen and her face goes pale. “Drugs? But... why would he need to... No. That doesn’t make sense. I thought he might be doing some funny tax stuff, but he’s not some kind of crime boss.”

“It’s true.” Outlaw snaps. “Didn’t you wonder why guys like us were here to send him a message? Your daddy got greedy, even for a drug lord. We usually ignore it, but his quality control has been slipping lately. People are fucking dying. He didn’t listen when we warned him, so someone had to come make sure he knew we weren’t going to let it slide.”

“Outlaw...” Lightning warns.

“Doesn’t matter. I’m done.”

I shake my head. “He’s right. Your father has a lot of lives on his conscience. He’s not a good man, Harper.”

She looks at me, at Outlaw, at Thunder and Lightning, before she settles on Carnell, the cop in the room. “Are they telling the truth?”

“I wish they weren’t. I’m sorry you’re caught up in this, but I can’t let this opportunity slip through my fingers.” Carnell pushes off the desk to pace. “For the first time, I’ve got something that he truly wants and cares about, and that’s you.”

“I don’t know if I can be a part of this.” Harper looks away, obviously conflicted. I wish I knew what the fuck was going on in that pretty head of hers. She’s not stupid, but even if she hated his fucking guts, Mesner still has a grip on her through her mother.

“You already are,” Carnell says with what sounds like honest sympathy. “As far as Mesner’s concerned, you were kidnapped as part of a plot to hit him where it hurts. He’ll be waiting for someone to get in touch with a ransom message or some sort of demand.”

“Which is where we come in,” Thunder says, nodding.

“Exactly. I’ve been after Mesner for years and years. Carnell’s eyes turn fiery and his voice goes tight with sudden passion. He fucking wants this. “But it stops here. So here’s the deal. You contact him and set up a meeting. I’ll handle the details. What I need is for you to get him talking so we have enough to bring him in and start taking him down. Do that and you’re free to ride home. But if you fuck with me, I’m going to bring down the full fury of the law. I have the resources to put all of you behind bars for a long, long time. And don’t think running away is going to save you. Is that clear?”

Lightning and I nod. “Crystal,” I say.

Carnell turns to Harper. “And Miss, I hate putting you in this position, but your father is a very dangerous man, who has more lives than I can imagine on his conscience. I realize this might be hard for you, but he belongs in a cell. Is this going to be a problem?”

“Was that a threat? Because I don’t like your fucking implication that she’s an issue to be taken care of.” We barely know her, and she’s not my woman to defend, but Harper wouldn’t be in this situation if it wasn’t for us, and I’m not the kind of man who can forget that.

Harper tucks her hair behind her ears, looking down at the comforter. “I don’t know...”

I can’t fucking imagine how it feels to think that she finally found the solution to everything wrong in her life, and then it just turns to more and more shit for each day that passes. I cross over and crouch down next to the side of the bed, taking her hand. Her fingers are so fucking small, with those perfect pink wedding nails. “Nobody’s going to force you to do anything. You got me?”

Her fingers close around mine and squeeze.

Carnell sighs. “If she won’t play, maybe we can hook him with just the four of you, but we don’t have time to waste. It’s already past when he’d be expecting contact. I need at least a couple of you to come with me, so we can plan this out.”

Thunder nods at me. “Me and Lightning will stick around and keep an eye on Harper, make sure she’s okay.”

“Good. I’ll take Outlaw. We’ll be back ASAP.” I don’t like splitting up, but as team lead, I need to deal with Carnell and his fucking plan. Outlaw will have my back, and I trust Thunder to keep things from going off the rails.

As we follow Carnell out, I wonder what the fuck we’ve gotten ourselves into. I trust Carnell about as far as I can fucking throw him, and I have absolutely no fucking faith in his plan being able to draw Mesner out, but we don’t have much fucking choice.

If he betrays us, I’m gonna fucking make sure he goes down with us.

HARPER

“YOU OKAY?” LIGHTNING SETTLES ON THE SAME BED AS ME.

I don't know when I stopped being scared and started to think of them as being almost on my side, but having him here is actually comforting. Which is stupid, right? I heard Shadow ask that guy if he wanted them to kill Vincent with the kind of tone someone else might ask if they should be the one to order pizza. But if my father is really some kind of dangerous drug lord... maybe it's best to have guys like these bikers on my side.

“I don't know. Not really, but it's a lot to take in.” I draw a deep breath, and let it out slowly. In, and out. “Up until a few months ago, my life was working at a nursing home and taking care of Mom. There was literally nothing special about me. I got average grades, shared a middle of the road apartment with my mother and got my drama from TV like everyone else. Now I'm hiding out in a motel while a cop and a bunch of bikers plot to bring down my father who is apparently a horrible drug kingpin.”

“Laid out like that, it is pretty fucked up.” Thunder drops on the other bed, but close enough that he could reach out and touch me if he wanted to.

I shake my head in disbelief. “For just a little while, I thought something had finally gone right, you know? Vincent seemed so happy when he found out I was his daughter, and he was the answer to all my prayers. Everyone who says money doesn't buy happiness has never had to sit and watch someone they love die because they didn't have it. When Mom couldn't

work anymore, we only had what I was making, and I had to always balance getting as many hours as I could with needing to take care of her. We were lucky enough to have some good neighbors and she has friends, but they all have their own lives too. I had to start going to the food pantry just to be able to stretch the budget between paychecks.”

Ugh, I don't want to cry in front of these guys, but the corners of my eyes are stinging, and I can't help it.

“Fuck,” Lightning breathes out. “I hear ya.”

I shake my head. “Do you? I've always thought I was a good person, but when you were all telling me about what my father was like, all I could think was maybe it wasn't that bad. Want to know the truth? I already figured he was into something shady. I never thought drugs or anything like that, but at least sketchy business stuff. Rich people crime, you know? If it meant my mother got better and I didn't have to worry about where the food was coming from, I was willing to look the other way. I ran because the idea of marrying a stranger freaked me out, not because he was using me for some kind of tax scheme. Oh God. I'm a horrible person.” Hot, frustrated tears slide down my cheeks.

Thunder shakes his head and cups my chin in one of his big, rough hands. His thumb strokes away a tear. “Nah, you're just fucking human. The world isn't black and white, baby. It just takes some people longer to learn that lesson than others.”

“Yeah, look at us. Don't know if you've noticed, but we aren't exactly fine upstanding citizens,” Lightning says with a mischievous grin.

“I guess so.”

Thunder lets out a deep, belly laugh. “Baby, we were sent here to drop millions of dollars of glass to send a fucking message. You said you were going to look the other way about white collar shit? We don't give a fuck that your daddy is into drugs. The problem was that he got sloppy and it was putting our people in danger. More importantly, our people. Not a single one of us will fucking judge you for taking what you were offered.”

Lightning nods. “Gotta say, though. I’m glad you aren’t married to that other fucker. Means I still have a shot.”

His teasing puts a little smile on my face. “But I’d be in Hawaii right now, so I don’t know. It sounds a lot more fun than this.”

“Dunno about that.” Lightning leans a little closer. My heart skips a beat, but unlike last time, when he was checking me for weapons, it’s not fear that causes it. “There’s a lot of ways of keeping entertained if you’re creative.”

I’m pretty sure he’s not talking about board games. “That’s probably not a good idea.”

Lightning laughs. “Oh, it’s a great fucking idea. But I get it. Finding out your daddy’s a fuckstain is probably a mood killer.”

Right. That.

I don’t correct him, because there’s been enough honesty. They don’t need to hear about how I didn’t have much time for dating the past few years and haven’t made it past third base. If everything had gone to plan, I’d be on my “honeymoon” right now, getting used to the idea of at least two more years of membership in the V-club. It definitely wasn’t going to happen with Devin. We had about as much chemistry as flat soda.

I must have a thing for bad boys, because I’ve had more dirty thoughts since ending up with these men than I’ve had in ages. Even now, with Thunder and Lightning next to me, their T-shirts clinging so hard to their bodies, I can’t help but wonder if Lightning’s as big as Thunder? They’re twins, right? Wouldn’t everything be identical?

Am I blushing? I feel like I might be. When I look up, I find Thunder watching me with one eyebrow raised.

Steering the conversation back before I say something stupid, I latch onto what Lightning said. “What about you guys? I bet your dad wasn’t a drug lord.”

He shrugs. “Nah, he wasn’t so bad, to be honest. He did his best, but our parents were better at making babies than they

were taking care of them. Living was always tight. Too little room, too little food. We've seen our share of charity."

"Yeah. Too fucking much." Thunder grimaces at the memory. "We took off as soon as we could."

"Ran away?" I look back and forth between them. They don't seem like the type who would run away from anything.

Thunder laughs without a lot of humor. "That makes it sound like we were angsty kids. We just got to the point where we knew we had each other, and we could make our own way. Take the load off our parents. We didn't know shit, of course. It was a rough learning curve, but we never went back."

"Wow. How old were you?"

"Thirteen," Lightning says. "We were always big, though. Everyone thought we were older, and it made it easier to get work and defend ourselves. We worked and fought and fucked our way around town until we were grown. We got into motorcycles along the way. Kept us from getting into too much trouble."

"Not everyone would agree," Thunder adds with a chuckle.

"Anyway, one of the guys we did work for was a member of the Eagles. Sponsored us as prospects, and in spite of being know-it-all little shits when we started, Eagle-eye must've seen something there he could work with. We've calmed down a little. Right?" He glances over at Thunder with an amused smirk.

"One of us has, at any rate," he says with a snort.

Thirteen? I can't even imagine what it would have been like to be on my own that young. The way they talk about it now makes it sound like no big deal. Like an adventure, but I bet they're leaving out a lot. "Wow. That's... I could never have done that."

"You didn't have to. I don't know your Mom, but you wouldn't have done all this for her if she wasn't pretty fucking great."

“Haven’t even seen our parents in years,” says Lightning. “Last time I saw our father, he walked right by me on the street. I don’t think he even fucking recognized me. Looked about eighty even though he’s not even sixty.”

His words hit me hard. I never knew my father, but I grew up with so much love. It makes me want to go back in time and hug both of them so hard. “That’s horrible!”

Lightning looks a little taken aback. “It’s not a big deal.”

“It is! Oh God, I’m c—crying again,” I stammer out around a sob.

“Shut the fuck up and come here.” His voice isn’t angry, but it’s not a question. It’s an order.

Would a hug be so bad? I think I could use one just now. So I swallow my protest and do as he says, pushing off the headboard and basically crawling into his lap.

“That’s more like it.” Lightning envelops me in his powerful arms and pulls me tightly against him. He’s so big and warm, it’s like I’m in a cocoon. I tense at first, but then I relax against him, resting my head on his broad chest. His heart thumps steadily through his shirt, a calming rhythm in my ear.

“You still crying, baby?”

I shake my head, rubbing against him like I’m trying to get his scent. “N—no.”

His strong fingers slide into my hair, combing slowly through it until the ends of it slips from between them. Then he does it again, and it feels nice.

Strong fingers start to massage my legs, and it takes longer than I want to admit to realize that it can’t possibly be Lightning, since he’s still holding me and running his fingers through my hair. Okay, so having more than one guy around might have some benefits, I can’t deny that. The way they were talking before, it sounded like they were no strangers to sharing, as wild as that sounds. I don’t even know what sex with one guy is like, what would I even do with two?

“That feels nice.” I sigh against Lightning’s chest, while I wiggle my toes, stretching the tense muscles that Thunder is massaging loose.

“All part of the honeymoon service.” Thunder chuckles softly. “You looked so fucking beautiful in that dress. If I’d been the one waiting for you to walk down the aisle, I would’ve torn apart the fucking city before I let anyone take you away.”

I shake my head a little. “It wasn’t me in that dress.”

“It woulda been if you wanted the man you dressed up in it for.”

Thunder slides his hands further up my legs until he’s rubbing my thighs. I should be stopping this, right? But I don’t. I have no idea how far I’ll let them go, but we’re not there yet.

I’ve been alone for so long.

“Just relax, Harper,” murmurs Lightning and presses his lips against the top of my head. It’s a soft kiss, testing my reaction, but to me it’s like a... well, a lightning bolt that fires up every single nerve ending that I have. I let out a little contented hum, and he takes it as permission to do it again.

“I’m not sure I should—”

“Then let’s find out for sure.” Thunder moves past my thighs and up to my hips, where his fingertips slip underneath the hem of my shirt. The touch of his rough fingers against my bare stomach is indescribable.

Lightning hooks a finger under my chin and makes me look up at him. His eyes are smoldering dark chocolate pools, drawing me in. So much that it’s not until his lips touch mine that I realize exactly how close we’ve gotten.

It’s not my first kiss, but it might as well be, because no one’s ever kissed me like this. He tightens his grip in my hair until it pulls at the roots, and holds me in place as he kisses me senseless, his thick tongue playing with mine, claiming with an intensity that I can feel all the way down in my toes. My core just went from pretty hot, straight to being a soaking molten mess.

There's a sudden release at my waist, and I realize Thunder just popped open my jeans.

Oh wow, but...

It's like a warning shot, because he slides his hand up over my stomach instead of moving further down. He caresses me, his fingertips playing along my sides and just skirting the sensitive skin below my breasts. Teasing me, testing me. Daring me to react.

Lightning pulls away, though he doesn't relax his grip. I don't have a choice but to look up at him, not that it's a hardship. My eyes go right to those full lips that I want right back on mine. I'm breathing hard, and they haven't even done anything to me yet. Not really.

But I think they're going to.

And I think I want it.

HARPER

LIGHTNING TEARS OFF MY SHIRT, PULLING IT OVER MY HEAD and throwing it across the room. We crash back together, breathing hard as he presses his lips against mine with so much ferocity it stings. But I'm right there with him, my tongue demanding that he help me forget everything. Thunder slides into position behind me, trapping me between their two powerful bodies.

"Is this what you need, honey?" Thunder rumbles in my ear, his hands sliding up my ribs to cover my breasts. My moan is all the answer he needs.

My bra offers no protection from his clever fingers, and he easily finds my hard nipples through the soft fabric, rolling them between his thumbs and index fingers. Sparks light a trail of fire from the tips of my breasts straight to between my legs.

Lightning pulls away, but only to turn me towards his brother, whose mouth eagerly takes his place. Their mouths and bodies feel identical, but their techniques aren't. Lightning kissed me like the world was ending and we had to make every second count. Thunder takes his time. He's demanding and in control. As he makes me his own, he pulls the cups of my bra down, freeing my breasts for them both to see and touch. Skin on skin, every touch is intoxicating.

Tangled together on the bed, the three of us move together in sync. I feel the button on my jeans come loose, and then Lightning is tugging them down over my hips. I gasp into Thunder's mouth, when I realize my panties are coming with them.

What am I doing? This is about as far as I've ever gone before, and now I'm about to do it with two guys I just met? And they're twins!

I force my head back. "Wait, maybe—"

"Shh." Thunder puts a finger on my lips. "This is just a little taste to take the edge off. You deserve to have a little fun before the shit hits the fan again."

Screw it. So much has gone wrong the last few days. Weeks. Years, even. He's right. Why shouldn't I let myself be a little wild?

So when my jeans slip over my feet, I don't fight it. Lightning presses a kiss to my thigh, following it up with a gentle nip of his teeth. They position me so my butt's right on the edge of the bed. The only things I'm left wearing are my socks and my bra, which isn't hiding anything with the cups pulled down.

Thunder leans in and latches his lips around my nipple.

Oh my God.

His hair is short, but I grip what I can with both hands and hold on tight. The hot swirl of his dexterous tongue around my sensitive bud has my breath coming in moaning gasps. I arch my back, pressing my breast up into his hungry mouth. My grip on his hair tightens, but if it hurts, he doesn't show it. If anything, he kisses and nibbles my skin even harder.

I lose track of Lightning for a minute, but there's no mistaking his big strong hands as he grabs the backs of my thighs and pushes my legs back. My first reaction is to resist, but maybe that's just years of always making the sensible choice. And look what that got me. Nothing! Right now, all I want is to let him do whatever he pleases. I relax and he opens me to him.

"Fuck, you're beautiful," he says reverently.

Maybe it's just as well that Thunder's head is in the way, because I'm pretty sure I'm blushing like a tomato. Lightning's right *there*. What if I look weird? Or he doesn't—

My train of thought completely derails when Lightning's tongue slides right through my slickness like he wants to taste

all of me at once. I've never felt anything like it, thick, wide and devilishly talented. Outlaw's tongue piercing flashes through my mind for a second, but I shove the thought away as fast as I can. Aren't two guys enough?

It's a good thing Lightning has a strong grip on my thighs, or I'd worry about how hard I'm squeezing. His powerful fingers dig into my flesh as he holds me open and paints my pussy with his tongue. I'm locked between them, and with every tug of Thunder's mouth around my nipples and the way his twin is working me over, it's not going to be long before I lose it. I'm already breathing hard and getting goosebumps as the heat inside me grows warmer and warmer.

My virginity is hanging by a thread. No one's ever made me come before. I thought I was pretty good with my fingers, but twin tongues are a kind of magic I could never have imagined.

Muscles tight and my body quivering beneath them, I press my ass into the bed as I arch into their touch. I squeeze my eyes tight, drowning in the sensation of soft, insistent, wet tongues against my skin. Lightning finds my clit, circling his tongue around it in a steady, swirling pattern that inches me closer and closer to exploding.

"Oh God, oh God, oh God," I chant.

Thunder lets my nipple go. He stretches out beside me and turns my head to face him, his lips rough against mine as his tongue demands to be let in. His strong hand covers my throat, holding me gently but firmly in place as he kisses me crazy. I grip his shirt frantically for something to hold on to, just as Lightning slips a thick finger inside me.

"She's so fucking wet for us," he says with a smug chuckle.

I can't even be mad because he's right. I squeeze tight as the orgasm builds deep in my core. Even just his finger is a stretch. Their cocks might kill me!

Thunder's grip on my throat tightens, or maybe it's just me pressing myself harder against him. I don't have a lot of control over my reactions right now, just doing my best to kiss him back as Lightning's tongue dances over my clit while his

finger slowly works me open, stoking the fire blazing inside me.

I scream as I come, right into Thunder's mouth. His fingers roll my nipples while his twin works me through an orgasm that's so intense I don't know if I'll ever come down. It's the first time I've ever had someone else in control of my pleasure like this, and it's a totally different experience. Usually my finish passes quickly, but with Lightning in charge, I have no choice but to ride the waves. My heart thunders and I gasp for breath. I'm either dying or going to Heaven.

Or both.

I float, hovering between the two of them for what seems like an eternity. I can't even sense the bed beneath me, though I know on some level it's there. When I come down, it's like a ragdoll, all my muscles lax after the intense surge of pleasure finally runs its course, leaving me limp and satisfied. If I knew it could be like this, I might've been a little more adventurous in the past. But then I wouldn't have this moment, and I don't think I'd want to give that up for anything in the world.

My eyes flutter open, finding two nearly identical faces looking down at me, both with the same smug grin. They know what they did, and God are they pleased with themselves.

"Carry me out, I'm dead," I whisper, barely raising one hand before it seems like too much effort and it flops back to the bed.

Lightning laughs. "Fuck no. I'm willing to try most things once, but even I've got limits, and alive is definitely a requirement."

I wet my lips nervously. "Listen, guys, I need to be honest with you. I don't exactly have a ton of experience, but if you want me to... um..." I'm a grown woman and they literally just had their hands and mouths all over me. Pull it together, Harper. "...help you out. I'll do my best."

"I thought you'd never fucking ask," says Thunder, tearing open his fly and sliding his jeans down his hips. A moment

later, the monster I got a handful of this morning is free and standing proud, thick, hard and glistening at the tip. Holy crap. On the other side, Lightning does the same.

Turns out, the twins really are identical... everywhere.

Tentatively, I reach out, and this time there's no doubt about what I'm gripping. Thunder's pulse presses against my palm and he groans at my touch. I have no hope of getting my fingers all around him, he's too thick. They both are.

What are they expecting me to do? I mean, I've read plenty of steamy books, but real life is different... I lean forwards, opening my mouth and tentatively sticking my tongue out. If they can lick me, the least I can do is return the favor.

I can almost taste Thunder's satiny smooth skin, when the hotel room door slams open.

I scream, grabbing the bed covers and yanking them around me even though it's probably way too late. Shadow and Outlaw are in the door, taking all of us in.

"For fuck's sake. Couldn't you have waited just a little longer?" snaps Lightning, pulling his pants back up.

"Like I wanted to look at your hairy ass," comments Shadow and laughs harshly.

Outlaw shakes his head and closes the door. "Can't say I'm surprised. You've only got so many ways to calm a woman down."

"Oh fuck off," says Thunder, zipping his jeans. "Did you bring food? I'm fucking starving."

How can these guys just stand there like nothing happened? I scramble to grab my clothes and slide down the far side of the bed. My heart is beating a mile a minute and I make a break for the bathroom to get dressed without putting on any more of a show than I already have. My legs still feel like jello after my orgasm. I barely make it without going flat on my face.

Once I'm fully dressed, I quickly wash my face over the sink, staring at the girl in the mirror. A little crooked smile paints the lips of the woman looking back at me. Oh my God. I can't

believe I just did that. I take a deep, steadying breath. If they can be calm about this, I can too. Maybe. Besides, it's not like I can hide in the bathroom forever.

I walk out to them sitting like a war council, two on each bed. They all turn towards me. Something has shifted between me and the twins. Thunder and Lightning know me on a different level now, and there's something subtly different about how they look at me. I wet my lips nervously while turning my attention to the others.

Shadow seems thoughtful, and his eyes follow me like he would strip me right back out of my clothes if he had the chance. Like he would've happily made it three on one, if the opportunity arose. Now that's a thought that has me tingling, wondering if I would do it. God, one or two sexy experiences, and...

Outlaw, on the other hand, looks skeptical, even a little hostile. He doesn't trust me, and he's not bothering to hide it.

I crawl onto the bed, settling between Thunder and Lightning, feeling just a little safer with both of them at my side.

"I think we need to do it," says Outlaw. Shocking me for a second until I realize what the topic is. Vincent Mesner.

My father.

Shadow nods, but he doesn't look happy about it. "Carnell is fucking drooling at the chance to nail this guy. The plan is held together with string and a prayer, but it could work."

"What does he want?" I ask.

"We contact your father, making him promise to stay out of our territory in exchange for you. Carnell is gonna slip one of his guys in with us. He'll be wearing a wire so if we can get Mesner talking, he's hoping he'll get enough to pull him in. It's hairy as fuck, but if we wanna get out of town without a national APB, then we don't have much fucking choice."

"I don't like any of this," Thunder grumbles. "Working with cops feels like tying a noose around my own neck."

“No fucking kidding. Still, while I don’t trust Carnell, I believe him when he says he doesn’t really give a shit about us so long as we cooperate. If we were home safe at the clubhouse, I’d tell them all to go fuck themselves, but we gotta play the hand we’re dealt. I hate to fucking say it, but there’s not a lot roads outta this city. What are we gonna do? Fly home and leave our bikes here? No fucking way. We’ve pulled off crazier shit than this, and if everything works out, we can put all this behind us.”

Outlaw nods, his dark eyes fixed on me. “There’s only one hitch. He’s gonna want proof of life. He’s not gonna accept a fucking picture, so he’s gonna want to hear and see Harper.”

Which means they have to trust me to play along. The unspoken question is, can they?

Begging them to take me with them was a split second decision. I just wanted to buy myself time and I didn’t think about what it meant for them. If I could go back in time... I don’t know what I’d do. But I can’t. So whose side do I take?

My father runs a drug empire. One that’s killing people. I wish I could talk to Mom, find out why she really ran away and never contacted him about me. But even if I could, I wouldn’t risk scaring her while she’s recovering. My gut says these guys are the only ones that don’t have a reason to lie to me, but at the same time, Vincent is my own flesh and blood. That counts for something—doesn’t it?

“He might be an asshole, but I don’t like asking her to turn on her own father,” Lighting says, mirroring my own thoughts.

Thunder nods. “Me either.”

Outlaw’s expression is grim. “But what’s the alternative? Hoping he doesn’t ask to talk to her?”

“I’ll do it.” I force it out before I change my mind. “I won’t set him up myself, but I’ll pretend to be a good little hostage.”

Shadow’s deep hazel eyes feel like they’re staring right into my soul, and he looks like he wants to say something, but then he just nods. “Good. No point in putting this off. Harper, call your father and hand me the phone.”

I hope I don't regret this.

SHADOW

“GIVE ME ONE FUCKING REASON NOT TO SEND A SQUAD OF guys to bring you the fuck home, Shadow.” Eagle-eye’s gravelly voice is grim on the other end of the line. “You were supposed to get in, hit him in the heart of his little empire and then get the fuck out.”

“Your old lady would kill us both,” I say dryly.

He chuckles. “Ain’t that the fucking truth? I’m too old for this, man. I barely remember what it was like when my ex was pregnant with Faith. And everything’s fucking changed even though it’s the same shit humans have been doing since we figured out what dicks and pussies were for.”

“Look, this situation is fucked three ways from Sunday, but give us a chance to try this. I don’t like this Carnell fucker, but he’s our best shot. We’ve already arranged to meet with Mesner tomorrow.” I’m pacing the hotel room in what little space we’ve got.

“Twenty-four hours. If I don’t hear from you, we’re on our way. And don’t fucking test me, Shadow. I promoted you to officer, I can bust your ass right the fuck back down to prospect if I want.” He lets out a sigh. “Alright, do what you gotta do to keep breathing, you got me? I’m going to be pissed if any of you ugly bastards don’t make it home.”

“I’ll do my best, Prez.” I drop my phone into my pocket, then look at the others. There isn’t anyone I’d rather have at my side when shit goes south, but the girl... fuck, she really stepped in it when she asked to come with us. We shouldn’t

have fucking taken her, but done is done. “Alright, he’s up to date. We’ve got a day to clean this up before the cavalry rides. You gonna hold up until then, Harper?”

She licks her lips and nods. I’m not easy to impress, but she’s got a lot more spine than I thought when we first met. She was shaking like a fucking leaf when we talked to Mesner, but it just made it sound more believable when she told him she wasn’t hurt. He, on the other hand, sounded like he wanted to reach through the phone and break my fucking neck. Jury’s out on if it was because he was worried about her, or if he was just furious at having something of his taken.

“I’m hungry, though,” ventures Harper.

“Yeah, I could use a bite.” Outlaw jumps to his feet and stretches. “I checked, there’s a bar like fifteen minutes away. Our kinda place. Cheap grub and they won’t ask questions.”

Harper looks worried. “What if my father sees you?”

“Not likely where we’re going,” Outlaw says while cracking his knuckles like he’s itching to punch something. “We got our bikes back. Let’s ride. I’m going to jump out of my fucking skin if we have to keep sitting around in here.”

“What about me?” Harper asks, her fingers twisting and turning in the hem of her shirt, giving away how much she hates that idea of being alone.

I make an executive decision. “You’re on my bike. No more splitting up, and I got itchy legs too.”

Lightning grins. “Sounds like a fucking plan.”

Twenty minutes later we’re at Chainsaw Charlie’s, a bar on the edge of town with a dirt parking lot filled with parked motorcycles. I feel at home immediately. This isn’t one of those touristy dives for the weekend warriors in designer leathers, riding Harleys that spend most of their time getting shined in a fucking garage. This is the real fucking deal—dirty and loud with the thick scents of motor oil, leather and cigarette smoke hanging in the air. The beer’s cheap, the food’s cheap, and over on one end there’s a barely dressed girl swinging around a stripper pole on a stage, shaking her hips in

time with the steady rock beat coming off the crackling speakers.

Perfect.

Harper stares wide-eyed at everything, her head swiveling like it's gonna fucking fall off. The guys leaning against the far wall clock her as fresh meat right away, their eyes locked on her fuckable curves like goddamn laser beams. I glare until they look away. She rode with me, and even if she doesn't know what that means, I'm not going to let anyone disrespect what's mine. I'm a little surprised at the surge of possessiveness I feel considering Lightning and Thunder are the only ones that have fucked around with our little bride so far.

Not that I'd kick her out of bed if the opportunity rose.

A scuffle breaks out, and one of the brawlers comes stumbling our way. Quickly wrapping my hands around Harper's waist, I swing her around to my other side while deflecting the guy with my shoulder. He must be drunk outta his fucking mind, since he topples and goes down like a sack of potatoes. Nobody gives a shit, people just step around him until he picks himself back up.

A finger tapping on my hand brings my attention back to Harper, who's looking down at where my hands are still locked around her waist. "Thanks, but you can let go now."

It only takes a moment to decide. "I can, but I'm not going to." I drag her with me up into one of the bar stools, settling her right in my lap.

She squeals in surprise and wiggles like she wants to get down, but I'm way too strong for her. Crossing her arms over her chest, she scowls. "This is ridiculous."

I brush a lock of golden, silky hair away from her ear and lean in close. "Look around. These horny fuckers will only stay away if they think you belong to someone, and right now, that someone is me. It's for your own damn good."

She huffs. "But who will protect me from you?"

That makes me laugh. “Don’t play innocent. I saw you with Lightning and Thunder, remember?”

She turns beet red and looks pointedly away from me. “I didn’t plan for it. It just sort of happened.”

“Yeah. That’s why I’m keeping you close. In case something sort of happens again.”

“It won’t,” she snaps.

“Why? Am I not pretty enough for you?” In our world the scar doesn’t scare off the kind of women that come looking, but she isn’t one of the sluts. She’s just a naive young woman who’s way out of her depth.

“What? No! I mean, you’re plenty pretty. Wait, that’s not right either. You know what I mean.” She looks so fucking flustered it’s hard to keep a straight face but I want to see how much shit she can shovel before she gives up. “Not that I want to, but I would... You’re making fun of me, aren’t you?”

“A little, but feel free to keep telling me what you’d do with me.”

A grizzled guy with a faded blue bandanna on his head and a thick beard that’s more white than the hints of red still left in it is working the bar. His leather cut has a patch on it that says Mad Dogs. “Screaming Fucking Eagles, been a while since we’ve had any of you come through here. Name’s Red. What can I get you boys? First round’s on me.”

“Whatever you got on tap that won’t burn a hole in my stomach,” Thunder says with a grin.

“Good choice.” He starts filling our glasses and passing them out. “You probably don’t give a shit, but you took a fucking load off us when you took out the Pit Vipers. Those nasty fuckers were creeping closer and starting to put pressure on some of the local clubs.”

Outlaw lifts his beer to him in thanks. “Kitchen open?”

“Sure. No menu. All we got is fries and what we can do on the one grill.”

“We’ll take it,” I say with a nod and Red vanishes into the back.

“I didn’t know you guys were celebrities,” Harper says curiously. She takes her beer and tastes it, then takes a deeper drag.

“We’re not,” says Outlaw. “But the club’s earned a lot of fucking respect. That’s why we came out here in the first place. Mesner’s shit was in our territory, putting our people in danger. If we let that shit slide, people would think they could get away with more.”

Now that he’s got a beer in hand, Outlaw doesn’t even seem to mind Harper so much. Not that I think he actively dislikes her, but he’s always been slower to trust. Most of the younger members go through a wild phase, fucking and fighting until they level out. He never did. I’ve seen him with sluts here and there so I know he’s not made of stone, but he usually holds himself a bit apart. I’ve always wondered what it would take to make him relax.

“Is it okay that I’m sitting with you? After earlier I mean? Do you think Thunder and Lightning mind?” Harper glances over at them, but they’ve gotten into conversation with Red.

“Mind what?”

“You know. Don’t make me say it.” She looks uncertain. “I know we’re not dating or anything—I’m not that naive—but I thought bikers would be the jealous types? I don’t want to be the cause of anything between—”

“You’re too fucking precious,” I say, trying not to laugh, because I can tell she’s serious. “If you decided to flirt with old Red over there? That might be a fucking issue, but the four of us are a team. There’s no room for jealousy between us. One for all and all for one.” I wink.

“*All?*”

Testing the waters, I put a hand on her thigh, not too high, but enough to be more than friendly. I give it a squeeze through her jeans. “Curious?”

She shakes her head with a little laugh, but she doesn't move my hand away. "My mom's recovering from almost dying, I'm about to help set up the father I just met after being kidnapped from my sham wedding, and if it works, I'll probably end up with a lifetime of medical debt." Her cheeks color the most adorable shade of red.

"If you ask me, that sounds like a lot of good fucking lesson about enjoying life while you can." I stroke her thigh with my thumb, just a little bit back and forth.

A quick glance down and a slight indrawn breath shows that she notices, but she doesn't do anything, at least not yet. "I feel like I'm drowning. It started before we met, and I'm trying to figure out if you're pulling me out, or pushing me deeper."

"Oh, we'll push deep if you want us to, baby girl."

She's warm against my chest, and so damn soft. I've wanted to get my hands on her since seeing her in that snow white wedding dress gave me a lot of dirty fucking ideas, and especially after seeing what was hiding underneath it when we walked in on her having a little fun with Lightning and Thunder.

"Motherfucker!" Outlaw belts out a curse just as a glass hits the floor and shatters. I turn Harper away from whatever the fuck is going on and see him standing toe to toe with an ugly fucker with thick, dark eyebrows.

"Fucking Eagles. This isn't your damn turf. I bet you'll shit yourselves without the whole fucking club here to back you up."

Outlaw smirks and tilts his head to the side, cracking his neck. People underestimate him because he's young and not as big as some of the guys, but it's a mistake. Of the four of us, he's the meanest son of a bitch, hands down. Outlaw fights every battle like it might be his last. "I guess we're famous after all. Do you want an autograph, shithead?"

"What the fuck did you just say?" The guy steps up and puts his hands on Outlaw's cut.

It's like someone cast a fucking spell on about a ten foot circle around us, clearing the crowd instantly. Lightning and Thunder are on their feet, ready to jump in. Red calmly collects the glasses on the bar and puts them aside. Not his first rodeo.

The guy doesn't stand a chance. Outlaw lands a quick hard punch to his throat, leaving him gasping and gurgling in pain. He takes a swing, but it doesn't come close to landing. Outlaw laughs, and grabs him by the back of the neck, bending him in two and planting his knee right in the guy's gut. He hits the floor and Outlaw holds his head in the pool of spilled beer and glass shards.

"Don't. Fucking. Touch. Me." Outlaw looks up and sweeps the watching crowd with his dark gaze. "Anyone else?"

The bar is dead silent, dozens of grizzled bikers waiting to see if anyone is stupid enough to say yes.

Red slams a new beer down in front of us. "Burgers are up!"

Outlaw grins. "Good. I'm fucking starving."

HARPER

YESTERDAY ALL I WANTED WAS FOR THIS TO BE OVER, BUT I'M not ready. The quiet ticking of the clock on the wall sounds like a drum banging over and over while we wait to see if my father and his men show up. Carnell's man, a scruffy cop named Bruno, is undercover as one of the Screaming Eagles. Maybe it's just because I've been with them for the past few days, but he feels all wrong. He's too stiff.

The guys seem to feel the same. They're all watching him like a cobra that could strike at any moment. Bruno doesn't seem to care, leaning against a desk in the empty construction office Carnell chose for the meeting. He picked it because the building of the huge complex behind it is on pause, and it's outta the way. If shit goes wrong, there won't be any bystanders.

Bruno cocks his head to the side, listening to a voice we can't hear. "Incoming."

Outlaw raises his gun, pressing the metal barrel hard against my temple. "Safety's on," he whispers, but it doesn't make me feel much better.

I don't have to pretend to be terrified. With my hands bound, a wad of cloth in my mouth keeping me from screaming, and a gun pointed at my head, there are so many things that could go wrong. Sweat drips down my temple, soaked up by the gag.

The doors creak open, and two of my father's guards walk in. They fill the door. Bulky rectangles in suits, with short

haircuts, dark shades and in-ear communication devices. Their guns are out, and they're pointing them right at us.

"Easy," Shadow says from the side, holding his hands up in front of him, palms towards the security guys. "We're here to deal, so put 'em the fuck away."

The guards scan the room, and I pray to whatever god might be listening. "Clear," one of them says. "She's here."

"Then let's get this over with." God, I definitely haven't missed that voice.

"Yes, Sir." The guards step out of the way, parting to let Vincent through.

He steps in, cool and collected in a business suit that makes it seem like he's just running an errand on the way to his next meeting. It looks bulkier than usual, though. I bet he's got a bulletproof vest underneath. The annoyed expression on his face turns sour when he spots me.

"Alright. You've had your fun. Hand her over, and I'll let you slink out of town like the dogs you are. I don't know what you think you're going to achieve, but you're lucky I'm willing to talk considering what you've done." His nose wrinkles like he's smelling something bad.

"We're lucky?" Shadow replies, his voice dripping with sarcasm. "You should be grateful we didn't drop that whole damn thing on your fucking head. People like you are fucking scum, and I want to your word you'll stay out of our territory."

"Oh, for Christ's sake. Who are you to act like you're better than me? Your club has so much blood on its hands the streets are running in it." Vincent brushes a speck off the sleeve of his suit jacket.

"We defend our own," Shadow says calmly, not denying it. "Can you say the same?"

Outlaw wraps my hair in his fist and yanks my head, the barrel of his gun still digging into my temple. I whimper in very real fear. How much do I really mean to my father? He wasn't the one that changed my diapers or held me when my heart was broken after my first boyfriend dumped me right in the middle

of homecoming. I'm just a pawn in a game that keeps adding more and more players.

"I'm here, aren't I?" Vincent snarls. "What do you think threatening the girl will accomplish? Or are you all too stupid to think that far ahead?"

"Like you just said. It got you here, didn't it?" Shadow mocks. He turns his head and spits on the floor. "Now can you give us the assurances we need or don't you have control over your people?"

Vincent's smooth demeanor slips for a moment, more annoyed at his power being questioned than the threat to my life. "I have no idea what you're talking about."

"Don't play fucking innocent. We know everything that goes in and out of our town, and unlike the cops, we don't give a shit what would hold up in court. You sit here all smooth, but your business is rotting. Either you're getting sloppy, or your grip is slipping. Which is it, Vinny? Word's going to get out about what we did, and we won't be the only ones asking these questions."

"Do you even realize what you did? That chandelier was one of a kind. It's going to cost me a fortune to get the artist back, and the materials alone are worth more than your walnut brain can comprehend."

"I was talking about stealing your daughter from her own fucking wedding, but good to know your priorities. And where's the groom? Doesn't he give a shit either? Damn. I didn't expect much from a man pushing dirty product, but that's cold."

Vincent's face contorts into a furious mask. "I don't know what you're talking about. Let my daughter go and I'll let you leave with your lives. That's all the assurance I'll give."

I'm not an expert, but this isn't going well. One side is going to have to back down eventually, and so far my father hasn't said anything that incriminates him in anything beyond being a cold hearted jerk. Is everyone off base? The only proof I have that he's involved in drugs is what Carnell and the bikers have

said. What if I've chosen the wrong side in this? My father might have pressured me into marrying Devin, but so far the only people to hold a gun to my head have been the men I've decided to put my trust in.

Including the one I'm pretty sure hates me, who showed how easily he can turn violent, and who could end my life in the blink of an eye. And is the one currently holding the gun.

"Alright. Fuck it." Shadow shakes his head in disappointment. "Call us if you change your mind. I'm sure your little girl will fit right in with the sluts at the club."

I hold my breath. Even if he doesn't care about me at all, it wouldn't look good for him to let them take me.

Right?

"You're not going anywhere," says Vincent icily, as his men raise their weapons. One of them taps their earpiece, and a door slams outside. Reinforcements. "It would be a shame if she got hurt, but no court in the world would convict me for trying to save her, especially not in this town."

Bruno, silent this whole time, suddenly draws his gun and aims it straight at Mesner. "If anyone touches the door, I'm gonna fucking shoot. People are dying because of you already. What's a few more?"

"What the fuck are you doing?" Thunder asks in a dangerous growl.

"Stand down!" Shadow orders, fury radiating from him like a furnace.

The gag in my mouth is making it hard to breathe. I know it's not suffocating me, but it feels like I can't draw a real breath.

Bruno doesn't listen. He takes a step forward, aiming right at Mesner's head. "Maybe we can just eliminate the problem right here. What's it gonna be? Clean up your shit? Or rot in here until someone finds the body?"

And that's the last thing Bruno ever says, because the words are still leaving his mouth as one of my father's guards puts a bullet right through his face. I jerk away, my scream muffled

by the gag, but something hot hits my face, and the gory image of Bruno's head exploding is burned into my brain. I struggle against my ties, all concepts of good guys and bad guys forgotten in my panic.

More shots.

It's loud. So loud. How can anything be this loud? Everything is happening at once. I thought the scene at the bar was scary, but compared to this, it might as well have been a pillow fight. One of Vincent's men grunts and slams into the door. He slides limply to the floor, a dark red stain spreading across his chest.

Where's Carnell and his people?

"Finish them," my father yells, walking out the door while even more of his men pile in.

"Get her out of here!" Shadow yells. The three of them form a semi-circle around me as Outlaw cuts through the rope holding me to the chair.

"Harper, stay down!" growls Lightning as he fires his gun. The shot hits a guard who Thunder grabs and sends reeling into more of my father's men.

They don't need to tell me twice. I'm already out of the chair when he yells, setting a course for the next room that has a back door. It's awkward with my hands still partly bound, but I keep my head down and do my best. Heavy footprints sound behind me, and I pray they're on my side.

A bullet hits the wall near my shoulder, throwing me off balance as I shy away from it.

"Don't stop," snaps Outlaw, right behind me. Thank God.

But I'm not moving fast enough. Outlaw's strong hands go around my waist and he half pulls, half carries me. Just as we reach the door, he stiffens, sudden surprise in his expression. He grips the door handle and leans all his weight on it as he coughs.

"What happened?"

"Keep going," he bites out. There's a hole torn through his biker vest, and crimson blood is spreading across the white t-

shirt underneath.

“Outlaw!”

LIGHTNING

FUCK!

Motherfucker! I knew we couldn't trust that cop.

With Shadow on our six, and Outlaw hooked over our shoulders, me and Thunder burst out the back into the construction site. Everything is chaos. Mesner is long gone, and his people are either fleeing like rats off a sinking ship, or exchanging fire with what must be the few people Carnell left behind. Probably to make sure we didn't walk away either. A helicopter passes overhead.

I knew this could go south, I just had no idea how south it would go. "Hang in there. You hear me?"

Outlaw grunts, sounding fucking annoyed, which is a good sign. If he's got the energy to be angry, we have time to plug the hole.

At least I fucking hope so.

"That way!" Shadow snarls, pointing to the metal skeleton of a high rise waiting for construction to resume.

Harper is doing her best to keep up, running for all she's worth with her hands tied. She's struggling, but there's no way to stop and help without leaving us all sitting ducks.

"What the fuck just happened?" Thunder rumbles as we duck behind the base of a crane. "Did Carnell order that idiot to open fire?"

"No fucking idea, doesn't fucking matter." Shadow takes advantage of the cover to pull out a knife and slice Harper

free. She slumps down, ripping out her gag and gasping for air. The shooting seems to be over, but with our luck, Mesner's men are out there waiting to pick us off. Or maybe Carnell's. Fuck, why not both?

The loud rumble of the helicopter passes right over our heads again, shaking the whole fucking place and kicking up dirt. We huddle low, hoping the fuckers didn't see us. Whoever it is, they can't be trusted. The sound recedes as the helicopter moves on.

"Okay. Go quick, get inside and don't give 'em anything easy to aim at." Shadow gives us a chance to nod our agreement, and then we run across the construction site, exposing ourselves as we cross the open lot.

For the first time all day, something goes right. Either everyone's packed it in and gone home, or they're too busy killing each other to notice us. No shots are fired, no alarms raised. On a day like this, that's a fucking blessing.

Outlaw groans.

"Hang in there, you dumb fuck," my twin growls. He must really be worried, because normally that level of annoyance is saved for me. "If we all make it through this I'm fucking kick your ass."

"Follow me," Shadow says, leading us deeper into the forest of metal girders, half-finished concrete walls and scaffolding.

There's an industrial looking door with a couple metal chairs set up outside it and a jar half filled with water and cigarette butts. He pushes it open, and using our phones for light, we see a big, unfinished room that looks like they are using it as a break room and to store random tools. There's a couple temporary metal lights strung up, and thank fucking God someone's still paying the power bill because they actually work.

"Hold Outlaw." I make sure Thunder's got him, then jam the door closed with the back of a chair shoved under the handle. Safe, for now. Or maybe trapped, but it's a chance we gotta take.

Harper's eyes are fixed on Outlaw, her face white as a sheet. "He got shot. He's bleeding," she whispers.

"Yeah, baby. That happens sometimes when people point a gun at you. Why don't you look around and see if there are any supplies in here. Anything that might be useful."

My heart fucking bleeds for her. The first time you see someone get stabbed or shot is a real fucking head game. Humans are only born with so many holes, and we like to keep it that way. There's something really fucking disturbing about coming face to face with the reality that under all the fancy clothes, we're just sacks of blood and guts.

She nods. Having something to focus on will keep her brain from spinning in place and panicking.

"Lemme clear off that table," Shadow says, already sweeping the random coffee mugs and debris straight onto the floor.

With a heave, Thunder and I get Outlaw in place. He snaps out a pained "Fuck!" through clenched teeth, so at least he's still conscious. That's something.

"Hang in there, brother," I tell him.

Shadow pushes Outlaw's jacket open and starts carefully pulling up the blood soaked shirt. He and Thunder roll him gently to check for an exit wound. It's there, so at least it didn't stay inside, scrambling his guts, but I can't tell the angle it went through him.

"Call Doc," Thunder snaps.

I'm already on it. Twins think alike. It takes way too fucking long for the number to start ringing. "Come the fuck on," I hiss like it'll make it go any faster. God knows how much fucking time we have.

"Yeah?" Doc's grouchy voice is like fucking music. Off-key maybe, but sweet all the same.

"Thank fuck. Outlaw's down, bullet through his right side, back to front. He's awake and bleeding hard. Walk us through it."

“Get the wound clear and his knees up. I’ll call back on video.” Doc hangs up.

Harper comes over with a roll of heavy duty paper toweling and a six pack of store brand bottled water. She also found a small first aid kit. “Here. I don’t think the bandages are big enough to help, but there’s some antiseptic. It’s better than nothing, right?”

“Abso-fucking-lutely,” I say with a grin, putting a hand on the back of her neck and pulling her in for a quick, grateful kiss. She gapes at me in shock as the video call starts ringing.

“Yeah, good. Clean it up,” Doc orders. “How fast can you get back to the compound?”

“Not happening. We’re in Vegas.”

“Vegas? For fuck’s sake. Outlaw, if you’re gonna get into trouble, at least do it at home. Fine.” He follows along as we do our best to get the blood off so we can see what’s going on, telling us where and what to feel for.

“It’s not bleeding as much. That’s a good sign, right?” Thunder asks.

Outlaw’s face contorts and he flips Thunder off.

Doc barks a curt laugh. “Or a very bad sign, but he’s still breathing and pissed off, so that’s a point on the right side of the equation. If you’re calling me, I’m guessing 911 isn’t an option.”

Shadow looks over at the camera. “Not a good one.”

“Of course it isn’t. It looks like he got lucky, but how the fuck would I know from here? Watch him like a hawk. It’s a good thing he’s a lean fucker. Keep his legs bent to take pressure off his abdomen and if you see any sign of bloating or he starts throwing up, I don’t fucking care where you are, you drops his ass off at the ER. Let him drink, but no food. If he’s still breathing in the morning, infection could still be a problem but there’s probably nothing worse happening where we can’t see it. He needs to rest, and I want you to call me if anything changes. Got it?”

“Got it,” I say, and hang up.

“Le—” Outlaw winces at the effort to speak. “Leave me here. You heard him. I’ll make it or not.”

Shadow rolls his eyes. “Shut up, dumbass. No one’s gonna fucking leave you here. Thunder, scout around. See if there are any tarps, Hi-Viz jackets or anything we can use to keep him warm and make this a little less fucking uncomfortable. Stay out of sight and don’t take any fucking chances.”

“On it.”

Harper is sitting off to the side, watching everything with a thousand yard stare. I walk over and crouch down in front of her. “Hey.”

“It was for me. He got shot because he stayed between me and the guards. Is he going to be okay?” she whispers.

I could lie to make her feel better, but she’s not dumb. “I don’t know.”

HARPER

THUNDER IS STRETCHED OUT ON THE GROUND, USING HIS SHIRT as a pillow and snoring softly. Lightning is slumped over in a chair, dead asleep. How? I try to close my eyes, but every time I do, all I can see is Bruno's head exploding, and then Vincent Mesner—the man who seemed so enthusiastic about being my father—walk away. He *left me there*. Maybe I could believe that he didn't specifically want me to die, but he sure didn't seem bothered by the possibility.

But Outlaw, a man I'm not sure even likes me, put his body between me and danger.

I get up and walk over to check on him. He's sleeping as well, after taking the little over the counter packet of painkillers from the first-aid kit. He was restless at first, but seems to be sleeping easier now. I reach out and let my fingers skim over the makeshift bandage without really touching. If that bullet had hit him anywhere else, it could've been the end. It still could. There's no guarantee that it didn't nick him somewhere inside.

He got hit protecting me.

"Sleep," Shadow says quietly, but it makes me jump anyway.

I find him looking at me from the shadows a few feet away. It's his turn to watch Outlaw and stay alert in case anyone finds us. I shake my head. "I tried. I don't know how they can fall asleep at a time like this. I can't stop *feeling*."

He nods slowly, an understanding look on his face. "They trust me to have their backs, and they know the only way to do the

same is to get as much rest as possible. I can fucking guarantee you they have a lot of fucking feelings about what's happening, but sometimes you have to pack it up and put it on a shelf to deal with later."

"I don't know how," I whisper.

"Don't you? What did you do when your mom got sick? Did you fall apart? Or did you step up and keep going even though you didn't know what the fuck you were doing and if it was the right choice?"

"That's different."

"Is it?"

"Yeah! Because I love her and I know she'd do the same for me. If it was up to Outlaw, you wouldn't be in this situation. He didn't want to take me with you, and look where it got him. This is my fault." I fidget with my hands, twisting my fingers around each other. The manicure is chipping on one of my nails, and I feel like a bitch for even noticing at a time like this.

Shadow stands up and walks to my side, he takes my hand and pulls me away from Outlaw's sleeping form. "Do you want me to be all comforting and shit, or do you want me to be real?"

"Real. I guess."

" 'What if' is a game you can play back as far back as you want. Life's just a chain of consequences, and none of us are the center of the fucking universe. If your daddy gave a shit about human life we wouldn't have been in town at all. If we hadn't picked such a public way to kick him in the nuts, we wouldn't have had to grab you in the first place. Outlaw is a grown man who makes his own damn choices. There isn't a fucking world where he would have let you or any of us take a bullet if he could make a difference."

Unlike my own father. Oh God.

My life is a train wreck, and I don't know what to do, or where to turn. I'm afraid that if I start crying I won't be able to stop, but I can't stop the sob that racks my body.

“Hey, hey, it’s okay. You’re gonna be okay.” Shadow pulls me against him. It feels so nice with his strong arms around me. Like I can relax just for a second. I burrow my face into his shirt, hoping he doesn’t mind the tears.

It takes a few minutes before I’m back in control, and the whole time he rubs a strong hand in circles on my back. I sniffle, willing the lump in my throat to settle. Up close, he has an intoxicating smell of leather and oil, so distinctly masculine that it calls to the feminine inside me. I breathe it in like a drug.

“Listen, Harper. Fuck Mesner, and fuck Carnell, okay? We’ll get you home, or wherever the fuck you wanna go, away from all this bullshit. The only thing you’re fucking guilty of is wanting to help, and trusting someone who doesn’t deserve it. A couple bullets won’t scare us off. Back home, that’s a regular fucking Tuesday.”

I laugh despite how tight my chest is feeling. “Why did I end up with such a terrible father?”

“Happens to the best of us,” he says bitterly.

“Was your dad no good either?”

He scoffs. “Fuck no. That asshole drank like a fish and had a mean right hook that he practiced on both me and my ma. The only good thing he ever did for us was leave. Trust me, living this life, I’ve run into some crazy motherfuckers, but he was a real piece of work. I heard he died a few years back and all I felt was relief that he couldn’t poison anyone else’s life anymore.”

I swallow, wanting to wrap him up in my arms like he does to me, but I have to settle for hugging him tight around the waist. “I thought the worst things I could find out about my father would be that either he was already dead, or that he knew about me and just didn’t care.”

“Who shares your blood doesn’t mean shit, Harper. That’s not what makes family. It’s who sticks around, day after day, at your best and worst. It’s who we choose. Remember that.” He pulls me closer, running his fingers up and down my bare arm.

His fingertips are rough and callused, but they feel nice. A connection. “I was a kid when he left, but even then I wasn’t stupid enough to miss him. Mom was fucking amazing, and eventually the dad of one of my friends kinda took me under his wing. He was a biker. A really tough son of a bitch. He’d be gone regularly, and I probably don’t even wanna know what kinda shit he was involved with, but he treated me as good as his own boy. Thanks to them I had people in my life that taught me to be a better man than the one that spawned me. I owe that man a lot. So when I think about a father, I think about him, even though we were never related.”

“Is that why you became a biker?” I look up into his eyes and slide a hand to his chest, feeling his strong heart beating beneath my palm.

He chuckles softly. “Maybe? Not directly, but I suppose it planted the possibility in my head. He wasn’t a good guy, not by most measures, but he saw me. Gave me direction. A sense of... I dunno. Of self, I guess.”

“Yeah, I don’t think my father’s going to do that for me.”

“Fuck, baby girl, you don’t need him. You were already living your life before you met him. Taking care of your mama and doing the best you fucking could. Him being who he is doesn’t take shit away from everything you’ve done before this clusterfuck. You fucking got this.” He sounds more confident than I’ve ever felt.

“Do I have to?” I say with a tired laugh. “Sometimes I think the worst part of this isn’t not getting the father of my dreams, it’s that I thought I had it for a short time, and it was so nice to just be able to relax and know I didn’t have to make all the decisions. Now that’s over and everything’s even more complicated. I just want someone to take over, deal with the bad things and just tell me what to do so I don’t have to think about it. It sounds stupid, but it’s true.”

“Baby, if you wanted someone to order you around, all you had to do was ask,” his voice is husky and low.

“What? I didn’t...” The tingles from his fingers stroking my arm start buzzing around and racing under my skin. Shadow

has a calm aura of competence that makes him a natural leader. “What would you order me to do?” I ask him breathlessly before I chicken out.

“You have no idea what it does to me to hear you ask that,” he growls, deep in the back of his throat. As much a threat as a promise. “Are you sure you want to play this game?”

I run my hand over his pec, feeling its muscular outline through his tight T-shirt. “What are the rules?”

“Do you trust me?”

I nod. The only people in this town that have proven to want to protect me are the four men in this room—even Outlaw. Maybe it’s stupid, but I do trust him.

“Then rule number one. You don’t let anyone fuck with you unless you want it. Even if that’s me. Rule number two. While you’re with us, you belong to *all of us*.”

My knees go a little weak. “Is that it?”

He shakes his head, and the smile on his lips should be illegal. A dimple stands out next to the scar. “Yeah, one more. Rule number three. You do what you’re fucking told.”

HARPER

SHADOW'S FINGERS THREAD INTO MY HAIR AND HOLD ME IN place while he kisses me like he's trying to devour me.

I'm losing touch with the person I used to be, because I'm not worried about anything except the relief of knowing that I can turn off my brain and leave him in the driver's seat. For once, not having to be in charge of anything. It's an incredibly powerful feeling.

I moan into Shadow's mouth as he claims me.

Shadow pulls back. "Shh."

"But—"

"Quiet." He stops me with a callused finger on my lips and a clever smile on his. "We don't want to wake anyone else up, do we? I'm gonna need you to be real fucking quiet. Not a sound, got it? The twins have already gotten a taste and right now I want you all to my fucking self. Can you do that?"

I nod eagerly. That's easy. I can keep quiet if he wants.

"Say it," he commands.

"I'll be quiet," I mouth silently.

He smirks. "We'll see. But if you're not, I might have to punish you."

"You wha—"

"Shh."

I shut up, then swallow thickly as he grips the hem of my T-shirt and pulls it up. I open my mouth to say something, but one look, and I close it again. When he gets it up to my armpits, I raise my arms so he can take it all the way off.

“Good girl,” he whispers, and the soft words give me goosebumps.

Am I that desperate for affirmation? Does it matter if it feels so good?

He pops the hooks on my bra with practiced fingers, and pulls me into a chair with him, leaving me topless in his lap. His big, warm hands cover my breasts, capturing one in each and trapping my nipples between his thumbs and index fingers. My heart jumps up in my throat. I try not to moan, but a little peep comes out.

He raises an eyebrow as he pins me with his deep hazel orbs, but lets it pass. For now.

Okay, maybe this won't be quite as easy as I thought, but the threat of what he might do if I can't stay quiet is almost as exciting as being ordered to try in the first place.

Things moved fast and hard with Lightning and Thunder, but Shadow takes his time. He caresses my sensitive skin, exploring me with a curiosity that borders on obsession. Every time he tugs on a nipple, my core clenches in anticipation. “These are fucking treasures,” he whispers, then kisses me on the side of my neck, his stubble scraping against my skin as his teeth nip. A little zing of pain arcs from my neck, and I let out a brief hiss to keep from yelping out loud.

That's cheating. I'm not going to be able to stay quiet if he keeps doing stuff like that.

“Stand up and turn around.” He eases me out of his lap, and I let him, reluctantly. I felt safe there, but when he tugs me back to stand between his legs with my breasts right in his face, I forget about being annoyed. He sucks a nipple into his mouth as he unbuttons my jeans. A slick tongue circles my hard bud while Shadow works both my pants and panties down at the

same time. I wiggle my hips to help him, and they pool around my ankles. I toe off my shoes and step out of them.

I've never felt so exposed.

I'm completely naked in a room with four men. Three of them are sleeping, but they could wake up at any time and watch. The only thing blocking their view of me is Shadow, and he's sitting down. And we're still not safe. If anyone was going to find us here, they'd probably have done so by now, but still. It's terrifying, and yet I'm soaking wet, the evidence cooling on the insides of my thighs.

"Fuck, you're beautiful," he whispers. "Maybe we should take a little time before sending you home. Or what if we keep you for ourselves? How do you feel about that, Harper? Just you and four big, mean bikers who will force you to do all sorts of depraved things."

I don't trust myself to answer, because it sounds too much like a dirty fantasy. At this rate, I don't think they'd have to force me at all.

His fingers find their way between my legs, and I spread my thighs to let him in. I've never been touched standing up like this, but it feels hot. I'm here for him to use, and he does it so well.

"Fuck, you're soaked, you dirty little girl," he groans low in his throat.

I shiver, pressing myself against his touch, wanting more. I bite my lip so I don't moan out loud. I promised to be quiet, but I'm not sure how much longer I can keep it up. As his skilled fingers find my clit, I have to grab his shoulders for support and breathe harshly through my nose as I try not to cry out. It's not easy when he's busy coaxing an orgasm out of me. My knees wobble as I dig my fingernails into his arms right through his T-shirt. He is soooo good at this.

Just as I think I can't take anymore and I'm about to give up and moan, he puts his hands around my waist and switches us around. He pushes me into the chair and drops to his knees in front of me, pressing my legs up and out so he can hook them

over his shoulders with my soaking pussy right in front of his face.

“Shhhhhh,” he hushes, then buries his tongue between my folds.

And he wants me to keep quiet?

I have to jam my fist into my mouth and bite down, otherwise I’m going to scream. His tongue parts me, then plays around my clit before it dives deep, only to come back out and do it all over. For a while I swear he’s spelling out letters with it, driving me wild, then he settles into a swirling pattern around and over my throbbing flesh as he eases a thick finger into me.

My body tightens around the intrusion, resisting even as it pulls him deeper. I’m panting so fast and loud, that if he didn’t have my thighs clamped to his ears he’d know I was breaking my promise. I can’t help it! I should get a prize for not screaming.

Nerves wound tight as a spring, my orgasm hits with enough force to make the chair rock as my back arches and I push against Shadow’s tight hold. Tears sting the corners of my eyes and I moan quietly at the sensation of his finger twisting while I pulse around him. He can punish me all he wants if he’s going to make me feel like this each time.

When I collapse back into the chair with a soft sigh and open my eyes, I find him looking up at me with lust in his gaze and my juices glistening in his short beard.

Oh my God.

He strips like he does everything else, with precision and utter control. His jacket is draped over the back of a chair, and then I watch as he pulls up his shirt, revealing a chest that should be immortalized in marble.

Seeing him undress is like watching a piece of erotic art being unveiled. Each new bit of bare skin takes my breath away. And from the smug look on his face, he knows I’m enjoying the view.

In the end, Shadow slides one hand into his underwear, covering up the massive bulge, and uses the other to slowly

pull them down. He straightens back up and shifts his grip to reveal a long, thick shaft topped with a fat, glistening crown.

Is this a biker thing? Are they all hung like horses? I know I've more than doubled my experience with male bodies in the past couple days so I'm probably not the best judge, but I'm pretty sure these guys have porn star dimensions.

But nothing about him is just for show. His body is real, and it tells a story of a man who's been through a lot in his time on earth. Scars and tattoos crisscross his skin, and he's lean and muscled not to show off, but just because it's who he is, what his life has made him.

Shadow holds out his hand and pulls me to my feet. "Rule number three," he growls and points to the bundle on the floor. "On your knees."

The command gives me chills—the good kind.

Without hesitating, I kneel in front of him. Staring me in my face is his steel hard cock. There's already a glistening drop of precum on the tip, daring me to lick it right off him. I missed the opportunity to try it with the twins, but now?

"Kiss it," he orders in a rough whisper.

I put my hands on his thighs to steady myself and wet my lips. I know what I'm supposed to do in theory, but what if I'm no good at this?

"I don't know what the fuck you're thinking about, but forget about it. I'll tell you what to do and what to worry about. Your only job is to obey," Shadow hisses.

With a nod, I lean forwards, touching my lips to the tip. There's a hint of saltiness. I look right up at him, then swirl my tongue around the head, marveling at the texture and softness.

"Watch it," he warns, weaving his fingers into my hair and holding my head just out of reach. "Don't rush."

I don't think I'm in trouble, not really, but his expression is stern and he forces me to look at him until I nod to show I understand.

"Good girl. Take me in your mouth. Just the head."

This time, I do exactly what he asks, no more, no less, sliding my lips over him until they're just past the distinct ridge before the shaft, then wait. After a moment's pause and a soft grunt from him, he guides me, using his grip in my hair to show me exactly how he likes it. Short strokes that stretch my mouth without really challenging me, letting me adjust to the taste, smell, and feel of him.

I glance up, and God, the darkened pleasure written on his face is overwhelming. If the size and strength of his erection wasn't a good enough indicator, that look is more than enough.

"I think you're ready for more. Make me come, baby girl." Every raspy word makes my nipples harden and my core clutch tighter.

His words leave no room for self-doubt. This is happening. I'm going to do this.

He slides deeper, right up to where the thick head of his cock bumps against the back of my mouth. It tickles my throat and I gag, just a little. As soon as I do, he backs off, like he's trying to figure out my range. He repeats the cycle until I relax and start to move with him, anticipating the next stroke. The quiet wet sounds of his precum mixing with my saliva as I swirl my tongue around his blood-filled shaft fill the room, hopefully not loud enough to wake the others.

He closes his eyes and leans back. His tight grip on my hair makes it easy for him to set the pace. All I have to do is follow his lead. Shadow lets out a low moan, and his cock jumps. He must be getting close, and it's got me so freaking hot.

I run my hands up the back of his legs, speeding up and getting more into it. I'm half waiting for him to stop me, but he doesn't. For the first time, I sense his control slipping as his thrusts get more ragged and his breathing harsher and louder.

A hissed "Fuck!" is my only warning before his legs tense and his shaft goes completely rigid. He pulses, filling my mouth with slick, salty cum. Curiously, I swallow. The flavor is mild and musky, but I can't stop, wanting to draw out his pleasure like they have mine.

He lets me, his body slowly relaxing until a shudder goes through him and he stops me. His eyes open, his hazels unfocused until he finds me. “Jesus Christ. That was fucking magic.”

I grin and sit back on my heels, feeling worn out but kind of proud and worked up at the same time. I’ve already come, and this is hardly the place or situation I’d choose to lose my virginity, but I want to know what comes next. We dress together, which has a strange sort of intimacy to it, even in a place like this.

Instead of returning to his chair, he sits on the floor and pats his leg. “Come on, I’m probably a shitty pillow but it’s better than nothing.” Shadow strokes a hand over my hair. “Much as I fucking hate to say it, you should get dressed and get some rest. We’re going to need to get out of here before the sun comes up.”

I nod, already starting to drift to sleep surrounded by his scent.

His whisper is nearly inaudible. “It’s going to be hard to let you go, I hope you know that, baby girl.”

THUNDER

I ALWAYS PREFER LAST WATCH. MY INNER CLOCK IS TOO fucking eager. Outlaw's up. He's moving like he's fucking ninety, but it's a massive fucking relief. Everyone else is still conked out, and it would almost be peaceful in different circumstances. There's one light on in the corner, and I watch Harper sleeping, practically curled up on Shadow's lap. Fuck, she looks so vulnerable, so fucking fragile.

She yawns and her pretty blue eyes pop open to look around in sleepy confusion.

"Morning, sweet pea," I greet her. "Sleep alright?"

"Um... yeah, I guess so." She rubs her eyes.

"After Shadow put you to bed?"

"Oh God. You heard?" She hides her face in her hands. "I'm so sorry."

"What are you apologizing for? That was the best fucking show I've seen in a long time." I grin. "Maybe next time it's my turn again."

"How am I supposed to sleep with you all yacking away?" Shadow grumbles. "What time is it?"

I pull out my phone to check. "It's get the fuck out of here o'clock." I stand up and boot Lightning with my toe.

He throws his arm over his eyes and rolls over. "Just a little longer, Mom. I don't wanna go to school."

I kick him harder this time. “Stop being a fucking idiot. We need to get the fuck outta here. How’s your side, Outlaw? Can you move or are we going to have to figure something out?”

Outlaw leans cautiously to the side with a pained wince. “I feel like someone punched me directly in the fucking guts, but I’m not dead.”

“You need to be straight with us,” snaps Shadow. “This isn’t the time to be a hero. I thought we’d fucking lose you last night.”

Outlaw looks like he’d rather swallow acid than admit to weakness, but he nods. “I got fucking shot. It burns like hell but I’m mobile. I can ride.”

“Good. We should get on the fucking road.”

“Where to?” I ask. “Carnell screwed us over. Or his boy Bruno did.”

“Don’t talk about that asshole. I don’t know if he was following orders or went off on his own but he got what he fucking deserved,” Lightning spits out. “We get out of here before sunrise, get the bikes and get the fuck out of here.”

“What about me?” Harper asks.

“You come with us.” Shadow stretches. “There isn’t shit for you here. You’re better off sticking with us until we can get you back home. I don’t suppose it’s an easy drive?”

She shakes her head. “Rhode Island. We moved there so Mom could—oh, crap. Do we have time for me to call and check on her? There should be someone at the desk all day. Carnell took my phone in case my father called, and with everything that happened I never checked in.”

Shadow nods. “Make it quick.”

Lightning hands her his phone and she calls as we get our shit together to get out. I can hear it ringing, then a female voice answers.

“Hi, this is Harper Simmons, I’m calling to see how my mother’s doing. Eileen Simmons. Sure, I’ll wait.” She paces back and forth with the phone held close to her ear. “What?”

What do you mean she's left? She wasn't even awake last time I called. Who moved her? There has to be a record, right? Or a note about where she's been transferred? It's not like she stood up and walked out on her own!"

"Everything okay?" Shadow asks, but we all fucking know it's not.

She shakes her head, listening to the person on the other end. "Right. I understand. How was she doing before that happened? Okay, okay. Thank you for checking. Bye." She looks up, her expression stricken. "She was moved yesterday. My father had her discharged, and because the payments are in his name, nobody questioned it. I expected him to stop paying, but why would he do this? He always talked like he blamed her for keeping me away."

Outlaw shakes his head. "Leverage. He's still after something. He can't control you physically anymore, so he pulled the one string he knows you can't ignore."

"But why would he do all this? Yesterday, he didn't even seem to care if I lived or died, and I'm sure as hell sure it's not because he loves me."

"I don't know, but I don't like this," I say. "I'm all for getting the fuck out of town, but my vote is to see if we can get a little more info before we leave."

Lightning nods. I knew I could trust him to back me up. "If Mesner's got her, he'll probably move her here, right?"

Shadow doesn't look happy, but he nods. "I'll call and give Eagle-eye an update once we're out of here. He can probably put some pressure on our connection inside Mesner's place, but we'll need more than that. I think we should arrange to talk to Carnell. On our terms this time."

"We can't trust him," Outlaw snarls. "He wants Mesner and he doesn't give a shit if we get thrown to the dogs in the process."

I nod in agreement. "You're right. But Harper? Mesner's name was on the room, but I bet you're the one with power of attorney. Unless he has the right to make medical decisions for

her, he just kidnapped her and probably moved her out of state. That can't be fucking legal.”

She'd been lost in her own world, probably worrying about her mother, but she perks up. “You're right. We had to talk to an attorney before they started treatment because she was going to be out of it for weeks. I filled out a bunch of different forms at the hospital, too, but none of those listed my father anywhere. Her room was paid for through the end of the month, so there's no way they should have been able to move her without checking with me.”

“If anything seems even a little bit off, we're gone,” Lightning says, unusually serious for him. “I'd feel a hell of a lot better if we were doing all of this from the compound with the club behind us, and Outlaw needs time to recover. What do you think Harper?”

“I'll do whatever it takes to get my mother back, but I'm not playing bait again.” Harper adds.

Shadow makes the call.

HARPER

I'VE NEVER BEEN IN A DESERT BEFORE, NOT FOR REAL. I SAW IT from the plane when I flew in, full of hope for Mom and excited to get to know my newly-found father, but needless to say, there hasn't been a lot of time to explore. It's a whole different world from home. Harsh, wild and a little scary, but also beautiful. A lot like the guys, though I'm not sure they'd appreciate the comparison.

I lean my head against Lightning's back and enjoy the rumble as I watch the sun come up on the horizon. His motorcycle is a deep, dark blue, almost black until the light hits it and you see the full depth of the color. Out here on the quiet road, with the dry desert air whipping past, I can really understand why they love this. It's exhilarating and relaxing at the same time. Especially with my arms wrapped around his broad chest and my thighs resting against his.

So much is going wrong, I'm going to cling hard to everything that feels good and right.

Meeting an untrustworthy cop out in the desert feels like something out of a spy movie. We pass by prickly cacti, scraggly desert bushes and the occasional tumbleweed rolling by. It's an unfamiliar combination of flat barren ground, rocky outcrops and mountains rising in the distance, nothing like home. We ride into the foothills, and they turn off onto an unmarked road. The air was cool when we started riding, but it's already heating up. Hopefully there will be shade where we're going.

They have to slow down and drive carefully over the bumpy, washboard road. Shadow, riding in front, motions with his arm, and they pull off the dirt path and cut through a trio of giant rocks. On the other side is enough room to park the bikes without being seen. The guys pull up in a patch of shade and kill the engines.

“Guess we’re here.” Thunder checks his phone. “This is where Eagle-eye’s man suggested meeting. I’ll send Carnell the coordinates.”

“It’s got good visibility, but I still don’t trust him,” Outlaw notes while scanning the area. If I didn’t know he was hurt, I wouldn’t notice that he’s being very careful how he’s standing, but I can only imagine how much pain he’s in.

Shadow gets off his bike and stretches. “That’s why we’re out here and not in the fucking city. If we see anything suspicious, we head that way.” He points in a different direction than we came. “It meets up with access road and we can get the fuck out.”

“If you ask me, it just makes both sides sitting ducks.”

I shiver at Outlaw’s words, looking around like every rock might be a gunner’s nest. I slide off the back of the motorcycle, feeling very exposed.

“Well, then we’re fucked anyway,” Lightning says as he swings his long leg off his bike. “No point worrying about it. So, what do we do while we wait? We shoulda brought some six-packs or something.”

I glance at his abs. Pretty sure we brought at least four. “Actually. Could you teach me how to shoot?” I ask a bit out into the air, not sure how any of them would feel about it.

Shadow arches an eyebrow at me, looking a little skeptical. “Shoot a gun? Is that something you want?”

Thunder and Lightning are so identical that if they weren’t wearing different clothes, I wouldn’t be able to tell them apart sometimes, but then they’ll do or say something and it’s so incredibly obvious.

Thunder frowns, not looking like he approves of the idea. “Some basic self-defense would be safer.”

Lightning flashes an amused grin. “Don’t see why not.”

Outlaw cocks his head, expression unreadable.

I chew my lip nervously. “I mean, in an ideal world, I’d rather never touch one, but this isn’t an ideal world, is it? I hate feeling helpless when things go wrong. You’re right, self-defense would be a good idea, but you could show me the basics of how to shoot right now, and it would take a lot longer to teach me Judo or whatever. I know you’ll protect me when you can, but I can’t count on you always being there.” And something I don’t want to mention—if someone else gets shot or hurt, I don’t want to have to stand there and wait to get saved.

Shadow nods slowly, but it’s Outlaw who surprises me by answering first. “I’ll show you.”

He confuses me so much. I’m not afraid of him anymore, not after he saved my life, but I’m really not sure how he feels about me. The others feel more straightforward. Lightning is an open book, Thunder isn’t as easy going, but what you see is what you get. If he didn’t like me, I’d know it. Shadow took longer, but I think it’s because he carries the most responsibility. Outlaw...

I owe him my life. “Are you sure? I mean, if you need to rest I understand.”

“I’m fucking fine. I said I’ll do it,” he growls.

Thunder pushes me in Outlaw’s direction. “Don’t argue. We’re all decent shots, but Outlaw trains with Quickshot. He helps a lot of the new members learn to shoot. He’ll teach you right.”

“Okay. Let’s do it.” I nod, a little nervous but determined not to chicken out. I asked for this, and maybe if I show Outlaw that I’m not completely useless, he won’t be as grumpy around me.

Outlaw turns and walks off, heading away from the group. He pauses without looking back. “You coming?”

“Yeah! Sorry!” I jog to catch up, ignoring the chuckles from behind me.

He stops at a rock that could function as a table, pulls his gun out and removes the ammo. He hands the gun to me.

I nearly drop it in surprise. “Wow, it’s heavier than I thought.”

“Had I known, I woulda brought something smaller for you to learn on. But this is what I’ve got. The first and most important rule with guns is that they’re always loaded. Even if you’re a hundred percent sure they aren’t, always treat them like they are.”

“Right.” This is reminding me of Shadow’s three rules. “Is there a second rule?”

“Yeah, don’t fucking point it at anything you don’t intend to shoot.”

“Is the third rule to always do what you say?” I tease, before catching myself.

His brows knit together. “What the fuck are you talking about? The third rule is to never rest your finger on the trigger. Do you want to learn or not?”

“Yes, sorry.”

Outlaw goes over the basics. Figuring out my dominant eye and then the different parts of the gun while I do my best to follow along. Then he gets right up behind me. His arms come around so he can show me how to hold the gun with both hands. The grip is thick, obviously made for someone with hands like his, not mine. “Hold it like this. Yeah. You don’t really use your thumbs, but try to squeeze between your index finger and your palm. Keep it as steady as you can.”

He has me get into a staggered stance, shows me how to hold it, bracing my grip so I don’t lose control, and to hold it so it doesn’t twist when I pull the trigger. With every new position, he guides me with his hands, on my wrists, on my upper arms, on my hips. His hand brushes over the front of my shirt, and of course it’s right across the nipple, which comes alive with a tingle that shivers its way through me all the way down to my toes. I need to focus, but there’s something sexy about a man

who's obviously very skilled at something, and is giving you his full attention while teaching you.

There's so much more to firing a gun than I realized. The movies make it look like it's all point and click. But finally, he sets up a few differently sized rocks on the larger one we've been using as a table, and has us move about 10 yards away. He positions us with his chest flush with my back and his arms right along my arms and steadying them. Is it me, or can I feel his heart beating?

"Just close your left eye, align the sights and pull the trigger," he says, his no-nonsense voice right in my ear. His breath hot on my neck. I swallow thickly and squeeze the trigger.

The hammer slams home loud enough to make me jump, even without being loaded. I don't know why I expected a big explosion. Maybe all the anticipation is making me skittish.

"Good. Do it again." He repositions my wrists just a little. "Right there."

His choice of words makes me think of Shadow ordering me to take him in my mouth last night. This might be easier if Outlaw's voice didn't make me feel like we're doing something way dirtier than we are. Especially when he's wrapped around me like this.

I pull the trigger two more times, without jumping this time. Click click. I actually feel a little proud when he grunts in approval.

"Alright, I'm gonna load the gun. Remember the rules?"

I nod. "Always treat a gun like it's loaded. Don't point at anything I don't want to shoot. Don't rest my finger on the trigger." I kinda think he'd approve of Shadow's third rule, too, but I'm not going to bring it up again.

He pulls the pistol from my fingers and slips the magazine in with an ominous click. Then I get it back in my hands.

"It's heavier."

"Full mag, of course it is." He wraps his warm hands around mine, giving me support. "Take your time. Aim at the biggest

rock like I showed you.”

“Okay,” I say, so incredibly nervous. I know it’s going to make a lot of noise this time and kick back at me. Only his steady grip calms me.

“Draw a deep breath, hold it and flex your core and shoulders, make yourself as stable as you can. Then pull the trigger.” His voice is right in my ear.

I do my best and when I think I’m ready, I put my index finger in and squeeze.

The gun explodes. Even knowing what to expect, I still scream in surprise. “Did I hit it?”

He laughs. “No, but I’ve seen worse first shots. Let’s try that again.”

Outlaw supports my hands again, and this time I brace better, remembering the power of the gun from the last time. I promise myself not to scream this time as I aim down the sights. Then I squeeze.

This time when the gun barks, at least I see where the bullet hits. It wasn’t the rock I was aiming at, but I’m getting closer. Next time for sure. With a smaller gun, I think this would be way easier. It’s actually a little fun. “Okay, let me try on my own.”

Outlaw doesn’t say anything for a moment, but then he backs up a step, letting me go. “Okay.” He sounds a little uncertain, but lets me try.

Determined, I get into the stance as he’s shown me, aim right down the barrel, and pull. The rock *next* to the one I was aiming at shoots off into the distance with a loud crack. “Did you see that?” I won’t win any shooting contests anytime soon, but at least I can fire the gun without losing complete control now. I spin around with a huge grin on my face.

Before I can react, he’s on me, grabbing my wrist and forcing it down so the gun points at the ground. He has me disarmed in no time. “Always fucking treat the gun like it’s fucking loaded!” he yells, then his face twists in pain and he looks like he’s about to be sick.

“I—I’m sorry. I wasn’t thinking...” I mean, he’s right, I should’ve been more careful with the gun, but I wasn’t prepared for him to explode like that. “Are you okay? Maybe you should sit down?”

“Just go back to the others and don’t cause trouble,” he snarls, hand on his side and walks away, leaning to favor his injured side.

“Outlaw!” I yell at him. “I’m sorry. It was a mistake.”

“It’s fine,” he growls, not even looking my way. “Go tell Shadow to bring me my shit.”

He’s hurt. Of course he is. You don’t heal a hole in your side overnight. I feel like such an idiot. He was so patient with me before that. A little crabby maybe, but in a nice way. He must have twisted his wound when he grabbed the gun from me. The guys look at me as I walk back to the bikes where they’re waiting.

“Everything okay?” Thunder asks.

I nod, heading right to Outlaw’s bike. “Yep.” We picked up some medical supplies on the way out of town, and since it’s my fault he’s hurting, I’m going to fix it.

Whether he likes it or not.

OUTLAW

FUCK.

I fucked up and drove someone away again. But what the hell did I expect? She doesn't fucking need me when the others are all over her. Thunder and Lightning didn't surprise me, but Shadow? I didn't expect him to line up for his turn so fast.

I flick the safety on and find myself a piece of rock to curl up against and die like a wounded coyote. There's blood on my palm, and it's spreading across the shitty drugstore undershirt. Where the fuck is Shadow? I need help wrapping everything back up and making sure my guts aren't leaking out.

"Hey, are you okay?" Harper's voice, sweet and timid, drifts over to me.

"I told you to go wait with the bikes," I growl, not wanting her to see me hurt.

"I'm not useless, you know," she says, and sits down right next to me. "I've had to learn a lot about nursing over the past couple years. Let me see."

"What? No, I'm fine," I lie.

"No, you're not. Lift up your shirt and show me." She's already reaching to look.

I try to move away, but she's right on top of me, her hand pushing the hem up and exposing the blood seeping through the bandages.

She sucks in a little breath and her mouth quirks in a smug smile. "Totally fine."

“Fuck off! Just because I offered to teach you to shoot doesn’t mean I want you touching me. Why are you acting like you care? Is it to impress the rest of them? Because they’ll fuck you either way.” I said it to hurt her, but when I see the words actually land, I want to take them back immediately.

How do I fix this?

“I’m not trying to impress anyone,” she snaps. “Maybe I’m just grateful that you got hurt saving me, and I don’t think you’re as big of an asshole as you pretend to be.”

“You’re wrong about that,” I say under my breath as her soft hands lift my shirt away and start picking at the old bandage. It’s stuck under the waistband of my jeans.

Harper hesitates. “Um, you need to…”

I might not be as fast to whip my dick out as the others, but I’m not fucking shy. I straighten up, open the buckle on my belt and lower my jeans down my hips. My side hurts like a bitch, stabbing in the front and a dull ache in the back. “It’s torn open, isn’t it?”

“Yeah,” she whispers, gently unwrapping the bandage and pulling away the gauze. “I don’t know how you’re up and talking to me. I’d be in bed crying my eyes out.”

“Don’t have fucking choice, do I?”

Harper pulls out an antiseptic wipe and cleans off the blood before replacing everything with clean supplies. I do my best to ignore the feel of her hands as she gets in close, winding the bandage around my waist, her fingers smoothing over my skin as she fixes it in place. My cock has no fucking business getting hard, but a little pain has never stopped it before, and there’s no way she doesn’t notice. Not with it straining against the waistband of my boxers and her hands a fucking inch away.

She licks her lips and meets my eyes.

I don’t have to read minds to know what she’s thinking. It’s right there on her face. She’s curious. I might’ve been half out of my mind last night, but I wasn’t dead. I heard her whimpers

as Shadow ate her fucking pussy, and then her sucking him off right there, where any of us could see.

Damn, it's easy to imagine guiding her head down and a turn of my own.

Do I want her? Fuck yeah. I'm not blind. She's gorgeous.

But messing around with someone who doesn't know the score? Dangerous territory. I can tell the other guys are getting fucking attached and I don't want to fuck that up for them when the inevitable happens.

When she gets sick of me and makes them choose.

"Why don't you like me?" Harper asks quietly. Her big blue eyes look up, confused and hurt.

What? "Why do you think that?"

"Oh, I don't know. Everything? You keep snapping at me and acting like I'm a huge burden."

"You are."

Harper recoils.

God damn it. Now she definitely thinks I hate her, and that's not fucking true. I grab her hand before she can leave. "Listen to me. This was supposed to be an in and out job. You made this whole situation a lot more fucking complicated, but it's not your fault. None of this shit is your fault."

I don't think she believes me. If she did, her eyes wouldn't be filling with tears that I don't know how to fix. Every time I open my mouth I shove my fucking boot in it. I grab her chin and force her to look up at me. "Look, if—"

She shocks the fuck out of me by leaning in and kissing me. It's just a feathery light peck, or at least it fucking starts that way, but her lips are every bit as soft as they look, I slide my hand into her honey blonde hair and take it deeper. She melts into the kiss, a tiny moan slipping out as her eyes flutter closed. She tastes like fucking heaven.

Harper presses herself into me and slides her hands across my stomach, then down. If she keeps going, she's going to get

more than a fucking handful, and learn that my tongue and nipples are far from the only things I've had pierced. The side of her hand brushes along the edge of my boxers, skimming the head of my straining cock through the thin cotton. I hiss at the touch, and she pulls back.

“Sorry! Did I hurt you?”

“What do you think?” I nod downwards.

She follows my gaze to the clear outline starting to push out of the elastic. “Oh! That wasn't what I meant to...”

“You sure? Because that was definitely the direction you were going. But it's fine. Go back to the bikes. I'll meet you there in a few.”

“Do you need help?” She asks.

Oh for fuck's sake. She's too fucking innocent for this life.

Well, I can fix that. “Not unless you want to help me take care of this so I can walk back without those assholes thinking I'm fucking dying instead of suffering from a massive case of blue balls.”

Harper's jaw drops and her cheeks flush pink, but she actually laughs. “That's not a real thing.”

“Nah, but the rest was true.” I slide my hand into my underwear, giving her plenty of time to leave, but she doesn't move. “I wasn't fucking kidding.”

I watch Harper as closely as she's watching me, waiting for the moment when she stands up and leaves, but she doesn't move as I free my cock and wrap my hands around the base.

“Is that...?” Her eyes go huge.

I grin and flick the silver ring hanging from my frenum, just below the head of my cock. “Yep.”

“Didn't it hurt?”

“Not as bad as getting shot.” I lean back against the warm rock, enjoying the small thrill of being watched. And she's fucking transfixed, watching like it's the first time she's ever

seen a dick. Which I know isn't true, but my gut tells me it's not as far off as it should be.

I also know for a fucking fact that Shadow wouldn't have been ordering her around like one of the club sluts if he knew.

"Harper..."

She doesn't look up. "Mmm?"

"Are you a fucking virgin?"

She tears her gaze away from my moving hand and looks at me like she just got caught. "What? Why?"

"Just answer the question."

"Does it matter?" She waits for me to answer, but I'm a patient man. "Fine. Technically? Yes."

"Technically?"

She fidgets and her eyes flit to my cock, then back to me, like she's afraid to let herself get distracted. "I haven't had sex, but I'm twenty-one. I've done other stuff, and I'm not a child. It just never felt like the right time I guess."

Things click into place. The whole reason she's showing interest makes sense now. Her life just got flipped upside down and then she was thrown into danger with men who clearly have no fucking problem teaching her a few things that she might have missed out on before she escapes back to her normal life. I can work with that.

"Touch me, then."

She licks her lips and hesitates. "We might not have much time."

"Then you better not waste it. Come on. Touch me." I reach for her and grab her hand, guiding it to my shaft and wrapping her fingers around it.

"Like this?" she asks, moving her hand.

"Yeah. Up and down. Fucking squeeze. Don't worry about the piercing. It's long healed. So long as you aren't yanking on it, it'll be fine."

Her hand moves awkwardly at first, but I help guide her. She's a fucking quick learner and soon she's jerking me off exactly the way I want.

"That's it. Fuck." I groan. "Just a little harder. That's perfect."

She bites her bottom lip, her cheeks are bright red and her eyes are locked on what she's doing. "Are you...are you going to come?"

"Do you want to watch?"

Harper nods, her breathing is coming quicker and her breasts rise and fall, pressing against her t-shirt. Her other hand slides tentatively down into my underwear and her delicate nails scrape over my balls, feeling fucking amazing. Pre-cum drips from my slit, and every time her hand comes up, she swipes her thumb across the head, spreading the slick fluid.

"That's it. Fuck. I'm so fucking close. Are you watching?" I ask, knowing she is, but wanting her to have to say it.

"Yes," she moans, and the sound shoots through me, adding another layer of pleasure.

"Keep that up and I'll come all over your fucking hand."

She doesn't stop, and she doesn't slow down. Her grip is firm and tight, sliding up and down my length, the friction just the right amount. The muscles in my thighs tense, and I arch off the rock.

"Fuck!" I growl as the pleasure hits a crescendo, and my cock erupts, thick ropes of cum spraying across my stomach and the new bandages, then dripping down over her still pumping hand.

"Wow," she breathes. "That's a lot. Um, what do I do now?"

"What did you do for Shadow last night?"

Harper blushes bright red, but she answers, "Swallowed."

"Incoming!" Thunder yells, with the worst fucking timing.

"Motherfucker."

SHADOW

HE'S ALONE. BRAVE.

I don't know exactly what to make of this cop. My instincts are telling me that he's not on our side, but that he wasn't lying about his real goal being Mesner. If it wasn't for Harper, I wouldn't be taking this risk, but when all this is over, she's going to help to put her life back together, and the Screaming Eagles are a force to be reckoned with, but our reach only goes so far.

"Carnell," I greet him as he comes out of his car, taking a quick glance around him before committing. "You've got ten minutes to convince us that we shouldn't leave you here for the vultures. We played by your fucking rules and your man fucked us over before you left us all to fucking die."

He runs a hand through his dirty blond hair, shaking his head. "I don't know what the fuck he thought he was doing. Yeah, I told him to push things if the talking stalled out, but he wasn't supposed to start shooting. We can't exactly ask him, can we? This is a fucking shit show. I didn't fucking sleep last night."

"Boo fucking hoo," Thunder rumbles like his namesake. "We had to hide out like rats while things died down. If any of us had died, you'd be a dead man walking right now. Hell, I'm not convinced we shouldn't shoot you right here." He loosens his gun in his belt.

Harper and Outlaw join us, walking back from where he was teaching her how to shoot. Not sure what passed between them, but if he let her patch him up, that's a good fucking sign.

I was half expecting her to come running back in tears after he tore into her but Outlaw's walking easy, laser focused on Carnell. I don't know if the cop knows Outlaw was shot or not, but if we don't have to reveal that, it's for the best.

I'll give Carnell points for bravery. The shoe is on the other foot this time and he doesn't shrink back at all. "But you haven't, so why am I here? You have no reason to believe me, but I won't hold yesterday's fiasco against you. Mesner's mystery daughter is clearly choosing to be with you for whatever reason, and if that pisses him off, I'll count it as the only silver lining in the fucking situation."

Lightning nods reluctantly. "Missing person."

He cocks his head. "Okay? It's not my department, but I could make some calls. I want to know why, though. I'm not tracking someone down so your club can execute someone who pissed them off. I feel like I owe you a favor, but contrary to how it might seem, I'm not dirty."

"It's Harper's mother," I clarify.

He barely reacts, his eyebrows rising just a touch. He turns to Harper. "Your mother? I didn't know she was part of this picture. I've been following Mesner for longer than any of you have been alive, and I've gotta say. The fact that he had a daughter came completely out of the blue. Has he had your family hidden away all this time?"

Outlaw and Lightning take positions behind Harper, like bodyguards.

She shakes her head. "I didn't find out he was my father until recently. Mom moved to the east coast when she was pregnant. As far as I know, they never had any contact after that. He didn't know I existed."

Carnell frowns. "When did she go missing?"

"Yes—yesterday," Harper says, her voice cracking. She starts to cry, and Lightning puts his arm around her.

"We don't know for sure if it happened before or after we met with him. All we know for sure is that she was in a medical

facility recovering, and Mesner had her checked out and moved,” I explain.

“Mesner.” Carnell says it like a curse.

I cross my arms over my chest and lean against the cliff wall. “He was helping pay for her recovery, but he shouldn’t have been able to move her. Harper is her only legal family. I’m betting my left ball that if she’s not in Vegas by now, she’s on her way.”

“Why, though?” Carnell says thoughtfully, only half paying attention to me as he thinks. “What would he have to gain? To use her to force Harper into line? To punish the mother for keeping his child away? I feel like I’m playing cards with only half the deck.”

I glance at Harper with a raised, questioning eyebrow. Her story isn’t mine to tell. Pretty sure she’s had enough of fucking men making decisions in her life.

She takes a deep breath and nods. “I can tell you what I know.”

By the time she’s done explaining how she ended up getting mixed up with Mesner, Carnell’s shaking his head in disbelief. “I don’t fucking believe it. I mean, I do,” he adds quickly, holding his hands out. “I’m not saying you’re lying. It’s just so... it doesn’t sound like Mesner, is all. Bringing home his long lost daughter, setting her up for some kind of tax fraud marriage... We’re still missing the bigger picture. Mesner’s got a whole army of crooked lawyers and accountants to deal with keeping him looking clean. Trust me, my life would be a lot easier if he didn’t.”

“But can you find her?” Harper steps forward, glaring up at Carnell in a determined expression that’s a good match for his own. Poor girl’s had it rough, but she’s still got that fire within. The one that makes me wanna stoke it later to watch her burn, but I table that for when Carnell’s gone again. “She was starting to be more aware last time I checked on her, and if he’s hurting or scaring her... I’ll do whatever it takes to make sure he pays.”

“I do feel for your situation,” Carnell says with a nod. “I wish I could give you some sort of reassurance, but I know Mesner. I don’t believe he would go through the trouble of taking her just to let her get sick or die, but if he sees it as a punishment of sorts, I could see him emotionally manipulating her in the same way he tried with you.”

“Shit. You’re even worse at talking than me,” Outlaw snaps. “Have a little sympathy, man.”

Carnell winces. “Sorry, just thinking out loud. I’m not usually in direct contact with victims.”

I hold up my hands before things get fucking stupid. “So are you in or not? Harper wants her fucking mother back, and you want Mesner. Do we keep playing ball, or do we all walk away empty-handed. Because just a heads up, if this gets messy and we have to come back and clean things up, it won’t just be the four of us.”

“Is that a threat?” Carnell snaps back.

“It’s a fucking promise. But as long as our goals align, I don’t see why we need to fight each other as well as Mesner. You can think whatever the fuck you want to about us, but up until she came here, this girl was living a totally normal life. She’s exactly the type of person the cops are supposed to protect. She fucking deserves a future, one with a white picket fence where her mother gets to play with her fucking grandkids.”

I mean every fucking word, but talking about Harper’s future without us burns. She’s already worming her way under my skin, and I haven’t talked to the others about her, but I can tell Thunder and Lightning are both feeling real fucking protective. More than just for any innocent.

“It’s as hot as Satan’s asshole out here,” Lightning says, “We all want the same fucking things, so can we just agree already? What do you need from us to get this moving?”

Thunder rolls his eyes, but nods in agreement.

Carnell huffs. He looks about as tired as I feel. “Fine. I need all the information you can get me about your mother. Pictures, ID, former addresses, anything that could help us

track her down. The details of what kind of medication or equipment they might need to take care of her so we can see if anything pops up. Anything and everything, really.” He looks expectantly at Harper.

“Sure. But I’ll need my phone back,” Harper says, holding out her hand. “Without my laptop or any of my stuff, that’s the only way I can get to anything from here.”

“Fine. I’ve got it in the car. Just a warning, I swapped out your SIM with a new one in case Mesner or any of his people try to contact you.”

“Sounds like you want to be the one tracking her,” Thunder says darkly.

Carnell doesn’t look remotely apologetic. “Better me than him, don’t you think?”

While they handle exchanging information, I step to the side and start looking for somewhere to hole up for the night. It’s a long ride back to the compound even in good shape, and I don’t want Outlaw to keel over. Somewhere halfway maybe. Where we can head in either direction depending on how the wind blows. The moment our interests don’t align, I don’t trust Carnell not to dick us around again and I’d rather be closer to home than not.

“This is your mother?” Carnell asks in a tone that has me looking up. His brows are deeply furrowed as he examines what I’m assuming is a picture on Harper’s phone.

Harper nods. “Um, yeah? Why? Have you heard or seen something about her?”

“Simmons?” He shakes his head slightly, dismissively. But I can tell there’s something he’s not saying. “She just reminds me of someone. I’ll do everything in my power to find her. I promise.”

Harper doesn’t look convinced, but none of us have a lot of options right now. We all watch him drive away.

“I don’t fucking trust him,” Outlaw says, and we all nod together, even Harper. “Back all your shit up and bury that phone. Who the fuck knows what he’s put on there.”

“Agreed.” I start walking to my bike. “But if there’s one thing I do know. It’s way too fucking hot to be standing out here. And Vegas is nothing but trouble for us right now. It’s time to put a little distance between us, Mesner, *and* Carnell. I booked a room for us in the mountains. We’ll crash overnight and if we don’t hear anything, I’d rather wait this out inside the walls of the clubhouse.”

“You and me both,” says Thunder.

“Is there a pool?” Lightning asks, like a fucking kid.

“You gonna skinny-dip?”

“Maybe.”

“I don’t want to deal with more cops because you want to swing your dick in public,” Outlaw grumbles.

Lightning grins. “Bet you’d change your mind if Harper joined me.”

HARPER

I RIDE BEHIND SHADOW ON HIS SLEEK, BLACK MOTORCYCLE. The engine purrs like a big cat, something that might stalk you in a jungle before pouncing and killing you in one snap of its massive jaws. It suits him.

I mean, he's eaten me, and it was pretty amazing.

I giggle at the thought. I don't know if he can feel it against his back, but I'm clinging to him pretty tightly, so maybe.

Outlaw's riding to our left. The others seem to be careful about making sure he stays where they can see him. I'm still awed by how he's able to function with such a major injury. I'm not scared by the tattoos, piercings and grumpy attitude anymore. He reminds me of Garfield, the cat we found when I was little. It was a big, orange tabby who'd probably been living on the street for a long time. At first all he did was hide under the couch or the bed, growling if I tried to pet him.

I must've been about five, and I cried about it to Mom because I wanted a cat like I saw in the cute cat videos. She sat me down and explained that sometimes, when someone has been scared and alone for a long time, it takes time, but they deserve the chance, because when they do learn to trust, they will trust you with their whole heart.

She was right back then, and when I see Outlaw with the others—men he trusts with his life—I see the man who put himself in the line of a bullet for me.

The hotel is nicer than I expected for being along the highway. It's tied to a little casino, like it ran away from Las Vegas and

ran out of juice here. I suppose once you're in Nevada, any stop is a gambling opportunity. But as long as it has a functioning shower, I'm happy. I'd be a lot happier if I still had my luggage, but we never made it back to the little motel.

My wedding dress is probably either for sale online or shoved into a lost and found box. I won't miss it, but I would kill for those silk pajamas.

Shadow taps the keycard on the latch and opens the door. I'm the first one in. "Wow! This is nice."

It's a small suite on the tenth floor, with not only two queen size beds, but a little side room with a sitting area, a big TV and a pretty nice view of the town. To turn on the lights, there's a little screen with a color wheel that I can touch to adjust the lighting. I put us firmly in the red light district before finding something a little more natural, with just a hint of purple from a strip of lights hidden near the crown molding. Neat.

Shadow chuckles. "Just because we're bikers doesn't mean we're poor, baby girl. I thought we could all do with the chance to stretch out a little."

Outlaw does exactly that, carefully stretching out on the bed with a soft breathing hiss.

"And yet we still have to have to fight over who bunks with who tonight," Lightning says with a laugh, collapsing onto a chair in the sitting area.

"I feel like I'm running away from my problems," I say while wetting my lips. "Mom is out there somewhere, and I don't know if she's okay. He could be hurting her, or telling her I'm dead or all sorts of horrible things."

"Carnell is on it. In the meantime, the most important thing is to keep you safe, and that's what we're doing." Thunder sits on one of the beds, putting our heights about even. "We've been doing nothing but reacting since this shit started. It's time to take a minute and think."

"I know..." I lean my back against the wall, kind of how my whole life feels at the moment. "I just hate not doing

anything.”

“Waiting is shit. It’s one of the hardest fucking things to do. We all fucking hate it, but you have to play this smart.” Shadow sounds about as frustrated as I feel.

I look around the room taking in all four of them, one by one. Outlaw might be the only one hurt, but they all look rough. “Why are you guys even still here? Honestly. You’ve got your bikes back, you delivered your message to Vincent. You don’t need me for anything anymore. I’m literally just more trouble for you. Not that I don’t appreciate it, because I have no idea what I’d do without you guys, but... you’re putting yourselves at a lot of risk here, for what?” I have to ask, even if I’m terrified that if they think about it, they’ll come to their senses and leave.

I get hard stares back from each and every one, like I’m asking a really stupid question. Even Outlaw.

“Pretty fucking sure we promised to keep you safe. That means something. Do you think we’d go back on our word just because shit got messy?” Thunder sounds genuinely insulted.

“No, of course not, but there has to be a time limit on that, right? Ten years from now you aren’t still going to be with me just because you made a promise. None of us expected things to spiral this far out of control.” I raise my hands like I’m trying to indicate the whole universe.

Lightning grins. “Trying to get rid of us?”

“What? No.”

“Don’t fucking worry about ten days from now, let alone ten years,” Outlaw says, propping his head up on an arm. “We’ll deal with today first, and then see where we are tomorrow. Right now, I just want something to eat.”

“I’ll see what’s nearby,” Lightning says, pulling out his phone.

“Chinese,” Thunder adds. “Szechuan Chicken, extra hot. Wanna feel it burn all the way down.”

“And out,” Lightning tacks on.

I blink at the guys. Apparently I'm stuck with them. And we're having Chinese for dinner.

A warm feeling spreads inside, making me grin. If you look away from the kidnapping, the shooting, the hiding out while fearing for our lives, it's actually been nice to be part of the group. It's just been me and Mom for a long time, and I've never had any other family. The way they've taken me in without question, it would be really easy to get too attached.

Well, if you can't beat them, then join them. "General Tso's, if they have it. Medium," I announce, before going to explore the shower. I need to get all this desert dust and road grit off me.

"Noted," says Shadow.

Still smiling, I go check out the bathroom. It's nice. With a huge open shower that looks more like a sauna, with a wood slat floor, two shower heads on the wall and two rainfall showerheads above. There's room for at least three or four people my size, so maybe two bikers.

I strip off my dust filled clothes and turn on all the heads. When I jump in, it's like being dropped into a tropical storm. One day when this is all over and I have a home of my own, I'm going to have a shower like this. That's not too much to ask, is it?

I'm just starting to lather up with the complimentary loofa when a cool draft alerts me that the bathroom door's been opened. "Who's there?"

"Need help? I'm good at scrubbing backs and other hard to reach spots." Lightning's voice is teasing.

"I'm not dressed!" Why out of all my options was *that* what came out of my mouth?

"Woulda hated to think you were one of those weirdos who showers with their clothes on," says Thunder.

"It'll get pretty cramped in here," I note, not sure if I'm trying to encourage or discourage them. I turn towards the back showerhead, clutching the loofa with both hands and my forearms covering my breasts.

“Then I guess we’ll have to get cozy,” Thunder says so close that I jump. “You’ve got great hips for holding onto, honey.”

He puts his hands on my hips and pulls me into him, pressing my shoulder blades against his torso, my legs against his, and his rigid cock against the small of my back. My time with him and Thunder feels like a lifetime ago even though it’s only been a couple of days. I swallow nervously at the thought, because I don’t think anyone’s going to interrupt us today.

“Hand me the scrubby thing,” he asks, clearly not expecting resistance.

I pass it to his waiting hands, knowing that I’m baring my breasts in the process, but what’s the point? He’s seen all of me, and I doubt I’m hiding nearly as much as I think. As tall as he is, I bet he’s getting a great top-down view.

“I found another one.” Lightning says, and then there are two big, naked men scrubbing me down with a loofa each.

They’re more gentle than I would’ve imagined, and very thorough. The rough texture feels so good against my thighs, my sides, and right up the middle of my back. I close my eyes and let them work, shivering in pleasure.

When one passes over my breast, my nipple draws tight. I have to bite my lower lip. “Watch it,” I whisper.

“Oh, we are,” Lightning confirms, and my other breast gets the same treatment, followed by a sudden, wet kiss. I let out a soft moan.

Thunder focuses on my back while Lightning takes the front. I suck in my belly, because that’s what you do when two perfect specimens of man are seeing you bare-ass naked. Maybe all this running away and dodging bullets will help me trim down a little.

Lightning chuckles as he kisses me, right around my belly button. “I’m going to stay right here until you breathe, baby. You’re perfectly fucking beautiful as you are. Don’t fucking try to hide yourself from us.”

I let out my breath slowly as his words wash over me. A lifetime of little comments and edited magazine photos can’t

be undone in one kiss, but it's a start. Unconditional acceptance. God, how is it that I haven't felt it until now, with them? I run my fingers through Lightning's short hair, nearly black now that it's wet. I scrape my fingers over his scalp as he continues to do exactly as promised and kisses my stomach.

And then a little lower.

Thunder rumbles into my ear, "That's right. Let us take care of you."

The soft command in his voice, and the lure of pleasure has me melting between them. I lean back into Thunder, reveling in his body heat and nod. "Okay." Just a whisper, but he hears it.

He takes one of the small shampoo bottles from a ledge in the shower and fills his hand. A moment later, he's leaning my head back and working it into my hair. Thunder massages the shampoo into my scalp with a grip that could crush rock. I'm not sure it's possible to get an orgasm just through a good hair wash, but after the time we've had, I think it might just happen. My eyes roll up into the back of my head, and if Lightning wasn't quick to support me, I would just collapse into a quivering mess at their feet.

"Turn around slow," Lightning orders, and just the simple act of obeying turns me on. I rotate until Thunder stops me so I'm facing him instead. His hard length presses into my belly, and as Lightning gets right up behind me, I realize I'm trapped between two wet, naked, hard men. God, what happened to the innocent girl that walked off a plane in Vegas?

"That's a good girl," Thunder says in his deep voice, making me moan just a little.

Lightning detaches one of the showerheads from the wall and leans my head back to rinse my hair. They might be rough on the surface, but they sure know how to make a girl feel taken care of.

Thunder pulls me into a hungry kiss. His cock prods my belly, and I reach down to put my fingers around it. It's hot and pulsing, and I want it against me. Both of them.

God, is my first time going to be in the shower? Should I tell them?

Thunder captures my jaw in his big hand and makes me look up at him. “No one’s gonna interrupt us this time. The question is, are you ready for us? All of us?”

Oh.

My heart races at the thought. I wet my lips, which suddenly feel incredibly dry, even in here. “I...”

Am I? Am I ready for it?

My body screams yes, which is a little crazy, right? Me? With four big, bad bikers?

Lightning reaches around me to cup my breasts, which doesn’t help me focus at all. He whispers right into my ear, “Remember what we said. Let us take care of you. In every way we fucking know how.”

“Okay,” I whisper.

HARPER

LIGHTNING SWEEPS ME UP IN HIS ARMS SO SUDDENLY, I SQUEAL in surprise and wrap my arms tight around his neck. “What are you doing?”

“Not enough room for all of us in here,” he says, and the reality of it sinks in. All four. Right now.

The cool draft as Thunder opens the bathroom door is nice this time after the hot shower. Not to mention that the guys have me burning up inside. How is this going to go? It’s terrifying and wonderful and maybe a little embarrassing all at the same time as Lightning carries me out into the bedroom, both of us naked and soaking wet. Not that he seems to care. I curl myself tighter in his arms, but that doesn’t help that my butt is hanging down for all to see.

“Fuck,” hisses Shadow. “Did you tan that ass? It’s fucking glowing.”

Thunder laughs and tears the comforter off the bed. “Good scrub and hot water. Go rinse off or we’re making this a private party. Where’s Outlaw?”

Shadow shakes his head.

“No?” Lightning asks.

Three men will be more than enough of a challenge, but it feels wrong that Outlaw isn’t here. “Maybe we shouldn’t do this. I don’t want to cause problems.”

“It’s not you, honey,” Shadow says gently, heading to the shower. “He needed a little space, and he’s still hurting.”

Without a care about getting the sheets wet, Lightning drops me onto one of the beds. I gasp in surprise, but the soft mattress catches me, and a moment later, its edges dip when Thunder and Lightning climb aboard. With me on my back and them on their knees on either side, their cocks hover over me, huge and imposing.

“Touch them,” says Thunder. His skin is still damp from the shower, droplets beading on his broad chest and powerful thighs.

A little nervously, I reach for both of them at once. I don’t find them hard to tell apart—their personalities are too different—but the moans Thunder and Lightning let out when I wrap my fingers around their shafts are absolutely identical. Their flesh thrums in my hands, two strong pulses pumping burning hot blood through them. It’s such a cliché, but it really does seem impossible that there’s room enough inside me. I just have to trust they know what they’re doing.

“Like this,” says Lightning, wrapping his hand around mine and moving it up and down his cock, showing me how he likes it. I do the same to Thunder, mirroring the motion. Just like I did for Outlaw, but with no piercings.

In sync, they reach down and touch me. Exploring with clever fingers. Cupping my breasts and teasing my nipples. They draw circles around my areolae, and flick the taut buds, making me clench and gasp. Their other hands find one thigh each and caress upwards, getting closer and closer to my center. It’s a little overwhelming already, and still it’s just the two of them. The water in the shower stops, warning me that Shadow will be joining us soon.

My tension must show, because Lightning briefly leaves my breast to stroke my damp hair back from my face. “Trust us,” he says simply, and I do. They’re not going to hurt me. I know that. I don’t know how I can be so sure after only a few days, but I am. Perhaps because they’ve had every opportunity to do so or walk away, and each time they prove they’re honorable men.

Their fingers find my folds at the same time, both of them sliding around in my slick wetness. It feels strange but good to have so many hands on my body. The twins are clearly good at working together, but they each have their own style, so there's no way to anticipate exactly what's about to happen. First one finger slips inside me, and then another, alternating until my hips are moving with the rhythm and they surprise me by pushing in at the same time.

“Ooooooh!” I moan from deep in my throat, enjoying the stretch. It's like nothing I've felt before, which is something I bet I'll be experiencing a lot of today.

Thunder slips from my grasp, moving to the end of the bed. I watch as he pushes my legs back and hooks his hands on my hips. He yanks me right to the edge and drops to his knees. Lightning grins down at my surprised face, very deliberately putting the finger that's just been deep in my pussy into his mouth and sucking it clean.

“Fucking delicious,” he says.

“I want my share.” Thunder buries his face between my legs, and his broad tongue parts me like a hot knife through butter. I knew I was wet, but I didn't realize quite how much.

“God, that feels amazing,” I groan.

It's getting harder and harder to keep stroking Lightning. I close my eyes and press my back into the bed, knowing full well I'm not doing a great job, but it's just so hard to concentrate with Thunder's tongue plundering my sex and strumming my clit.

I force my eyes open and look up at Lightning, first at his cock, slick and hard from my stroking, and then up to his face. “Um... should I... Do you want—” I suck in a sharp breath as Thunder slips a finger into me.

Lightning's smile is so broad it crinkles the skin next to his warm brown eyes. “Let me hear you say it, proper. What is it you wanna do?”

“I... I want to take your...” I have no problem thinking the words. Why is it so hard to say them out loud?

“Come on.”

“I want to suck your dick,” I say really quickly, racing to the finish before I lose my nerve.

“Fuck, that’s exactly what I wanted to hear.” He grabs one of the pillows and pulls it close, propping my head up and then straddling my chest.

His cock is right in my face. Thick and glistening. The insides of his thighs are hot against my sides. Watching my reactions closely, he holds himself right at the base of his cock and angles the tip at my lips. Nervous, I start to lean in, and then a sudden swipe of Thunder’s tongue across my clit makes me gasp.

Lightning seizes the opportunity to push himself into my mouth.

There’s a hint of saltiness on my tongue, but mostly he just tastes clean, fresh out of the shower. He runs his fingers through my hair before he starts making shallow thrusts. “Suck it, babe. Show me how much you want to make me come.”

The dirty words slice right through me feeling hot and nasty in the best possible way. I obey, immediately rewarded by a pleased sigh and a murmured, “Fuck.” Then Thunder adds a second finger, and I gasp around Lightning’s thickness. There’s so much going on.

The bed shifts as someone climbs onto it, and starts caressing my stomach. Shadow. “Fuck, you look amazing like this.”

I reach out a hand in his direction, wanting to touch him. He’s more than happy to comply, leading me right to his rock hard dick. Wet tongues, hard cocks, nimble fingers, they all conspire to drive me crazy. The three of them shift positions, Lightning and Thunder trading places. Thunder kisses me, my flavor still on his tongue, and I don’t care. Lightning kisses my clit, his fingers playing in my slickness, and even sliding one down to tease my ass, a strange but intense sensation I’m not sure how I feel about. Shadow takes my chin and turns me to

him. I open, and his cock drives forwards, fucking my mouth in a dirty preview of the real thing.

Then he backs away, and it's Thunder in my mouth. I lose track of whose fingers are where. The constant attention brings me closer and closer to tipping over the edge. My heartbeat thunders in my ears, my pussy desperate to be filled, and my breaths come in ragged pants. I arch against the bed, only to have the finger—or fingers—taken away.

“Nooooo,” I moan in frustration.

Something blunt and hot, much thicker than a finger, nudges between my folds, making my eyes pop wide open. This is it, the big moment. God, I don't even know which one it is.

“Wait!”

It's Shadow. “Easy, baby girl. I'll go slow.”

“No, you don't...” I have to tell them, right? Does it matter? What if it does? “I've never... gone all the way,” I finish in a rushed whisper.

They freeze, but don't pull away.

Thunder presses a soft kiss to my lips. “Then we better make it real good for you, baby.”

“Look at me,” Shadow orders, not angry, but firm. “Do you want this?”

I bite the inside of my lip, but nod.

Lightning and Thunder hold me, stroking as Shadow stares deep into my eyes and starts to push. I'm so slick, and all the play has helped get me ready, but it's still a stretch as he drives into me, taking my virginity with a single deep thrust of his thick cock.

My hands fist the sheets, clutching like I need to keep myself from being swept away. Instinctively, I push myself against Shadow, drawing him inside of me. The twins resume playing with my breasts and teasing my nipples. Lightning circles my lips with a finger, and feeds it to me as Shadow works me open, making my body adjust to his thick girth.

It feels sooooo freaking good. I'm being touched everywhere at once.

Overwhelming surges of pure pleasure race through me, making me squirm and moan. "I'm going to come," I gasp, flushed hot from head to toe.

"Do it," Shadow growls. "I want to feel you squeeze my cock."

Hopefully the doors and walls are thick, because if not, someone is probably going to report a murder from how loud I scream when it finally hits. Stars explode behind my eyelids, and Shadow drives me through the orgasm with powerful thrusts that keep me shaking and quivering around him until my muscles ache and I wonder if I'll ever stop coming.

"Fuck," he groans just as I'm sure if this keeps up I'll be completely destroyed.

He drives deep and stays there. Pulsing hot and strong. God, he's coming in me! And I don't even care, because it feels so good. Just the thought of it sends one last aftershock through me, before we finally collapse onto the bed, breathing heavily. Thunder and Lightning pulled away at some point, though I've been so distracted, it didn't even register, leaving just the two of us, with Shadow on top, resting his weight on his arms so he doesn't crush me.

"Oh my God," I whisper. "I had no idea."

He kisses my forehead. "It was my fucking honor," he says, then withdraws slowly.

I groan as he slips out, feeling really empty, like there's something missing. I breathe a sigh of relief when he pulls a condom off and disposes of it. At least one of us was thinking clearly, even if I can't help but feel a little disappointment that I didn't get to experience that one last thing. It's for the best, but...

And then Thunder is there, along with Lightning on the other side, not giving me time to dwell on what could have happened. The two of them close me in, trapping me between them and teasing me with touches, kisses and little nips at my

shoulder. They kneel on either side of me, their legs spread and holding their identical cocks. The sight is so incredibly sexy.

“I want to see my cum on your tits,” Thunder growls.

“On her pretty face,” counters Lightning.

“All over her,” they say together, and the idea of it makes me shiver.

I can't help myself. I have to reach out and stroke them. Both at once. One hand for each, stroking the thick shafts, the heads slippery and already dripping pre-cum. I can't believe this is all happening.

“You want this, baby girl?”

“Yes,” I moan, long past being self-conscious or feeling guilty about my desires.

They wrap their fists around my hands, and take over, using me to jack themselves. Lightning is the first to come, shooting thick, hot ropes across my breasts. It's warm and sticky, and when he's done, he swipes a finger across my chest, rubbing the cum in, before he holds it up to my mouth.

“Open up, babe,” he orders, and I do.

His finger slides in, and I close my lips around it, tasting the salty fluid and looking right up into his eyes as I swirl my tongue. Thunder groans, his grip on my hand tightening. He pumps his cock faster, jaw clenched tight and his brow furrowed. Then his hips surge forward and he shoots off too, splattering all over my stomach and the valley between my breasts.

“God damn,” groans Thunder.

I moan, feeling used and dirty. In a good way. Like a bad girl. I should probably be ashamed, but I'm not. Especially when I look up to find Outlaw leaning against the wall, watching. There are take-out bags at his feet. I have no idea how long he's been there, but our eyes meet.

He doesn't make a move to join, but he tips his head in acknowledgment. “Dinner's here.”

HARPER

I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO EXPECT WHEN WE PULL OFF THE highway deep in a city I've never visited. The neighborhood is a mix of brick apartment buildings and single family homes, with businesses slipped in here and there. I guess I knew it wasn't going to be a tent city full of motorcycles, but it seems very normal. It's not a rich area, with some boarded up storefronts, and a few overgrown lawns, but for the most part it's clear that the people who live here care about their places, they just might not have the money to keep it picture perfect.

A group of people hanging out on the stoop of an apartment building look up as we drive past. One of the men raises a hand in greeting and Shadow returns it. It reminds me a lot of the neighborhood I grew up in, before we moved to be closer to the specialist doctors.

With my arms wrapped around Thunder's waist as far as I can, I straddle the back of his deep red motorcycle, watching the city slide by. We roll through an intersection. Off to one side is a bar called The Eagles' Roost, with a long row of motorcycles parked out front. It reminds me of Chainsaw Charlie's in Vegas. And if the name isn't a good hint as to whose turf we're on, when I turn to look across the street, all doubt is removed.

A huge compound with massive walls stretches down the block as far as I can see. The walls are tall, maybe two stories high, and topped with vicious looking barbed wire. I can't see inside, except for what looks like the top story of a huge warehouse with a gigantic Screaming Eagles logo on the wall

that must be visible from at least a couple blocks away. We drive up to a large gate that's partly open, but it's watched over by a couple of tough-looking guys with the same patches on their leather vests. They wave us through into a courtyard in front of the warehouse.

There're bikes everywhere, parked wherever there's room. My gut instinct is fear of the dangerous looking men hanging around outside. Are the ones I'm with any different? I've long since stopped thinking they are scary, because when I look at my four, I see more than the rough clothes, tattoos and take-no-prisoners attitudes. I've seen them laugh. I've seen them worry about each other.

I've seen their passion.

To the side of the warehouse, a huge garage gapes open, with people working on bikes inside. It's way more impressive than the glorified frat house I'd pictured in my head. In the other direction, there are actual homes, with little bits of lawn, painted shutters and everything. There's even some little bikes with training wheels knocked over on one of the lawns. Kids? In a place like this?

Thunder kills his engine right in front of the metal stairs that lead up to a little platform in front of the front door. "Hop off, honey," he says.

I slip off and stretch. It's been a long ride, and I'm still a little sore from last night. My thighs are killing me and my butt is numb.

"I could watch you doing that all fucking day, baby girl," Shadow says as he pushes his bike up on its stand. "Showing off those sexy curves... fuck."

I've always felt a little bit invisible. Mom never seemed to want to draw attention to herself, and I guess that rubbed off on me. It's strange to suddenly be *seen*. I keep wondering when they're going to realize that I'm nothing special, but until then, I'm going to enjoy it. At some point, they'll be done with me and go back to their sexy exciting lives, and I'll go back to... I don't know. I'll never have another experience like this, no doubt about it.

“Come on.” Lightning smacks my butt, making me jump forward with a surprised squeak.

He laughs as he leads the way up the stairs and into what I guess is the clubhouse. When they called it that, all I could picture was a little tree house with a big “No girls allowed!” sign over the rope ladder up, but it’s obviously a lot more serious.

Shadow holds the door for me, and when I look over my shoulder to thank him, I walk right into what feels like a wall.

“Hey now. Better watch where you’re going. Who are you with?” The man standing over me is huge. Just as big as Thunder and Lightning. He’s wearing a black tank top, revealing massive arms covered in dark tattoos. His hair’s cropped short and he’s looking down at me with questions in his brown eyes.

“What? I—” What do you even say to that?

“Us,” Shadow answers, patting him on the shoulder in greeting. “Badass. All good?”

Badass grins and pats him back with whacks that’d knock a lesser man over. “Damn it’s good to see you back. We heard about the trouble. Shoulda known you’d bring back a souvenir. She for sharing?”

Lightning laughs. “Fraid not, not that you fucking care. Natalie would have your balls.”

They laugh together and Badass nods. “And fucking rightly so. Nah, those days are behind me and I’m a better man for it. But if she ain’t a slut, then what’s her deal?”

“You must not have heard all the news. She got into some trouble of her own out in Vegas and got dragged into ours. We’re getting her sorted out,” Shadow explains.

An athletic biker with sandy blond hair and piercing blue eyes joins us. “Watch out. That’s how it starts,” he says with an almost boyish grin. “Outlaw! Fucking hell, man. Have you seen Doc yet? Heard you caught a bullet out there. Hurts like a motherfucker, don’t it?”

“Can’t say I’d recommend it, but it’ll take more than that to take me down.” Outlaw’s been quiet, but he seems friendly with the new guy. “I’ll go get it looked at once we’re settled in.”

“Quickshot.” Shadow pats him on the shoulder. “Good to see ya, but we’ve got to go report to Prez. You know how much he loves waiting.”

Badass winks at me. “Welcome to the club.”

That was weird. “Must be nice to have so many friends,” I say as we round the corner.

“Not just friends.” Shadow puts a hand to the small of my back and guides me deeper into the clubhouse. “Brothers. Blooded and sworn. I trust these rowdy assholes with my life. They’re my fucking family.” He nods in the direction of Thunder, Lightning and Outlaw. “These are just the three I dislike the least.”

I thought I might have started to find my family, but look how that turned out. On the other hand, without it, I never would’ve met these guys, so...

We come out into a large common room, most of it two full stories tall. There’s a long bar along one side that looks as stocked as any I’ve ever been to, open space for mingling or dancing in the middle, pool tables further down, booths like a diner’s but with leather seats on the wall opposite, and towards the back there’s a massive big screen TV and a collection of couches and easy chairs. The walls are painted black, and on one of them is a huge gold version of the Screaming Eagles logo, flanked by American flags.

Okay, so it’s a little bit like a frat house, I guess.

That is, if you traded dunk college boys out with fully grown men with dark, watchful eyes. They look fairly relaxed, wearing bike leathers and jeans, patch covered vests, bandannas and T-shirts. Most are playing pool, watching a football game on the TV or just having beers at the bar. Just about any exposed skin is covered in tattoos and scars, and a lot of them have pistol grips sticking out of their belts. If I

wasn't flanked by men that I trust, I'd probably turn tail and run right back out.

"Well, look who's back," yells the guy manning the bar. He's wearing a leather vest over his T-shirt and the sides of his head are shaved to reveal an intricate dragon tattoo wrapped around and down to his neck. "Lose it all in the slots?"

A grizzled biker with a big gray beard laughs. "Looks like they brought some winnings back, if you ask me."

Are they... Do they mean me?

As we stand there, two girls about my age, but wearing half as much clothing pass by. Pretty sure when the one's oversized T-shirt flips up, all I see is her bare ass. They're quickly swept up into the laps of two of the bikers at the bar, who aren't shy about where they put their hands.

Lightning laughs. "Come on. Pick your jaw up off the floor. We can play later, if you want. Eagle-eye's waiting." He leads the way to a staircase that leads up along the wall to what looks like some sort of office over the bar with a full view of the common room through big, covered windows. If this was a corporation, it's where I'd imagine the CEO would sit.

He knocks, and a deep, gravelly voice from inside says, "Come in."

Shadow opens the door, and the first thing I see is the most intimidating man I've met in my life. Eagle-eye is tall, his torso a barrel of muscle, and bare, muscular arms covered in tattoos. His thick hair and bushy mustache are a silvery gray. He's not looking at us, his entire focus on a pretty woman with a few grays of her own. His hand is resting on her stomach, where a baby bump is clearly showing. He kisses her fiercely before she runs her fingers through his beard and leaves, giving us a brief nod. The whole thing took less than a minute, but it was such an intimate moment that it almost makes me feel more shocked than what happened with the girls downstairs.

His most striking feature I don't see until he turns to us. A mismatched pair of eyes stare us down. One razor sharp and

staring right into my soul, the other pale and obviously blind. Its milky center follows the motions of the good eye, and it's downright eerie. It's like how I'd imagine a fortune teller in a fantasy novel. He must know how it looks, so I'm pretty sure not wearing an eye patch is a very conscious choice.

"So you're Harper. Is it Mesner? Or Simmons?"

"Um, Simmons." I press myself into Thunder for support. He rests his arm over my shoulder.

When his gaze lifts from me to pass over my bikers, it's like a physical weight has been lifted. "You can't keep her. You know that, right?" What's he mean?

Shadow shrugs.

"Jesus fucking Christ. Alright, lay it on me. I've told Mesner's people to go fuck themselves, but they're not going to let it go if they figure out we've got his fucking daughter. I think I liked it better when they couldn't figure out how to pick up a damn phone. Now, I don't give a shit about his threats. He's got muscle but we've got a fucking army, but I could do without a fucking war against some Las Vegas gangster if it's avoidable. The shit of it is, I don't fucking blame him. We wiped the Vipers off the fucking planet when they messed with Faith. So tell me, boys, what's the real deal?"

Thunder steps forward. "Honest truth, Prez. We didn't fucking take her. She begged to come with us. Ask her yourself. Mesner was using her for shit of his own, and when we ran into her, she fucking jumped at the chance to bail. Now he's got her fucking mom, and we've got a cop riding our asses because he wants Mesner."

Eagle-eye's glare falls back on me with all the weight that entails. "And what do you say, Harper?"

"Me?" I'm feeling so out of my depth here.

"Yeah. You. Everyone out, except Harper."

"Prez—"

"Out! I want to hear what the fuck she has to say without you looming over her fucking shoulder. Now fuck off. I'll call you

back up when we're done.”

HARPER

EAGLE-EYE STARES DOWN AT ME WITH THOSE TERRIFYING EYES.
I must look scared out of my wits.

I am scared out of my wits.

He grunts, sounding very annoyed, but then turns away to sit down behind the big desk in his office. He gestures at one of the chairs. “Get comfortable. I’m asking you questions, but it’s not a fucking interrogation.”

“Yes, sir.”

His office looks like a well-used space. The desk is covered with paperwork and random things like what I’m assuming is a motorcycle part. There’s a big board behind him full of pinned papers, and a couple of file cabinets are up against one of the walls. On the opposite wall is a big map of the city, full of markings, and the rug is clearly worn from countless boots. It wouldn’t look out of place in any blue collar business. There’re also photos on the desk, one of the woman I saw earlier, and another of a woman a few years older than me. He said he had a daughter. I bet that’s her. She’s looking right into the camera, and I think she inherited her sharp gaze from her father. And then there are three pictures of a little girl who can’t be more than a year old, with bright bows in her hair and huge smiles on her face. A granddaughter?

I don’t know if it makes me any less scared of him, but at least it makes him seem more human.

There’s a rustling sound from behind the desk, and suddenly a sleepy canine head pops out, looking at me curiously. A lanky

boxer stretches with a huge yawn and trots over, its tail wagging slightly. I hold out my hand to let it take a sniff. “Hey there.”

“That’s Jupiter. Don’t pay him too much attention or you’ll never get rid of him. Come to think of it, the same goes for most of the guys in this place.” His voice is gruff, but it’s hard to believe that anyone who loves their dog and has pictures of their grandkid on their desk is evil. No matter how much they look like they could put a curse on my entire family.

Not that he’d have to. We pretty much seem to already have one.

I focus on scratching behind Jupiter’s ears instead of looking directly at Eagle-eye. It makes it easier to talk. “So what did you want to know?”

“Just to get it out of the way,” he says, easing his heavy leather chair back a little as his steel-gray eye bores into me. “I trust my guys. They’re tough bastards, but solid. A lot of people wouldn’t agree, but they’d be wrong. So I’ll listen to you, but you need to know where my loyalty lies. They reason I kicked them out was because I wanna hear the story from your fucking mouth. They’ve been there and done their job. As far as I’m concerned, the Screaming Eagles’ business with Mesner is done.”

“Right.” Distracted, I forget to scratch Jupiter, but he’s quick to make sure I know, pressing his head up underneath my hand. I resume my duties.

“You heard that I’ve got a daughter.” He nods his head towards the picture of the pretty young woman. “That’s Faith. An awful lot of people would say I’m a lowlife, no better than your father. Probably worse because I don’t bother dressing it up like he does. A few years back, some people made the unfortunate decision to try to get at me through her. Those people are no longer breathing. Me, this club and her men made sure of it. So tell me, Harper Simmons, why are my men risking their lives for you?”

Her men? Is that a common thing around here?

I take him through the whole story from the beginning. Mom's illness, the email, the DNA test, the fake wedding, the kidnapping, everything. He doesn't interrupt unless he's unclear on something and wants me to elaborate, but mostly he just listens attentively. God, right now, he feels more like a father than my own.

What does it say about my life that I'm comparing the fatherly qualities of two known criminals?

"Well that's a deep pile of shit," he says, scratching his cheek after I've finished. "I wish it wasn't because it would make my life a lot easier if I could just tie you up in a bow and send you back, but I'm not that big an asshole. The question is just what we do next. I gotta think on it a little. This isn't just about you and the Wrecking Ball guys anymore. I'm making you their responsibility. Don't go wandering."

That gets a little snort-laugh out of me. "Trust me, I'm not going anywhere without them. I wouldn't dare."

"Oh, I dunno about that. It took guts to do a lot of the shit you've done so far. It all blew up in your face, but you're still here and that means something. If life doesn't try to fuck you up the ass once in a while, you never learn you're strong enough to stand the fuck up and keep going."

Biker motivational speeches are really something else. "Can I ask you something?"

His brows furrow as he looks at me curiously. "Shoot."

"You were talking about your daughter—Faith—and, well, you said her men? Like, more than one? Is that a normal thing around here?"

He grimaces. "Didn't use to be outside of fucking around, but... these days? Families are what you make of 'em, and if it brings a little peace and light into their lives, nobody here is going to say shit. Me? I'm happy with my one old lady. I'm not the sharing kind. A lot of the old timers are the same, but yeah, Faith found herself three of my boys, and if you hang around, you'll see more of it. I don't get it, but I don't fucking have to, as long as their drama doesn't make a mess of my

club. Can tell ya, there's no safer woman than one that has three or four big guys ready to kill for her." He shrugs and leans back. "Why? You looking?"

I should have expected that after my question, but I'm totally not ready to answer. When I'm with them, things feel right. Especially physically, but is it more than that? Are my emotions all mixed up because they've been protecting me? I can't even imagine finding this sort of connection with anyone else, but in the long run?

I still don't quite know where I stand with all of them. The four of them are a unit, and Outlaw is still very much a mystery to me. He might think I'm okay enough to fool around with a little, but he walked away from us last night, and if he doesn't want me to stick around, I can't see it working with the others.

Apparently, my pause is enough of an answer. Eagle-eye shakes his head. "You could do a hell of a lot worse than my boys, but if you've got doubts, don't ignore them. This club is a fucking family, and just like all families, you gotta take the good with the bad. In this life, the highs are really fucking high, but the lows can put you six feet under. Remember that."

HARPER

“WELCOME HOME.” LIGHTNING GESTURES AT THE HOUSE. IT’S one of the ones inside the compound that I saw coming in, and there really is a child size bike on the lawn.

I point at it. “And that’s yours?”

He laughs. “Nah. It’s probably Dante’s. He’s one of Alessa’s. Good reflexes, shit parking.”

I wet my lips, wondering how to even talk about this stuff. I don’t want him to get the wrong idea—or is it the right idea? “Is she one of the women together with several guys?”

Thunder, who’s unlocking the front door, looks at me over his shoulder. “She is. Why? Curious about what it’d be like?”

I mean, yes, but... “I’m just having a hard time wrapping my head around the idea. It seems like it would be a very Tale of Two Cities kind of life.”

Outlaw, who’s been quiet so far, is the only one to laugh. “A Tale of Two Cities?” The others just look at him. “Come on. It was the best of times, it was the worst of times?”

“How long have you been hiding the fact that you’re a fucking nerd?” asks Lightning, laughing.

“Just because I’ve read a book doesn’t make me a nerd, asshole.”

Shadow opens the unlocked door and holds it for me. “Sounds about right, though. Could you imagine having to deal with the four of us every day? I mean, I’m fine, and Thunder’s not too

bad, but I give any woman we're with a month before she murders Lightning."

"Hey! What about Outlaw?" He grins when he says it though.

"He'd be the wild card," Thunder answers. "Nothing personal man, but you'd either be the best of us, or she'd slip something into your coffee."

I'm not sure I like them talking about this with a theoretical woman who might not be me so I change the subject. "There aren't nearly enough houses here for all the bikers around here. Where do they all live?"

I step in and look around. Nothing fancy, but everything looks well kept. There's some stuff lying around, but it looks lived in, and not like the aftermath of a frat party.

Shadow shrugs. "Mixed. Most of the houses go to the brothers with family, but we lucked into this one. Crash, Devil, and Preacher's old lady Summer got knocked up with triplets, and they ended up getting themselves a house off the compound with more room. Most of the members have rooms in the clubhouse, but since there's four of us and Shadow's an officer, Eagle-eye okayed us taking it over. Gives us a little more private room than the rest of the guys, even if our individual spaces aren't as big. Trade-off's worth it. And you're lucky. We have somewhere to put you up without you having to bunk in the clubhouse"

"You have a spare room?"

Lightning turns on the lights. "Nope. But my bed's pretty big. Want something to drink?"

"Water's fine."

"Grab me one, too." Outlaw stretches out on the couch, favoring his injured side, and turns on the TV.

This all seems strangely domestic. I imagine what it'd be like to live here full time, with all four of them, and well... I don't hate it. It's a nice fantasy, but this isn't where my life is. Mom needs me and we live all the way on the other side of the country. And that's assuming we both make it out of this and

can even get back to our normal lives. There's still a good chance this doesn't have a happy ending.

Suddenly, there's a frantic knocking on the front door, right before three women burst into the living room.

"The fuck? Jesus, what are you all doing here?" Lightning asks.

They look nearly frantic. One is Faith, I realize, recognizing her from Eagle-eye's photo. The other two, I have no idea.

One of the others, a curvy woman who has brown hair down to her shoulders and big brown eyes grins, looking ready to explode. "Summer's having the babies!"

Outlaw looks up from the couch. "That's great for them, but what are you doing here?"

"Crash said they left behind some things when they moved, including a box full of baby prep stuff. Receiving blankets, teething rings, onesies—you know, new baby stuff. We're going to go over to clean their house and make sure the nursery is ready." The third woman, who has long, dark hair and distinctly Mediterranean features, is already moving towards a closed door. "He said it's probably in the basement with the other things they were going to bring over."

Then they all stop when they see me. "Oh!" says the brunette, cocking her head curiously. "I didn't know you had someone move in. She's cute."

"She's not—"

"I'm not—"

Lightning and I speak at the same time.

The dark-haired woman nudges her out of the way and holds out her hand. "Stop being rude, Em. Hi. I'm Alessa, my sidekick here is Emily, and this is Faith."

After a confused blink, I take her hand. "Hi. Harper. I'm just here temporarily, though."

"No shame in that."

“No! I mean, no, of course not, but it’s...” I trail off, wondering how to compress this whole mess into a short explanation and not really seeing it. “It’s complicated,” is all I land on.

The three women exchange glances, nodding at each other. “It always is,” says Faith.

“Ain’t that the truth?” Emily shrugs, then grabs my hand. “Come on. Help us look.”

“What? But I—” They give me no choice, dragging me to stairs heading down into darkness.

The guys just watch, smartly not getting in the way. Pretty sure these women are a force to be reckoned with.

Faith flips on the light and Emily tells me, “I’ve yet to see a girl show up with one of our teams and not be in some sort of trouble. So whatever your situation is, this is probably the best place to be. I’m sure the guys are distracting you in their own way, but sometimes you need to get away from all the testosterone and motor oil.”

I mean, she’s not wrong.

In a corner in the basement is a couple of stacks of cardboard boxes. “Has to be one of these,” says Faith, pulling down the top one and opening it quickly. She shuts it even faster. “I’m actually surprised they didn’t bring that one already, but... it’s definitely not the one we’re looking for. Maybe if they decide to make more. Far far in the future.”

“Can you help me with this?” Alessa asks, wiggling another box. “It’s heavy.”

“Oh, sure.” I grab the other side and we get it down together. “Who’s Summer?”

“One of the newest members of the Harem Brunch Club,” says Emily as she pulls a box open and shakes her head.

“That’s an actual club?” I look at the other two to see if they’re laughing. They’re not.

“Kind of. All the bikers get cool sounding team names so we had to make something up when there started to be a bunch of

us.”

“Em is the OG,” Alessa says, pulling at another box, and I help her with that one too. “She’s the old lady of King, Hero and Wild Child. Me, I was number two, though technically I did meet my guys first.”

“We’ve discussed this. It doesn’t count,” Emily says with a grin. “I was the first one Eagle-eye had to deal with.”

Faith put a hand on her hip. “If we’re going by that definition. I’m his daughter, he’s been dealing with me the longest.”

Emily waves a hand. “Whatever. Summer’s the one about to burst open, and Natalie and Kaylee are there with her. Aaaaand, that’s all of us... so far anyway.”

“It’s a lot of names,” I say. “I’m sorry, but I think I already forgot half of them.”

Emily grins. “It’s fine. If you stick around long enough you’ll figure it out.”

“I’m telling you, we’re not—”

“Don’t pressure her, Em. I’ve never gotten the feeling that Team Wrecking Ball was looking to claim an old lady. Lightning and Thunder definitely, um... work together, but just because it works for us doesn’t mean it has to work for everyone.”

Faith nods. “It takes a lot of trust, and a really strong bond. Not that I’m saying there’s anything wrong with them, but not all the teams are cut out for it.”

“They have that,” I say confidently, wanting to defend them. “It might not be with me, but they are amazing together.”

“I bet,” Alessa says with a dirty chuckle. “Maybe you can settle a question we’ve had about the twins. Are they identical... all the way?”

Faith snorts a laugh.

I bite my lip.

“Oh, come on!” Emily exclaims. “We won’t tell anyone.”

“Okay, yeah,” I say, then cover my mouth with my hand like I just let slip a big secret. Two very big secrets. “They’re exactly the same.”

“I knew it!” says Faith just as Alessa holds up a black onesie with a stroller with motorcycle wheels on it.

“Found the box! Let’s get going!” She lifts it and starts for the stairs.

On their way out, Emily turns. “It was nice to meet you, Harper. Maybe we’ll do brunch sometime.” Then, with a wink, she’s gone.

“Yeah... maybe,” I find myself answering to thin air.

“What was that about?” Shadow asks after the door slams behind them.

“Oh, um. Nothing. They were just being friendly.”

This place is nothing like I expected, and I’m not sure if that’s good or not yet. Before I saw the club, I thought that being with the bikers would mean giving up any chance at a normal life. Like we’d spend our lives on the run, but this is nice. A different kind of normal.

One that might break my heart to not get a chance at.

THUNDER

“THIS WASN’T SUPPOSED TO BE A PERMANENT SOLUTION,”
Outlaw says, voice low so Harper doesn’t overhear.

“I know, but it’s only been two days. We knew it could take
some time to figure her situation out. Besides, I have to admit,
I like having her around.”

“Well that’s a big fucking surprise.”

“What’s that supposed to mean?”

“You know exactly what I mean,” he snaps.

“Don’t be an asshole. Harper’s a lot more than an easy lay and
you fucking know it.” Not that I’m not enjoying that aspect of
having her around, but she just... fits. I’m starting to see why
so many of the guys have been settling down in groups. At
first I figured it was the sex—not much is better than working
together to watch a beautiful woman get completely fucking
wrecked in bed—but having Harper around binds us together
in a different way. It’s deeper. Or it could be. “Is there
something that bothers you about her? Because if you know
something, fucking tell us.”

Outlaw starts to nod, then shakes his head slightly. “No, she’s
fucking gorgeous and you know it. Just... ignore me. Do what
you want.”

I grasp his forearm before he can turn away. “If you think for
fucking second that we’d—”

“Get in here!” Shadow yells from the living room.

Outlaw and I run, meeting Lightning and Harper who are rushing down the stairs, half-dressed. Shadow's pacing back and forth in front of the couch. He holds out his phone and puts it on speaker. "Carnell. Talk to us."

"We found Eileen. She might as well have vanished off the face of the earth after they moved her out of Lillyglade, but we identified some of his people when they popped up on CCTV accepting off the books medical supplies. She's in a private, secure care facility about an hour away. It's the kind of place the one percent use to keep their business out of the gossip rags. So the good news is that Harper's mother is probably being well taken care of, but the bad news is that it's not going to be as easy as walking in and finding her."

Harper sucks in a huge, quavering breath when she hears that her mother is most likely okay, but then turns real fucking angry, real fast. "He has no right to make decisions for her! She might be sleepy and confused because of the medications they had her on, but there's nothing wrong with her mind. She just needs time to recover."

Carnell hesitates. "There's a very good chance the staff were given a different story, and with Mesner's money, they aren't likely to ask questions."

"But what he's doing is illegal, right? You're the police. Can't you just go in there and demand to see her?"

"I wish it were that easy. Unfortunately, after the massive failure of the last operation, I've been chained to my desk. The department doesn't think it's worth pursuing Mesner for the time being, and to be frank, nobody gives a shit that he's paying for what looks like top of the line medical treatment for his child's mother."

"We can't leave her there!" Harper looks around for support. There's angry, worried tears in her bright blue eyes. "Right?"

"No shit," Lightning says with a firm nod. "The question is, are we going to have help?"

"I'll do what I can, but I might be on my own," Carnell says slowly. "It's not a lot, but it could be helpful to have someone

who looks a little more trustworthy to the employees.”

Outlaw frowns. “Why are you bothering? What’s in it for you?”

“It’s the right thing to do. I’d be lying if I said I wasn’t hoping to push Mesner into slipping up, but an innocent woman doesn’t deserve to be locked away just so he can play God with people’s lives.”

Shadow crosses his arms in front of his chest. “Fine. Sit tight for now. I’ll call you back when we’re ready to make a move.” He hangs up without waiting for Carnell to respond. “Do we all agree on going to get her out of there?”

Everyone nods, even Outlaw.

“Good. We can clear it with Eagle-eye and roll out tonight. I don’t care how fancy or private it is, it’s a fucking medical clinic, not a high security prison. Harper, you stay here and—”

“You’re kidding, right? There’s no way I’m sitting around here while you go find my mother.”

I shake my head. “Waiting sucks, but having you with us will just make it harder to—”

“No.” She stands firm, hands on her hips and chin high. “She’s going to be scared and alone. What are you going to do? Charge in there looking like you do and say: ‘Don’t fucking scream. We’re the fucking good guys. I know you just almost fucking died and then got fucking kidnapped and you’re on who the fuck knows what kind of drugs, but just fucking trust us and don’t scream your fucking head off because you’re getting kidnapped *again*.’”

Outlaw blinks.

Lightning bursts out laughing.

“We don’t swear that fucking much,” I object.

The glare she throws my way is withering.

Even Shadow looks like he’s having a tough time keeping a straight face. “She’s probably right. Her and Carnell are our best shots at doing this without having to get violent, and she’s

the only person her mama would recognize. But..." He turns right to Harper, "You remember the rules, right? You're with us, and you're gonna do what we fucking say. Is that fucking clear?"

"Fucking clear," she growls right back.

"Jesus." Outlaw rolls his eyes. "Let's go talk to Prez."

"I don't fucking like this," Eagle-eye growls after we've explained. "That cop already screwed you over once. He might not be a psycho like Hawthorne, but we've seen what that kind of obsession can do. He'll throw you under the fucking bus to get what he wants. This better be fucking worth it." He looks right at Harper, leaving out asking us if *she's* worth it.

"It is," I say.

He doesn't look away from her. "I hope Thunder's right, because their blood will be on your hands, girl."

Harper's eyes widen as she looks at each of us. I think because of how we met, she's been feeling like we're all in this together, when the reality is that once we made it back to the compound, our part in this mess was technically over. Anything we do from now on is for her.

"Fine, but I'm not sending you on your own." Prez leans back in his chair, hands clasped behind his head. "There's a lot going on, so teams are busy. The Fallen Angels just got triplets in their fucking laps, so they're out. Go talk to Sledge. He's been working with the prospects since we had to clean house and could use a change of scenery. Take him and whoever he wants to bring."

"Appreciate this, Prez," I say.

"Like I could fucking stop you," he grumbles. "Now you fuckers better come home safe, or I'm bringing the whole fucking club up there to kill you assholes all over again."

OUTLAW

WHEN THE LIGHTS OF VEGAS APPEAR ON THE HORIZON, A WAVE of *deja vu* washes over me. Has it only been a week since we drove into town thinking we could hit Mesner hard and run? So much has happened since then that it feels like a fucking lifetime.

There's still a dull ache in my side from where I got popped, but Doc helped fix me up and I'm not as worried about springing a leak every time I hit a pothole. We made good time, only stopping to stretch and grab a bite to eat as we drove through the night. Shadow's riding point, with Harper on his bike. The wonder twins are bringing up our rear, with Sledge, Phoenix and Havoc riding alongside.

Sledge took it hard when we found a traitor in the group, and he's thrown himself into the club like a fucking animal ever since. He's been brutal with the prospects, but Reaper and Beast have kept on trucking. Normally I wouldn't like the idea of running with anyone who hasn't been sworn in, but they were there when shit went down this past winter. They've seen what it means to ride with us, and they're still with us.

Harper turns her head, blonde hair sticking out below her helmet and fluttering in the wind.

She's going to tear us apart if she leaves. I can feel it. Thunder and Lightning are already sliding from lust to love, and Shadow's more cautious, but right behind them. It would be so fucking easy to join up. The feel of her hand on my cock and those big blue eyes is fucking burned into my brain. I slipped up, let myself think she would be out of our lives by now.

Shit...

She thinks I'm some sort of hero for taking a bullet, but the truth is it was easy. Hell, I'd do it again without even hesitating. I don't have a death wish, but what the fuck is my life worth, really? The people who created me didn't give a shit, and the ones who came after them returned me to the store like a puppy who got too big once they had their *real* fucking kid. It's easier not to get attached.

But somehow in spite of everything, the Eagles became my family, and Shadow, Thunder and Lightning my brothers.

And now one woman could destroy all of that by walking away.

Or sticking around, and revealing whatever fundamentally broken thing is inside me.

I'm a fucking coward.

It's two AM, but Vegas is such a twenty-four seven circus that our group riding through doesn't stick out much, and two days is more than enough time for the news cycle to have made most people forget all about our little dust up. I'm tense anyway, and I can see from how they're riding that the others are just as watchful of me.

I make sure my gun sits loose as we cruise up to where Shadow and Carnell agreed to meet. Nobody's turning their backs, that's for fucking sure. It looks like a power transformer station, tucked in between an apartment building and a gas station. We park around the back and find Carnell waiting by the door. He waves us in.

After a short walk down a dark corridor, he opens the door to a large room. Fuck, this coulda been on a cop show, complete with a corkboard that'd be perfect for one of those picture boards covered in red string to link a dozen different things together. There's a coffee machine, a water tank, some cookies and other snacks spread out on a table and all of it lit off under sickly fluorescent lights. In addition to Carnell, there's a couple more cops here, keeping back and watching us with distrust in their eyes. I guess working with a bunch of dirty

bikers isn't their idea of a good time. Glad we brought some backup.

Let's get this party started," Carnell says. He gestures for us to grab the folding chairs that are lined up against the wall. Most of us do, but I prefer to remain standing, putting my back against the wall. From here I can see everything going on. Keep an eye on my team, and Harper.

Shadow leans back, looking at Carnell and his men. "You brought friends."

"I'm not the only one interested in bringing Mesner down. He's hurt a lot of people in this town."

"Speaking of which," I say, drawing everyone's attention my way. "Why are you so fixated on him? I get that you're a cop and he's a bad guy, but there's more to this than you're telling us."

Carnell wets his lips. "Doesn't matter."

Surprisingly, it's Harper, who speaks up. "Actually, no. I want to hear this. He has my mother, and I need to know you're not going to sacrifice her if you get a shot at Vincent." It's a fair fucking point.

But Carnell looks horrified, showing more genuine emotion than I've seen from him so far. Like her suggestion is inconceivable. "I would never let anything happen to Eileen. Never. I can promise you that."

"Why?" Shadow looks at him suspiciously. "When Harper showed you her picture, you reacted. You know her."

"I—" He stops, and deflates, pain written across his face. "I do, or rather, I did. A lifetime ago, Vincent and I ran in the same circles. We were close, and Eileen went to his school. Looking at him now, you might think we were a bunch of spoiled rich kids, but none of us had shit. We grew up behind the glitz and the glamor. We were fucking troublemakers. Skipping school more often than not. Vin started running small time jobs for gangs and got me into it as well. I was always looking for a way out, but his aim was up. He wanted to be the

man at the top. I would've walked away, but there was Eileen."

Harper leans forward, obviously curious. "Mom's never told me anything about how she grew up. I could tell it hurt her when I asked so I stopped, but... I've always wanted to know more."

Carnell snorts. "There aren't many happy stories, to be honest. She was a nice girl, pretty. Lived down the street from Vin with a grandmother, I think. He was obsessed with her. Obsessed with the idea of having a pretty girl on his arm and the way other people would assume he was something special because she was with him."

"Did he love her?" Harper asks quietly.

"Fuck... I don't know. He probably thought he did. He loved being with her at least. I haven't talked about this in... in a long time, but she's your mother. You deserve to know why he might be acting this way." There's a catch in his voice.

"So what happened?"

"You mother did." He shakes his head with a little humorless laugh. "I was already frustrated with how Vin gave up even trying to do better, and I saw how staying with him was slowly killing everything beautiful in your mom."

"You loved her," I say quietly. Doesn't mean I like him for it, but I recognize the look in his eyes, the one that says he lives with the regret of letting something precious slip through his fingers.

Harper spins to look at me, and Carnell grimaces, but he nods.

"She wanted out but he wouldn't let her go, and at that point he was starting to move up the criminal ladder. One day I saw a bruise around her neck and, shit, I lost it. Everything blew up. We beat the shit out of each other, and by the time I was patched up, your mom had skipped town. She used to tell me about how she dreamed of moving as far away as she could and starting over, so I assumed she finally did it. Looking back, she must've realized she was pregnant with you and that gave her the courage she needed to make a clean break."

Carnell tilts his head back, looking up at the ceiling with a wistful expression.

Thunder scoffs. “So this is all about some girl you both had the hots for? Twenty fucking years go?”

“Hey! That girl’s my mom,” Harper says.

Carnell laughs bitterly. “No. Maybe that’s where it started. Hell, it was my reason for getting into the police academy. I knew exactly what he was capable of, because I’d been there to see him grow into it. Trust me, it wasn’t easy because I had a record of my own, but that’s not as unusual as you might think. Without me and Eileen around, Vin dug deeper and deeper into the worst cesspools of this city. He was ruthless. Murder, threats, anything that would give him an edge until he was in full control of most of the drug supply chains into the city. And when he had enough, he rebranded himself into a businessman, appearing on the scene like he sprang out of nowhere, but those of us who’d watched him grow knew exactly how his money was made. And continue to be made now. So yeah, it started with Eileen, but the harder I worked, and the more I witnessed, the more I realized he needed to be stopped. I’ve been the thorn in his side this whole time, but I’ve never gotten everything I needed to actually put him away.”

“Well,” says Shadow and stretches, “I wish you luck. As long as we get Eileen outta there, and keep Harper safe, that’s what matters. Putting Mesner out of our misery, one way or another, is just a bonus.”

“I doubt he’ll be at the facility,” says Carnell. “He lives in the penthouse of the Diamond Oasis, and does most of his work there, too. I’m sure he’ll want to see Eileen, but I don’t know what he feels about her these days. Once we have her, my guys,” he gestures at his men behind him, “will help Eileen and Harper get to safety.”

“And we’re supposed to trust you, why?” I ask, frowning. “Last time things went south, you and your people took off. She was an innocent fucking victim and you didn’t give a shit about Harper.”

Carnell runs his fingers through his sandy beard. “I really am sorry about that. Wires were crossed in the chaos. I was with the group that tried to follow Mesner. I admit I could’ve handled it better, but I never meant to leave her in the line of fire. Quite frankly, I was desperate because they were already talking about reassigning me and putting Mesner’s investigation on ice. All this?” He gestures around. “This is off the books. At the end of the day, I’d rather have him off the streets than get credit. Now let’s concentrate on getting this done. There’s no time for dotting the i’s and crossing the t’s.”

Lightning rumbles a chuckle. “Sneaky. I don’t think we’re as different as you would like to think.”

There’s definitely something about this that still scratches at the back of my brain, but I don’t know what the fuck it is. Carnell’s right, we need to get Eileen and Harper out of Mesner’s reach.

But will that mean leaving them in Carnell’s?

I don’t like the sound of that at all.

HARPER

“GET A FUCKING MOVE ON,” SHADOW SNAPS QUIETLY.

“Almost... there. Got it.” The door clicks, and Outlaw gives it a nudge. It swings open, a black maw in the darkness. No lights on inside. Lightning pulls out his phone and uses it as a flashlight, revealing a storage area. Crates are stacked against the wall, and shelves are lined with boxes, marked with medical information.

Thunder nods. “Get in before someone sees us.”

It’s just past four AM, and it seems like the whole place is asleep. It feels more like a high security luxury spa than Lillyglade, which was nice, but not on this level. All the rooms have big windows and balconies, probably with great views of the mountains.

From the outside, we could see dim lights in some of the rooms, probably night owls, or the break room for the people who work here. Carnell and one of his men went to reception to distract them, and see if they could talk their way or at least get information while we sneak in the back.

“The stairs should be through there.” Thunder points at an unmarked door. “If the plans are up to date, that should get us to your Mom’s floor. Unless we are shit out of luck and it’s just some other poor woman who fits her medical profile.”

It’s her. I feel it. It has to be. I tried to guess which window was hers from outside, but they all looked identical. I wish I knew how she was doing. It kills me to not know if she’s scared or hurting.

“Sledge, you stay here with Reaper and Beast, make sure our way out is clear. Phoenix and Havoc, you’re with us,” Shadow commands.

How messed up is my life that this is starting to be a little fun? Not the life and death part, but I can see why a certain type of person is attracted to this kind of life. Putting these guys behind desks would be like killing them slowly. They aren’t made for the real world, but their brotherhood gives them a different kind of structure.

We reach the first floor landing. There’s a camera on the ceiling, but I try to pretend it doesn’t exist. It makes me too nervous. In theory, one of Carnell’s men is taking care of the surveillance. Either way, we’re not stopping here. Mom’s upstairs. On the second floor, though, the stairwell ends.

“Fuck,” growls Shadow quietly. “This wasn’t on the plan.”

“Do we go back down? Or into the hall?” asks Lightning.

Outlaw frowns. “Where are the next stairs?”

“Halfway down the hall on the inside wall, but that’s assuming the plan got that part right. Let’s keep going, there’s no guarantee that doubling back will be any better.” Shadow tries the door off the landing, and it opens silently.

The hallway looks like a hotel, with doors on both sides at regular intervals. Soft running lights line the floor, giving enough light to move around by, but not so much as to disturb the patients. I don’t know how much goes on in the middle of the night, but this has to be risky. There are always nurses on call, and people who might need help.

Sure enough, low voices come our way. Shadow waves, pointing. I don’t know where to go until Outlaw grabs me and pulls me after him into a little dark room. Storage closet, maybe?

When he shuts the door, it’s completely black and super creepy. I put my hand on the wall, just to remind myself there’s actually something here, then jump when his hand settles on my hip.

“Easy,” Outlaw whispers.

Outside the door, the voices grow louder. Hopefully they're not looking for mops or whatever's in here with us. Then suddenly, there are a couple of dull thuds, a "What the—", another thump, and then quiet.

There's a soft knock on our door. "All clear," says Thunder.

Two men in white hospital uniforms are out cold on the floor, or at least I hope they're just unconscious. Thunder and Lightning quickly pull them into the little room where Outlaw and I hid. Hopefully, by the time they wake up and make enough noise to be discovered, we'll be out of here.

We're about halfway down, when the lights suddenly flick on, so bright I have to shield my eyes. It's immediately followed by the ding of an elevator.

"Fuck," growls Shadow. "Outlaw, take Harper. Scatter!"

Before I get a chance to see what's going on, Outlaw drags me down the hall, throwing me into another room before slamming the door shut behind us just as yelling starts out in the corridor.

"We can't just leave them," I hiss.

"Shut the fuck up," he snaps back in a rough whisper. "They can take care of themselves, but shooting a couple rocks doesn't make you a fighter."

There's a bang, a gunshot.

Outlaw stops me when I run for the door. "What the fuck are you doing?" I struggle against him, but his grip is iron. "You're not going out there."

More gunshots sound out there, and someone screams. Oh God, oh God, oh God. It didn't sound familiar, but... "What if it's—"

"They can take care of themselves," he snaps, but I don't miss the tension in his voice. "There's nothing you can do about it, so we're gonna keep you safe. Come."

He drags me towards a door at the other end of the room that's marked with a lightning bolt. Inside, there's a faint hum, and a

soft breeze of slightly cool air blowing past us. A maintenance room of some sort, maybe?

No sooner has Outlaw closed the door behind us, putting us in near complete darkness, before there are voices right outside. "Someone went in here. I'm positive," snarls a male voice. I breathe in very, very shallow breaths, sure that someone's bound to hear my heart thundering.

"Come." Outlaw's lips brush my cheek as he speaks. He uses the faint light of the machinery to examine the room.

Next to a large cabinet, there's a grate in the wall where the air's coming through. He pulls out a pocket knife, and uses it to work out the screws that are holding the cover in place. It's not easy work, and the knife tools aren't quite the right size, but he stays focused and keeps going.

"What was that?" A different voice, male, but higher. "We should call 911. This is above my pay grade." Further away now, there's another gunshot.

Two of the screws are out, and one looks like it's missing. That leaves one more. I think I know what Outlaw's plan is, and I don't like it one bit. I'm not claustrophobic, but is crawling around in air ducts a thing people can actually do outside movies?

"Fine, but check the closet first."

Oh no.

The last screw comes loose, and Outlaw pulls it open. "Quick," he hisses, and for once, I don't argue or hesitate. He grabs my hips and helps.

The duct is as dirty as I imagined. I grimace as I military crawl into it. In the dark it's hard to get a sense for how big it is, but if it feels this cramped for me, I can't imagine how it must feel for Outlaw. Assuming he's coming, but... he wouldn't leave me here alone, right? I panic and freeze.

But no, he's right behind me, shoving my ass. I scramble forwards as quickly as I can, hoping he's getting enough space.

“Keep moving,” he hisses, the sound bouncing off the inside of the duct. I feel like we must be super loud, but maybe it’s just because it’s so quiet in here. Something clicks behind us, but I don’t know if it’s Outlaw somehow putting the grate back in place, or the door opening. There’s nowhere to go but forwards. I’m one hundred percent convinced that I’m going to hit a turn so sharp that I don’t have room to turn, or that we’re going to get stuck and die in here, and they won’t find us until we start to smell.

I take back everything I thought about this being a little fun.

There’s so much dust up my nose, or at least I’m telling myself that it really is just dust, and not spider webs that might have actual spiders still attached. I’m not a wimp, but ugh. “Do you think they’re gone?” I take the chance to whisper.

“Yeah, but I don’t know how far. Keep going.” Outlaw doesn’t sound any more thrilled about this than I am. “There’s gotta be another way out.”

Another gunshot goes off, but nowhere close. I struggle my way forwards until I reach a corner, squeezing around. It’s a good thing I’m in here with Outlaw and not Thunder or Lightning who would never fit. The breeze is getting stronger, and there’s a rumble up ahead. What if there’s a big fan up ahead that I’ll fall right into and get spit out like a—Nope. Can’t think about that. “Where’s this going to take us?”

“I have no fucking idea. Shadow has the map. Keep going.”

“Wait. I think I see another grate.” We keep crawling, and sure enough, there’s a way out into a dark room. “I think it’s screwed shut like the other one.”

“Fuck. Try giving it a push.”

I try. I really do, but it’s stuck. “No chance.”

“Let me have a go.” He starts shuffling forwards, pressing up alongside me.

“What are you doing? There’s not enough room.”

Somehow, he manages to slide along my body, pressing himself in between me and the duct. My back’s forced hard

against it, my shirt is pulled up, and there's something digging into the small of my back, but if he can get us out, I'm willing to try anything. He pauses, face to face with me, his arms outstretched to work on the grate and his one leg squeezed tight between my thighs. It's the sexiest position I've ever been in without feeling sexy whatsoever.

"Can you get it?"

"Maybe, but talking won't help." It's too dark for me to see what he's fiddling with, but the scraping noises indicate that he's not being idle.

"Should I slide down?" I don't really want to, but I guess it'd give him more room.

"If you wanna suck dick, this isn't really the time."

Oh, for Christ's sake. "That's not what I meant, and you know it. Why are you so determined to push me away?"

"Push you away? If we were any closer you'd be in my fucking esophagus. Are we seriously doing this here?" He slams his palm against the grate, and part of it gives, just a little.

"I thought... I thought we were good, but we obviously aren't. The guys keep telling me to give you time, but I'm sick of it." If there's ever been a moment to give him time, this would probably be it, but I'm too scared and too close to Outlaw to keep my feelings in.

"I don't need time, I need—"

"What? Me to leave? Well, if we don't die in here, it looks like you might be getting your wish. Because no matter how I feel or what happens with Mom, I'm not going to stay where I'm not wanted."

"Fuuuuck." He draws it out in a long, obscene complaint. "The boys are fucking nuts for you, okay? And you're having the time of your life, aren't you? Why does it even matter what I think?"

"What do you mean?"

He sighs, and his forehead rests against mine. “I know this feels exciting now, but eventually you’ll realize you want normal, and we aren’t it. I’m just smart enough to skip the pain.”

There’s so much anguish hidden under his words. I’ve been beating myself up thinking I’m the problem. That he hates me and our time in the desert was nothing but a joke to him. I don’t know who hurt him, but they did a really good job of making a strong, brave man doubt himself. He doesn’t see himself like his friends do. Like I could if he let me.

He knocks the grate loose with a bang, then starts wiggling forwards. “C’mon.”

“Wait.” I press my hand up, grabbing his shirt and wiggling until we’re back in line. “Don’t you think it’s worth it to try? I thought you liked a bit of pain.” Then I kiss him.

HARPER

AT FIRST, I THINK HE'S GOING TO PUSH ME AWAY, AS MUCH AS it's possible the way we're squeezed together, but then his hand slips behind the back of my head and presses my lips against his, and I forget all about the cramped quarters, the dust, the—maybe—bugs and everything else. His darkness swallows me up, like he's pulling me in and clinging with everything he's got. Outlaw's kiss is rough, eager, demanding, and as his studded tongue slides against mine, he presses himself against me. His beard tickles my face, and he's hard. So deliciously hard.

“We better freaking come out of this alive,” I gasp when we finally push apart to breathe.

He must hear the rough promise in my voice, because his reply is just as raspy and eager. “We will. I fucking guarantee it.” Then he reaches up and pulls himself out of the duct.

A moment later, he extends his hand to help pull me out.

I was wrong, it wasn't a real room on the other side, more of a hub of ducts, with a massive ventilation system on one side. The rumble I heard comes from that as it pumps cool air past us, enough that I get chills. There's an access door as well, but when Outlaw tries it, it's locked, and way more solid than the grates.

“Fuck.” He looks around the little room. “We're gonna be fucking corpses before we break out there.”

“Then what? More crawling?”

He points up. “These look like they go to the next floor. That’s where your mama is, right? Might as well give that a go, unless we’re giving up and just trying to get the hell out again. If we bang on the door, whoever shows up might not shoot.”

“What? No! We can’t. I need to get Mom out of here. But what about the others?”

“If they’ve run into something they can’t handle, then we’re not gonna be able to solve it for them. Better we try for the objective and rejoin them when we can. Come.”

Not like it’s far for me to move, but I shuffle to crouch in front of him, and he puts his hands on my waist, preparing to give me a boost.

“Wait.” I put a quick kiss on his lips. “For luck.”

“Fuck,” he hisses. “On three. One, two, three!”

And then we’re clambering through more ducts. My arms are going to be covered in bruises and I’m going to look like a chimney sweep by the time we get out of here. And we are going to get out of here. I’m not going to give up now, not when I’m so close to both my mother and breaking through Outlaw’s walls.

This time we move faster. Practice makes, if not perfect, at least more proficient. The channel rumbles behind me as Outlaw follows, and we make our way up the sloped duct towards the next floor.

“Are you watching my butt?” I tease back at him.

“Stay quiet or I’ll fucking spank it. Don’t give us away.”

He’s right. We scramble through the ducts, checking the grates as we go. At the fifth, the lights are low, but someone’s in the bed, and her long brown hair looks very familiar. Her curls are a mess, something I never had and always envied a little. There’s an IV drip set up next to her, but it doesn’t look to be connected. Everything looks quiet. Steady. Tears spring to my eyes, probably leaving wet trails through the dust on my cheeks.

“It’s her.”

He doesn't question, just presses his way up next to me like last time. This time he's the one who surprises me with a quick kiss. In the faint light seeping in from the room, he grins and gives the grate a shove that pulls the screws right out of the walls. It drops, but falls onto a chair, and it doesn't make much noise.

"C'mon." Outlaw pulls himself out, somehow flipping himself around and landing on his feet. That's some core strength. Then he holds up his arms and helps me down, too.

While Outlaw makes sure the room is clear, I walk around to the other side so I can see her face. She's asleep, peaceful. Her color looks good, better than last time I saw her. God, I don't know if I should be happy that she's recovering so well or upset that it means she might be aware of everything that's been happening.

"Is it her?"

I nod, then quickly comb my fingers through my hair to hopefully get the worst of the cobwebs out, before I put my hand on her shoulder. "Mom?"

Her eyes flutter.

"Mom!"

And they pop open. It takes her a moment to focus before she recognizes me. "Harper! Oh thank God!"

"I'm getting you out of here. Can you walk?"

"Yes, but not far. What's going on? I don't understand. I kept asking to talk to you but—"

"We don't have a lot of time," says Outlaw. "They're gonna be making rounds."

"God, there isn't enough time to explain. You're not safe here and it's all my fault."

"What are you talking about?"

"I found my father."

Her eyes go wide. "You what? How?"

“Mom, later. Please. I’ll tell you the whole story. I understand now why you didn’t tell me, but I wish you’d warned me. Now Vincent knows about me, knows about you, and he’s obsessed. I don’t even understand everything that’s going on, or what his plan is, but we’re going to get you out of here, and somewhere you can finish recovering.” I know I’m rambling, but there’s so much to explain and so little time to do it in. We really, really, really have to get out of here. “Please, just trust me.”

Mom draws a deep breath, and nods. “Of course. I’ll always trust you.”

I hold out my hands to help her sit up, and she does. It makes me smile despite it all. “You’re looking so much better than you were.”

She lets out a weak chuckle. “I’ve definitely been better, but also a lot worse. Where are we? Nobody would tell me.”

Outlaw opens the door from the room carefully. It’s thick and solid, but it opens. I was half worried she’d be locked in. “Looks clear,” he says.

Mom nudges me. “Who’s he?”

“You have no idea how complicated this question is. Let’s save it until we’re out, okay, Mom?” I’ll need a whole night just to explain the whole biker thing to her, never mind everything else. “He’s here to help us, that’s the most important part.”

When I help her up from the bed, she’s weak, needing me for support. Outlaw sees and comes to help. He slips off his gun and hands it to me. “Do you remember the rules?”

This is for real. I nod, even though I’m terrified I’ll screw up.

“You can do it.” He sweeps her off her feet, grunting slightly from the pain. In a fair world, he’d still be resting and recovering from being shot, not rescuing my mother.

I nod. I can. I have to. If he can keep going, so can I.

“Oh, well isn’t this sweet.” Standing right outside Mom’s room, is Vincent, Devin—my ex-fake fiancé—and a small

army of security guards.

Just once, some day, I want things to work out in our favor.

“Took you long enough,” quips Outlaw.

Vincent laughs harshly. “I could say the same. You didn’t think I expected someone to find Eileen? That was the whole point of taking her in the first place. My only surprise was that it took you meatheads so long.”

“You have no right to keep her here,” I snap at him, slipping the gun into the back of my jeans. “I’m just here to discharge her from this place.”

He chuckles. “Should we just settle the bill then? Operations, gene therapy, convalescence... I mean, it’s a pretty hefty bill you’ve racked up, and you can’t possibly expect me to let you just leave without settling it.” He looks at Mom. “How are you doing, Eileen? Not very well apparently, but such is life. It’s got to be at least, what? Twenty years? Twenty-one? Time passes so fast.”

Mom glares at him with more energy than I’ve seen her have in a long time. “It’s too bad it wasn’t longer.”

He cocks his head and puts on a very fake-looking expression of innocence. “Oh, so cruel. To think you ran away before letting me know that I might have a daughter, and such a lovely one at that.” He gestures at me. “Very headstrong though. Did you know she ran away from her own wedding? Devin was quite disappointed.”

Oh, give me a break. “I should never have contacted you in the first place. I’d rather be paying medical bills until I die than feel like I owe you anything.” I look at Devin. “Disappointed? You don’t even know me.”

He laughs. “You would’ve been fun, you know that? For me at least.”

Vincent sighs. “Well, I suppose this shouldn’t be that big a surprise. Deceit runs in the family after all.”

“Like father, like daughter?” I spit at him.

“Oh absolutely, but I can’t take any credit for that.”

I blink. “What? But the DNA test...”

He just laughs. “God, you really are as trusting as he used to be. You want to tell her, babe? Or should I? Did you even know for sure?”

“Nathan...” she whispers, and the realization hits me like a truck.

Nathan. Nathan Carnell. Blond hair, blue eyes, something neither Mom or Vincent have, but Carnell definitely does. Just like me.

Carnell is my real father.

LIGHTNING

I SLAM A SECURITY GUARD FACE FIRST INTO THE WALL JUST AS Carnell and his guys rush in, tasing the last one to the floor. The guard flops like a fish on land. My guy sags into a pile on the floor, knocked out. Carnell'd better appreciate our restraint. When fuckers come gunning for us, I prefer to gun right back rather than playing nice.

“Everyone alright?”

“I'm good.” Havoc drags another unconscious guard over and drops him on top of mine. “But this is bullshit.”

“Fuck yeah, it is. Now let's get up there. Anyone get a bead on Outlaw and Harper?”

“They fucking vanished,” Thunder rumbles. “My call's to go back for them.”

Shadow shakes his head. “Nah. Outlaw's taking care of her. Either he made the call to get her out, and we'll have to haul her mom outta here by force, or they kept going and need our support. All alarms have been set off. We gotta make this happen now, or get the fuck outta here.”

Carnell nods in agreement. “These are just the on-site staff. Pretty soon the building will be crawling with police or better trained security.”

“Alright, let's get a move on then.” And if any of these fuckers have hurt Harper or Outlaw, I'm gonna fucking eradicate every last one of them.

The back stairs take us up to the fourth floor, which is eerily quiet. Did everyone rush downstairs, or are they waiting above? There's voices coming from down the corridor. I shush the others and wave for them to follow me quietly.

"You can't possibly believe that they're coming to get you now." Fuck Mesner and his slimy gloating. But who's he gloating at? "They're dead or gone, and no court would blame my people. They defended themselves and the poor innocent patients in this facility from a rogue cop and the criminal bikers he associates with. Who've already assaulted me and my property once, remember? Not to mention kidnapping my poor, innocent daughter on her wedding day."

"I don't believe you, and nobody else will either," Harper snaps back. Hopefully, that means Outlaw's still standing too.

I inch closer, getting my iron out. If I get Mesner in my sights, fuck non-lethal means. The others follow, quietly, with their pieces drawn, too. Carnell doesn't look happy about it, but I don't give a fuck. Harper's safety comes first.

"We're wasting time. Get them on the chopper. We're getting out of here."

"No!" A gun goes off.

Motherfucker. I move faster.

There's the sound of a struggle, and now I'm running. There's no fucking way I'm letting that motherfucker fly off with Harper. I'm gonna fucking murder him first.

The first thing I see is two big guys dragging Harper towards stairs leading up. She's fighting against them with all her might, but they're too strong. One of them's bleeding from a gunshot graze to the shoulder, but not enough to stop him.

Behind them, Outlaw's fighting just as hard against the guys holding him. He's holding his own for now, but they've got him outnumbered.

Mesner is already on top of the stairs, walking away behind a woman being carried by a couple of orderlies, probably heading for the chopper he mentioned.

It's time to fucking break up this party. I raise my gun and aim straight for Mesner's head.

When the gun goes off is when the shit really hits the fan.

One of Mesner's guys sees me coming, and fucking jumps in the way of my bullet. It hits him right in the chest and knocks him into Mesner, sending both of them flying. Fuck, I don't know how much that fucker's paying them, but it'd better be good for that kinda loyalty.

The moment Outlaw sees us coming, he rears up, taking advantage of the surprise and throwing off the guys struggling to keep him down.

"Get the fuck off her!" Thunder yells, charging the whole crowd like a fucking bull, trying to get to Harper, but even he can't bowl over all of Mesner's men at once. While we're all fucking around, they're dragging her farther away.

"Goddamnit," Mesner yells, scrambling to his feet and breaking into a run. "Devin, shoot that little bitch and take care of these assholes once and for all." He and the orderlies push through a set of double doors that slam shut behind them, while the Devin guy charges after Harper, pulling his gun. Fuck. I take a shot, but he's already around the corner.

"Go after them," yells Shadow while he puts a bullet in one of the guys attacking Outlaw. The goon drops, dead before he hits the floor. "Thunder! You too!"

"I'll get Mesner," yells Carnell, his gun out and ready. Guess even he knows when to stop fucking around.

Good.

Carnell and his guy rushes up the stairs after Mesner, and Shadow waves for Phoenix and Havoc to assist. Then he guns down one of the goons who tries to put a bullet in Thunder.

"Harper!" I yell, shouldering a guy into the wall and charging after her, followed closely by Thunder.

Doesn't take long to find them. Devin's got Harper, and has her throat in an arm lock while he's holding his gun to her

head. “I’ll let her live if you let me go. I’m not dying for that selfish asshole.”

“And if we don’t?”

“Then I’ve got nothing to lose. Come on, you know how it is. I was just following orders.” His head swivels as he looks around for a way out.

“Orders?” I narrow my eyes at him. Something about that doesn’t sound right. “To do what?”

One of Mesner’s guards tries to move, but Thunder waves the barrel of his gun at him, and he—quite sensibly—stops.

“What do you mean? Marry her. It was just a job.” Devin sounds really fucking shifty.

“Marrying a pretty girl ain’t a job. What were your orders?”

He pauses and swallows nervously.

“Now!”

“Fine! Fuck. I did some work for Mesner and my reward was an all-expenses paid trip. My ticket was round trip. Hers wasn’t. Is that clear enough?” He makes sure Harper’s right in front of him and his gun is carefully aimed right at her temple. “It wasn’t personal.”

“The fuck?” Thunder’s tone is lethal. The kind of tone that’s usually the last thing you fucking hear in your life before he ends you. “He wanted you to kill his own daughter?”

“On the honeymoon. The sick fuck wanted pictures of it. I wouldn’t have let her suffer. I’m not a monster.”

“If you fucking touch that trigger,” I say in my calmest, deadliest voice. “You’ll be dead before you can draw another fucking breath. Let her go.”

“And you’ll let me go, right?”

I glance over at Thunder, and he nods, not even needing to look my way. Twin power and all that bullshit. I nod back, knowing he’ll catch it in his peripheral.

“Put down your gun, and let Harper walk safely to us. Do it without fucking around, and we won’t shoot you. But if we ever, and I mean fucking ever, come across you again, deal’s off. Got it?”

He looks between us, unsure.

“Tick tock,” I say. “This is your one chance, because you know that if you hurt a fucking hair on her head, you’re already dead.”

“Okay, fine. Letting her go.” He lowers his gun, slowly, nervously. But when he stands up, just as slowly and his hands up and showing his palms, he takes a step back. Harper is looking right at me, terrified and waiting.

“It’s okay, Harper. Just come over here, nice and easy.” I’ve got my barrel aimed right at Devin’s face, while Thunder covers the other two guards.

The moment I can put my arm around her and squeeze her close, I’m so fucking tempted to squeeze the trigger. This fucker doesn’t deserve to live.

“You got her?” Shadow asks, voice deadly calm.

“Yeah.”

He raises his gun, aims it right at Devin’s head and fires. Blood, brains and hair explode all over the wall. “Amateur. Didn’t make me promise shit.”

The guards run.

Thunder grins.

“Harper, you okay?”

She clings to my torso like a monkey to a tree, but she nods. “Yeah. I think so. I can’t believe he...” Her head starts to turn, but I stop her.

“I don’t think that’s something you need to see.” I put away my gun so I can embrace her fully, hugging her against my chest until she stops shivering and settles. Thunder strokes her hair and presses a kiss to the top of her head. “We’re here, honey.”

“Mom! He’s got her! We have to find her. Vincent’s crazy.”

“Mesner got away on the chopper. Carnell’s gone after them and took his guys. We weren’t going anywhere without you.” Outlaw nods his head towards the elevator. “We should get the fuck outta here too. Then we’ll figure out what next.”

She nods, but doesn’t look convinced.

I’m about to encourage her, but Outlaw, of all people, beats me to it. “We’re gonna get her, Harper. We’ll make sure both of them are safe.”

Both of them?

CARNELL

“NATHAN, YOU RAN OUT OF FAVORS A LONG TIME AGO. I’VE got enough IOUs from you to last me a lifetime.” Chief Branden’s voice sounds tired and sick of my shit.

But this is Eileen that’s in trouble. “Chief! It’s an active hostage situation. This is life and death. If we don’t—”

“Nathan,” growls the Chief. “We’ve been through this before. You come here, you present your case, you get a warrant, and then we act. You know this. You’ve thrown so many accusations around against Mesner that I’m sick of it. The judge is sick of it. It’s never panned out, and just turns into a drain on our budget and me having to make a fucking public apology.”

Jesus. I try not to slam the phone into the cruiser dashboard. Gibbons, who’s driving, gives me a sidelong glance, but I know I can rely on him. His daughter was killed by one of Vincent’s men in a drive-by. The bullshit Chief is giving me is the damn reason why I’ve picked my closest men very carefully. But, it’s worth one last try. “This is an active fucking situation, Chief. There’s no time for a warrant.”

Is he in Vincent’s pocket? I don’t think so, but sometimes I wonder. It’s more likely that he’s just too cautious and afraid of wasting his precious budget. And backing me up would make political waves in a city where the mighty dollar is the strongest argument.

“Stand down. That’s my last word, Nathan. Don’t ruin your career over this. You’re up for promotion in a couple weeks.

Just keep your head down and let someone else deal with it.”

Promotion. I’ve fallen for that particular carrot before. “Alright. Standing down.” I hang up on him.

“We are?” asks Gibbons.

“Fuck no. Get to the Oasis.”

We pull into Vincent’s casino just as the rest of my men catch up and park behind us, taking up the whole valet area. I get out before the car is even fully stopped, immediately followed by my men spilling out of the other cars. “Special Investigator Nathan Carnell. Police business,” I say and hold up my badge. The doorman backs up immediately and my men cover me as we charge into the lobby. I don’t want to give Mesner enough time to mobilize all of his security.

Or to hurt Eileen.

The concierge strides towards us on an interception course, flanked by a couple of security guys who’re real bruisers. “Can I see your warrant? I’m not authorized to allow you access to the premises without one.”

“There’s an active hostage situation going on. Get me up to the penthouse and get out of my way if you don’t want to be arrested for obstruction of justice.” Gibbons stands next to me, pulling out a pair of handcuffs that he casually spins around his finger. The rest of my people, fourteen of them, spread out in the lobby, taking control of it. “Now move it.”

She stands firm. “I’m sorry, Sir, but you’ll have to arrest me, then. I have my orders.”

Fuck. Of course he’s put loyal people in control, and he’s got enough lawyers to get them right back out of their cells before the evening’s over, leaving me having to explain why I’m doing this without a warrant. I understand the need for documentation and transparency, but goddamn is it annoying sometimes. “Take her. And her access card.”

Her eyes go wide, obviously having expected the threat to be enough. The big security guys bristle, but even they realize they’re outnumbered. Unless they’re planning on bringing us down with an army of bellhops and customer service agents. I

wouldn't put it past Vin to disguise more security like that, but they seem to be staying put.

"You can't take that," she states firmly. "I know my rights. You can arrest me, but you can't just take my card and use it for unwarranted access."

Gibbons tears it off her belt and hands it to me.

"Huh, apparently we can." I shrug. "Gibbons, grab Taylor and Navarro. You're with me. The rest of you, keep the lobby under control." The concierge glares after me angrily as I lead them past the concierge's desk to the private lobby where his personal elevator is. I've spent so much time poring over the plans for this building that I probably know it better than just about anyone. The card opens the doors, allowing us in. I tap the penthouse button and the elevator starts to move.

"What's the plan, Boss?" asks Navarro. He's a compact man, built like a barrel, or maybe a powder keg ready to explode. Eager. No wonder. It's because of Vin that his brother's an amputee living on the scraps that disability pays. So many grudges for one man.

It would be a shame if he didn't survive the arrest.

"Secure him as fast as possible. We don't want to give him time to hide anything. The woman is Eileen Simmons. She's been sick so she might not be responsive, and if she is, she might need assistance." Vincent's private elevator races past the hotel level, only slowing as we reach the forty-second floor where he keeps his lair. "This is the last time he's getting away with anything, I'm going to make sure of it."

The elevator jolts to a stop between floors, a light blinking red on the floor selector. Fuck. I'm sure this isn't a random outage, but I hit the emergency call button anyway. "Hello? This is Special Investigator Carnell. Get this elevator moving again, or I'm going to arrest every single employee in this hotel and start running background checks. Hello?"

Nothing.

"Was too easy, wasn't it?" asks Taylor.

There's a soft hiss from below our feet and a thin layer of light gray smoke forms along the floor. "Is he fucking gassing us?" asks Gibbons, as he looks around. He sounds more shocked than scared.

"He's like a fucking Bond villain. Take your jackets off. Try to block the vents." I tear my own off as I give the order. If we can block this shit from getting in and knocking us out or whatever the hell it's supposed to do, then maybe we can surprise them when they bring the elevator the rest of the way.

Unless they just plunge us all to our deaths.

"There's too many," Taylor says and coughs. "They go up the walls too, in the corners here."

Gibbons coughs, and I'm getting a scratching in the back of my throat. The room's getting hazier. Fuck, we don't have much time. I pull out my phone to call for backup. It rings, and rings... and rings. Fuck. Fuck. And fuck. Navarro looks at me, but his eyes have gone glassy and he's leaning against the wall. I check for phone signal, but I've got plenty. Something's happened down there. I try calling another number. Nothing.

Goddamnit.

Taylor's the first to sag against the wall, sliding until he hits the floor. His head lolls to the side. I hope this is just knockout gas and not something worse. It'd be really fucking embarrassing if this is how Vin finally takes me out of the equation.

"Boss?" Gibbons gives me a look, and while it's not accusing, I sure feel like it is. If it wasn't for me, he wouldn't have been in here to suffer whatever the hell Vincent has in mind.

I've got one more option. I dial Shadow's number.

HARPER

I CLING TO THUNDER AS WE PULL INTO THE SAFE HOUSE Carnell—oh my God, my real father, apparently—arranged for me and Mom to be taken to. It’s empty. Not a soul is here. Is he still chasing Vincent? Has he found Mom? Is he okay?

Less than an hour ago he was just some overzealous cop with a hunger for revenge against Vincent. Now he’s my father? I have no idea how to feel about it. I’m glad that I’m not related to a monster, but does Carnell know yet? Has he talked to Mom?

Not knowing anything of what’s going on is maddening.

Shadow punches in the code to the garage door and we get inside. Still silent. The little hope I had that they were just keeping a low profile inside evaporates. It’s a small apartment, but there’s coffee for the coffeemaker, and Sledge gets on it.

“He’s probably chasing Mesner,” Shadow says.

“An update would be nice, but he probably forgot about us as soon as we weren’t useful to him.” Lightning pulls me over to the couch and into his lap. I curl up in his arms and press myself against his broad chest.

Shadow nods, but he pulls out his phone and walks away. “I’m calling Eagle-eye. I have a feeling we’re going to need more backup.”

There’s too much to worry about. I feel restless. Antsy. I give Lightning a kiss and go to the kitchen for a glass of water. I’m too jittery for coffee. Outlaw’s there, checking the fridge. “They coulda fucking left some beer here.”

“I don’t think cops are supposed to drink when they’re working,” I note while waiting for the water to get cold from the tap.

“That explains why they’re always so pissy,” he notes. “I’d be fucking grumpy too.”

I snort.

“What?”

“You *are* ‘fucking grumpy’.”

He scowls at me. “Not always.”

Something’s shifted between us since he saved my life again. I don’t think what he needs is space. I gave him plenty of that, so it’s time to be honest. “I’m scared. What if Mom’s hurt? What if Carnell dies before he even knows that he’s my father? Before I get to find out if I even want him to be.”

He gives me a long look with those dramatic dark eyes, then says simply, “I envy you.”

“What?” That wasn’t what I expected.

“You’ve got a mother who cares about you, and that you can care about. Mesner’s a piece of shit, but I think Carnell’s the kind of man who would at least try. He might fuck up, but I think he’d care. I got tossed out like garbage, so enjoy what you’ve got.” He turns. “Fuck it, never mind.”

“No, wait.” I grab his shirt with one hand and reach up to cup his cheek with the other, keeping him looking at me. “Tell me. I want to know. All we’ve got is time right now.”

“You don’t want my fucking life story.”

“If you think that, you’re even dumber than you look.”

His eyes flare as I get sassy with him, but he laughs softly. “It’s not much to tell. I was dumped as a baby. Left in a box in front of a fire station in South Side. No note, no nothing. I could’ve walked by my parents a thousand times and never known. Got adopted pretty fast, but then the mom got pregnant and suddenly I wasn’t good enough. By then I was five, and if you aren’t a baby, finding a stable home is like winning the

lottery. After that, I bounced around in foster homes until I was old enough to get the fuck out of the system. So when I say that everyone leaves eventually, I've got the experience to back it up."

"God, that sounds rough." Makes me think of my own childhood. Sure, it was just me and Mom, but even though we struggled sometimes, she was the best. Things didn't get really bad until she got sick.

"Yeah, well, I wasn't the easiest kid. I caused a lot of shit. Broke things. Sometimes just stuff, sometimes laws. But I was a kid, you know? It's not like my whole damn history wasn't an open book. Assholes." He pulls away, getting himself water and very pointedly keeps his back to me so I can't see his face.

"I don't want to be your mother."

He laughs roughly. "Good, because you watched me jerk off. That'd be fucking awkward."

God, no kidding. "You know it wasn't your fault, right? Even if you were difficult. If they gave you up, then they're the ones who failed *you*."

"Yeah, yeah."

"Look at me." I put as much authority into my voice as possible. I know rule number three is to obey them, but right now I'm letting rule number one, to not take any shit from anyone, including them, override it.

He stiffens, but doesn't turn.

"I said, look at me!"

"Why?"

"Because I'm not going to tell you this to your back."

Slowly, almost glacially, he turns. His dark eyes zero in on me like black lasers, but there's a lifetime of painful memories etched into his hard expression.

"I'm not going to leave."

"The fuck are you talking about?"

“If you guys will have me, I’m not going anywhere. You’ll have to kick me out. You’ve been through so much more than me, but I know what it’s like not to know where I came from. And look at what happened when I tried to find out! But if you can learn to trust Shadow, Thunder and Lightning, what makes me so different?” I have to crane my neck to meet his eyes, but I do my best.

“You just are,” he says softly.

It’s enough that I dare take a step closer. “Let me in, Outlaw.”

“And how do you propose I do that?”

I wet my lips, nervous. “I’m a good hugger. So that’s a thing.”

“Prove it.”

Tentatively, I wrap my arms around his waist, only to be crushed against him when he scoops me up so suddenly I let out a squeak.

“Anything else?” His raspy voice in my ear gives me chills, the good kind. I squeeze my arms around him, holding tight.

“I’m working on my kissing. I think I need more practice, though.”

Even with one arm, he holds me up and against him easily. With the other, he cups my jaw, his palm pressing against my throat. It forces me to look up at him, to take in his hard features, the deep darkness in his eyes, and something new, something he’s never shown me—an almost feral possessiveness. I get the feeling that when Outlaw loves, he does it wholly and completely.

He presses his lips against mine with a ferocity I’m unprepared for. I gasp into his mouth as his tongue finds mine while I wrap my arms around his neck and my legs around his hips, clinging to him for dear life. I find the stud in his tongue and flick it, tracing its base and tasting both him and the metal. The kiss has me tingling from my head all the way down to my curling toes. My core is molten hot, and with his torso against me, all that separates those most intimate parts of our bodies is a couple layers of clothing.

When we finally come up for air, his voice is little more than a harsh breath. “Anything else?”

I swallow hard. “I think we might need more privacy for that.”

“Why?” He grins, the closest I’ve yet to see him playful since I met him. “Shy?”

“The four of you are different. I don’t want the others to see,” I admit.

“Gotta say, I don’t mind keeping you to ourselves. So what do you suggest?”

“Maybe there’s a bedroom?”

HARPER

“ARE YOU SAYING I STINK?”

“No, I’m saying I don’t know what the fuck you and Outlaw crawled through inside the care facility, but you look like extras in a Halloween movie.”

“Fuck off,” says Outlaw. “You got your shower with her, I don’t mind taking my turn.”

Lightning whistles.

“Finally?” asks Thunder.

“Keep it up and you’re not invited.” Outlaw carries me into the bathroom, where he slams the door shut. He lowers me to the floor so he can start the shower.

“You know, they aren’t wrong.” I say to him. His cheeks are still blackened, and I bet mine are just as bad. There are knots in my hair and clumps of God knows what. I’ve just been far too stressed to worry about it.

He laughs. “You gonna get naked or what?” He pulls his shirt over his head, revealing a powerfully lean, tattooed torso. And pierced nipples! That shouldn’t shock me more than the one on his cock, but maybe because I have nipples of my own it sends a shiver through me to think about someone poking a...
gah! No!

Narrow hips, powerful thighs. Broad shoulders. He’s lean, strong, and as gorgeous as the rest of them. And then he smiles, and while I wish he did it more often, it’s so beautiful to see, that selfishly I like having it all to myself.

Outlaw's dick comes into view, and yep, still pierced. What would that feel like inside?

Am I about to find out?

He jumps into the shower and starts scrubbing himself while I finish getting my clothes off. And then my courage fails me again. He's so gorgeous, and he's been through so much, and are we really okay now? I feel like we're on the same page, but what if—

“Get in here. I don't wanna wash you with cold water.” He looks over his shoulder and stops. “Fuck,” comes out in a strangled whisper. “Get in here now before I come out and get you.”

Yep, definitely get yourself some horny bikers if you're ever worried about how you look.

A moment later, I'm in there with him, and his strong hands are sliding all over me, exploring me like he's blind and wants to memorize every part of me. He cups my breast, puts a hand on my hip and pulls me against him. He's hard, pressing into the middle of my back. There's a cool spot—the piercing maybe?

“Fuck, I hate that I waited so fucking long for this,” he growls into my ear while running a washcloth over me, soaping me up and rinsing me off. There's something so intimate about being washed by someone else, and while he's making sure I'm clean all over, I take the opportunity to do my own exploration of the sleek lines and powerful planes that make up his masterpiece of a body.

I take his length between my fingers, remembering how it felt last time, stroking him lazily while watching out for the piercing. He moans softly into my ear, but there's nothing soft about the way his fingers dig into my hips.

As soon as we're clean, he's pulling me out of the shower and toweling me down so vigorously I'm glowing. Then he drops the towel right on the floor and grabs my hand. “Come.” He pulls me back to the bedroom.

“Wait, my clothes—”

“You think anyone out there is wearing anything?”

It takes a moment before I realize what he means. “Oh. But...”

“Do you remember rule three?”

“Um... don’t point—no. Don’t rest my finger on the trigger?”

He grins. “No, do what I fucking say.”

Well, if I wasn’t glowing red from his toweling, I definitely am now.

Turns out they’re still dressed, at least partially. Thunder and Lightning have their shirts and boots off, and are just starting to unbutton their jeans, their matching dragon tattoos stretching across their broad torsos. And Shadow’s in the process of peeling his shirt off. I guess they heard us get out of the shower.

The smoldering looks that all of them send my way make me pretty certain that my clothes would’ve lasted like a millisecond anyway, but I still cover my breasts as well as I can with one arm while I put my hand between my legs like they’re not all about to see it. Outlaw doesn’t seem to care whatsoever that he’s parading around without a thread on, and furiously hard at that.

“Don’t fucking hide yourself,” he says when he sees what I’m doing. He presses his front against mine, covering it in a way, then tilts my head up to kiss him. He grabs my ass and pulls me with him over to the bed. “Just forget about them for now.”

“Okay,” I whisper, focusing just on him, and not the other three guys who’re also about to rock my world. It’s not that I don’t want it. It’s just a little overwhelming.

But with Outlaw kissing me stupid and his hands running up my thighs and over my hips, it’s hard to concentrate on anything else. I wrap my leg around his, keeping him close. His big dick presses into my stomach, ready and eager, but when he rolls me over onto my back, he doesn’t get on top. Instead he slides down, kissing his way from my lips down over my jaw and onto my throat, my collarbone, and then up one of my breasts. I close my eyes and let it happen, just feeling the sensations.

When he sucks one of my nipples into his mouth, I moan, and reach for him with my hands, running my fingers through his thick hair. His beard tickles my sensitive skin as he continues downwards, onto my belly. His tongue dips into my belly button, the steel of the stud in his tongue sliding around with it. Oh God, what's that going to feel like further down?

I'm about to find out, because he keeps going, all the way into the V between my legs. I spread my thighs to let him in. Only a few days ago, this would've made me shy, and now all I want is to feel him devour me.

Outlaw pushes my thighs back, opening me for him. And then his tongue slicks through my folds, the metal stud sliding against my wet skin along with it. I let out a pleased sigh and press my head into the pillow, arching for him. God, he's good at this. When he comes up to my clit and swirls the tip around it, the stud bumps around unpredictably, adding another magical element to the experience.

Speaking of magic, two mouths enclose my nipples, one on each side. My eyes shoot open to find the twins, and I don't even know which one's which. I run my hands across their broad backs, luxuriating in the feel of their vast expanses of sexy flesh while all three men apply their mouths to me at once.

Shadow kisses me, almost upside down as he's gotten on the bed next to my head, where there's room. His lips are rough, and he caresses my throat and shoulders like he owns me while the twins and Outlaw take care of the rest.

God, I've never felt anything so intense. So many tongues at once. It's like floating on a cloud that knows where all my erogenous zones are.

It takes almost no time before I'm clutching Thunder and Lightning to keep from launching off the bed. Outlaw's driving me to the edge with his studded tongue. He knows exactly where to touch, where to push, where to kiss, and when he slips a thick finger inside and fucks me with it, it's all over.

I scream into Shadow's mouth, while Outlaw's tongue drives me wild and Thunder and Lightning make my nipples shoot sparks of pleasure straight down to my core. Using the twins' backs for leverage and digging my heels into the bed, I strain against them as every muscle in my body goes tight. I'm exploding, and the four of them carry me right through every single aftershock until I drop limp to the bed, panting like I've just run a marathon.

"Stop. Wait. Let me breathe," I gasp. I pound the twins on their backs and squeeze my thighs around Outlaw's head to stop them. "God!"

"Take it that means we're doing okay?" Lightning asks. He's wearing the very definition of a shit-eating grin.

"God, yeah, you guys are amazing, perfect, blah blah blah. Just... let me recover for a second." I close my eyes and just breathe for a bit before opening them again.

Outlaw's beard glistens with the proof of his hard work, but it's not his mouth that's nudging at my folds now. His big cock looks ready to burst out of the condom, but I appreciate him thinking clearer than me. One day, maybe I'll experience this with nothing between us, but we should probably have a talk first. He grips his shaft and parts me slowly, easing his thickness into my pussy.

"Oh fuck, I'm in fucking Heaven," he groans as enters me, inch by agonizingly wonderful inch. I moan and my body twitches, making me squeeze him tight.

One of the twins, Thunder, I think, is up on his knees and he presents his cock to my lips. "Open."

"Rule three?"

Shadow chuckles. "Definitely."

Obedying is no hardship with them.

Thunder's flavor is a touch of saltiness and pure maleness on my tongue. I swirl it around the big crown while I suck on him, trying to make him feel as good as they do me. And as Outlaw eases himself deeper and deeper, I moan around

Thunder as well, the vibration making him moan in turn. It's the sexiest chain reaction I've ever been part of.

Meanwhile, Lightning's taken over both of my breasts, sucking on one and rolling the nipple on the other between his dexterous fingers. He knows exactly how carefully to tug, how hard to bite, how much tongue to apply. He's so good at it. Outlaw shifts his hips, and suddenly I feel his piercing, a small but steady rub against my inner walls.

"Fuck," Thunder hisses and pulls back.

Shadow turns me to face his big cock. He presses against my lips and I let him in. Thunder was happy for me to explore him with my lips and tongue, but Shadow drives with purpose, holding my head still while he thrusts his length right up to the back of my mouth. He's so thick, and every so often, he hits a little deep, making me gag, then eases off.

He's a lot, but knowing I'm exciting him enough that he loses control? That's pretty hot too.

I'm struggling to keep track of everyone and what they're doing, and eventually give up, letting myself just enjoy the sensation of being totally and completely mastered.

Outlaw goes faster, harder, his hips bumping against mine as he fills me over and over. Shadow pulls out of my mouth, giving me a moment to gasp, before Thunder's taking another turn. And all the while, Lightning is making sure not an inch of my body is left untouched. It's no wonder that just as Outlaw seems to be rising towards his finish, I'm right there with him. We groan together, his deep thrusts turning ragged as I fist the sheets.

We come together. Him driving his cock to the root just as I arch my back and press my hips up to accept him. He holds himself in me, his big cock throbbing so hard I can feel every pulse of cum deep inside me. That something so thin as a condom is capable of handling so much sends an excited ripple through me. It feels dangerous.

When he withdraws, Thunder takes his place. I've barely landed after my last orgasm when his big cock spreads me

wide, and even though he feels totally different from Outlaw, my body adjusts to fit him just as well. Male and female, perfectly made for each other.

Thunder takes one ankle in each hand, pushing my legs back as he fucks me with determination. His steady, dominant nature comes to the forefront as he fills me, claiming me as his with every sharp slap of his hips against my ass.

Lightning straddles my chest just below my breasts, getting in between my knees held back by his twin. His cock waves proud over me, and he's got a little bottle in his hands. "It's a good thing we travel prepared. I've wanted to do this since the first time I fucking saw you in your wedding dress. It really showed off those pretty tits." He grins while he gives the bottle a squeeze, pushing out cool, gooey liquid into the valley between my breasts and onto his dick. "Stroke it a little, spread it around," he orders.

Feeling naughty, I explore his full length with my fingers and palms until everything is glistening with lube. It feels so nice to stroke him like this, with barely any friction, just slippery skin on slippery skin. He cups the outsides of my breasts in his big hands and grins at me. "Put it in between."

I do, and he leans forward and traps his big cock between my breasts. Hips moving in a fluid, erotic dance, he fucks me in this new, kind of kinky way. He's so long that the tip almost hits my chin, so I stick my tongue out and give it a swipe.

"Oh fuck," he groans. "You're perfect, babe."

Then Shadow gets my attention, pressing his hardness back against my lips as he pulls my head to the side. I let him in, loving the taste of his skin on my tongue as I do my best to please him while Thunder and Lightning take their pleasure from my body.

Thunder's steady, hard thrusts are bringing me closer and closer to the edge, making me lose focus on anything but him and where we're joined. Could a single man beat this? With four lovers, having multiple orgasms is practically a requirement.

But it's Lightning who loses control first, his grip on my breasts tightening and his strokes coming faster. "Fuck," he hisses, right before thick, white cum sprays all over my breasts and throat, even some spattering against my chin. He keeps thrusting as he comes, marking me very visibly as his.

"Goddamn, girl," Shadow growls, filling my mouth with his own slippery cream. It spills from between my lips, running down my chin and dripping to join Lightning's on my chest. I'm a complete mess, but it's hard to mind when I see them looking at me like I'm their own personal goddess.

"Fuck, that's hot," groans Thunder as Shadow and Lightning pull aside, and he gets the full view of me covered in their cum.

I look up at him, eyes wide but barely seeing. Thunder drives home hard and fast. I hold my sticky breasts to steady them as he jackhammers me back and forth. My mouth opens in a soundless scream and then we come together, his low groan under my high pitched scream. My whole body clenches around him and his hard dick swells inside me. Again, I tumble over that final edge, quivering under him with my eyes tightly shut and my whole world shrunk down to only the amazing sensations coursing through me.

Absolutely amazing.

When I open my eyes, Thunder's withdrawing, though his chocolate eyes are still dark with passion. I'd keep him in me forever if I could.

"Looks like you need another shower," Shadow says with a laugh, but he gets a washcloth from the bathroom and wipes me off gently, first my face, then working his way down my throat and across my chest.

"Wow." It's all I've got. They fucked the words out of me.

Shadow's phone rings. He sighs but goes to look. "Yeah? Fuck, what? No, fucking stay with me, Carnell! You can't... fuck!"

HARPER

RIDING WITH MY FOUR BIKERS IS EXHILARATING, BUT RIDING with the full strength of the Screaming Eagles is like being a part of an army on the move.

My arms are around Outlaw, riding behind him for the first time. His bike is blood red with black trim and has the roughest ride of the four of them, at least as far as I can tell. But I think maybe he likes it that way, sporty and rough. I don't mind. It feels like him, and gives me an excuse to hold on even tighter.

Surrounding us, in a triangular formation, are the rest of my boys, Shadow in front, Thunder on my right and Lightning on the left. I'm protected. They gave me a bulletproof vest, which helps too.

Eagle-eye's here, and he brought what's got to be close to the whole club. The rumble of God knows how many bikes echoes off the tall buildings around us, making it impossible to talk, even though we're not going that fast. Our smaller group didn't warrant a look when we came into town, but nobody can ignore this many. The Diamond Oasis rises like a bad dream in front of us.

Somewhere at the top of that building, my mother and the man who is very likely my father are being held.

My fingers dig into Outlaw's vest. If Vincent has hurt either of them, I'm not going to be held responsible for what I do.

The bikes overwhelm the whole front of the casino, along with leather-clad bikers of all shapes, sizes and colors. Each one

lethal, and on every single back, a patch that reads Screaming Eagles MC. People flee as the bikers storm through the doors.

“C’mon,” Outlaw says and drags me along.

This time there was no argument when I said I was going. Not even when I asked for a gun of my own. Last time I barely managed to get off one shot, and this time I hope to God that I won’t have to use it, but if I do, I’ll hit my target.

Eagle-eye barks orders in that gravelly voice of his. “Snark’s working on breaking into their systems. Don’t ask me exactly what that means, but he’ll make it happen. I’m giving you Nitro, who’s got his usual goodie bag with him. Don’t fuck it up this time.”

“Sounds fun,” Lightning says with a grin. “Mesner’s never gonna fucking know what hit him.”

Shadow nods. “I fucking appreciate all this manpower. The more hopeless Mesner’s situation seems, the more likely he’ll surrender easy”

“I’ll take payment outta you guys later,” Eagle-eye says with a grin, then notices me. “You’re bringing her?”

“She’s earned the right,” says Thunder. “Besides, Harper’s been to the penthouse level before. She can give us the fucking tour.”

Eagle-eye nods. “Don’t gotta convince me. Your gig, your decisions. We’re here to back you up and do our best to make sure everyone makes it home safe today. Make it good because this is probably my last hurrah before Miriam pops.”

We push our way into the lobby, filling it with the smell of leather and motor oil. It’s strange to be back here. The massive staircase cuts up through the middle of the room, right up to the ballroom where, in what feels like forever ago, I was supposed to get married to a man who was apparently going to kill me on our honeymoon. Heavy curtains have been drawn over the entrance, with a sign that reads, “UNDER RENOVATION.”

I bet.

“We need her key card,” I tell Shadow, pointing.

Shadow takes the lead, but the five of us move like a unit, right up to the concierge, who looks ready to pee her pants. “I’m afraid I can’t allow all of you in here. There are fire codes and—”

“Mesner’s expecting us,” says Shadow, cutting her off. “So if you could just kindly show us the way...”

She squeaks. “I’m sorry, Mr. Mesner isn’t available today. Perhaps you’d like to—”

“Now,” says Thunder, drawing himself to his full height. Lightning too, as if one massive, angry biker wasn’t enough to intimidate her.

“I can’t—”

“Oh, I’m sure you fucking can,” says Outlaw.

Behind her, where there’s a big glass wall that separates the upper floor of the casino from the reception, people have started to gather, pressing their faces against the window and trying to catch a glimpse of what’s happening without risking getting caught in what looks like a massive biker raid.

“Please,” begs the concierge.

“Fuck it,” says Shadow, reaching over and grabbing the access card at her belt that looks like it’s been taped onto the fastener. It rips off easily.

We push past, and the card opens the door into a private lobby behind the concierge, with a private elevator, and fire stairs next to it. “Guess that’s the elevator that got Carnell,” Shadow says. “We’re taking the stairs.”

With a collective groan, we start climbing, followed by Phoenix, Havoc, Sledge and a couple of more Eagles I don’t know. Hopefully enough to deal with whatever’s waiting for us on top.

The first few floors aren’t bad, but by the time we’re ten floors up, the idea of thirty-something more sounds like hell. The guys are continuing up like it’s nothing, but I’m not built like

they are, that's for sure. It must be obvious, because Thunder sweeps me right up and puts me over his shoulder.

"What are you doing?" I hit his back, but I could be trying to spank concrete and tell it to behave for all the effect it has.

"You're tired, I'm not. Now shut up."

Lightning, who's walking behind us, looks up at me. "And if he gets tired, I'll take over. Easy. Any opportunity to get my hands on you, babe."

Oh, for Pete's sake.

It's not until the thirty-ninth floor that we come to a door that requires the key card to get through. And it opens straight into a lobby packed with bodyguards, the ones that Vincent surrounds himself with, armed and waiting for us. Instead of dropping me in front, Thunder simply passes me backwards so Lightning can catch and put me down, using Thunder for a shield. He flips me around so I land on my feet.

"Turn around and head back down the way you came, and no one comes away hurt. We're not going to ask you twice." The guy is nothing but rectangles. Square jaw, flattop haircut, hips as wide as his shoulders, and looks like he could bench press a forklift.

I know my help is a last resort, but I put my hand on my gun anyway. Just in case.

"Funny that," says Shadow, stepping forward with his hand on the hilt of his gun. His tone is real low, real deadly. "We ain't asking either. You see, there's a lot of us coming up, and we're on a goddamn mission. Now, I'm sure you love your boss and that he treats you fellas like you're his own goddamn children, but here's the deal. My woman's mother and father are trapped up there, and it's making her real upset. And when my woman's upset, I get upset, and I get just a little fucking crazy. Now I bet you're thinking, one angry biker, we can handle that. But I got a lot of friends, and we're all Screaming Eagles. Heard of us, right? So the question is, exactly how lucky do you feel? Maybe you'll shoot me. Maybe you'll shoot a couple of my buddies here, but do you guys think you can take all of

us? Because unless you can kill every last one, I can fucking guarantee you that this is your last day on this Earth, and you just spent it throwing away your life for a scumbag like Mesner.”

Square guy stiffens, but doesn't look convinced. The guy behind him, though, looks a little wild-eyed. “Fuck this, I didn't even get a bonus last Christmas.” He holds his hands up, well away from the gun at his side. “Let me pass, and I'll get the fuck outta here. I got a pregnant wife at home.”

“Jones, get the fuck back in line,” the lead guy says, but the deserter ignores it.

“Sorry, boss. I'm out.”

“Me too.” One of the other guys goes after Jones, who's very nervously squeezing down past the glares of a whole lot of angry bikers. “Odds are against us, man.”

I blink in amazement as he follows down the stairs and then a third and fourth guy do too. With every guard that leaves, the ones remaining look more and more nervous, and the scales tip further in our favor. And then even the leader shakes his head. “Fuck this. I'm not staying here to get murdered.” And with that, the landing is cleared, revealing a massive steel door.

“Viking and Ripper,” Shadow says. “Follow them down and make sure they all make it safely, if you know what I mean. Call ahead so our guys know not to shoot them on the way out. No need to make them feel comfortable, but no aggression unless they make the first move.”

The only biker here who's completely shirtless, and has a long braided beard, nods. “Got it. Good luck.” Then he and another follow them down.

“Well, we're here,” says Thunder. “What's next?”

“Everything from here up is his penthouse,” I supply, remembering my time here all too well. “I'm not sure how to open the door, but there are stairs inside to get to the rest of the place.”

Shadow pulls up his phone. “Snark. Any progress? There's a door up here, looks electric. Big fucking steel door. It's not so

crazy that it's online, is it?"

A moment later, there's the sound of an engine starting, and the door slowly rolls open.

"You're a fucking genius. Shadow out."

A chill races down my spine at the thought that we're about to face Vincent again. God, please let Mom—and Carnell—be okay, and that we're not too late.

LIGHTNING

THE FIRST FLOOR OF MESNER'S PENTHOUSE IS AN OFFICE, THE whole floor open with windows giving a panorama view of the city. There's only a few buildings that stand even taller, blocking his view. Bet those piss him off. Gotta love 'em.

The room is set up for multiple people, but it's clear which desk is Mesner's. He has a whole fucking command station on a platform overlooking five other desks. With a big oak desk, fancy-ass chair and three computer screens around, it looks like he's the captain of a fucking spaceship. I can only imagine how much shit and pain has been planned from that chair. It makes me sick.

"He'll be upstairs. That's where he actually lives." She points to a glass staircase that winds up to a landing on the next floor.

Harper starts heading that way, but I grab her shoulder. "Stay behind us. He's going to be fucking jumpy. Don't want you to get hit if he panics."

"Forget panic. I hope he's shitting his fucking pants," Thunder growls.

Outlaw laughs and heads up first, going slow. He's about halfway up when multiple doors slam shut all at once. We're cut off from most of our backup aside from Havoc and Nitro.

Fuck.

"You really thought I didn't protect myself better than this?" Vincent's voice comes over a speaker system, taunting us. "I could play with you all day if I wanted."

“Cut the fucking theatrics,” Shadow yells. “This isn’t going to go well for you. How about you give us the hostages, and we won’t throw you over the side of the fucking building.”

“How about no. I don’t negotiate with monkeys trapped in a cage.”

“Nitro,” says Outlaw, still standing on the stairs. “The door up here doesn’t look anywhere near as sturdy as the one downstairs. Think you can crack it open?”

Nitro grins, never passing an opportunity to blow shit up. He bounds up the stairs two at a time. “Easy.” He analyzes the door, choosing specific points to stick explosive putty. “Get behind something.” That’s all the warning we get before he pulls out his phone and starts tapping. A series of small explosions make quick work of the door, rattling the whole room.

“Move!” snaps Shadow.

Outlaw’s closest to the top, but I’m already running, with Thunder and Harper right behind. Havoc and Nitro bring up the rear. We pop out into a short hall that opens into Mesner’s living space further down. Two bullets slam into the wall a few feet from where we’re standing, burying themselves in fancy wood wall paneling. Harper shrieks and jumps back, but no one gets hurt.

“Meeeeeesner,” I yell. “Come out, come out, wherever you are.”

“Don’t come any closer. I’ve got my barrel trained on Eileen right now.”

“Mom,” Harper whispers in horror.

At least she’s still alive. Hopefully that goes for Carnell as well. “If you hurt any of them, it’ll be the last thing you’ll ever fucking do.” That’s a partial lie. No matter what happens, I’m gonna murder that bastard today, unless someone beats me to it.

“What’s out there?” Outlaw asks Harper. “Any cover?”

She frowns, thinking hard. “Um, there’s a seating area right past where the wall ends. I don’t remember the furniture exactly, but there’s at least a big couch and some chairs.”

“If you fucking get yourself shot again,” growls Shadow, “I’m gonna fucking kill you myself.”

Outlaw’s grin is dark and humorless. “I’ll hold you to that.” Then he launches himself, diving low into the room with a speed I couldn’t match if I tried. I break shit, I don’t dodge it.

More gunshots go off, splintering the hardwood floor. We all hold our breath for a second.

“Two guards. Mesner in back. He’s got Eileen, and it looks like Carnell’s tied up,” Outlaw yells.

“Why are you even here?” snaps Mesner. “Why are you risking yourselves? You already sent your fucking message. You want me to stop supplying to your territory? Done. None of this even involves you or your club.”

Thunder and I look at each other and nod. “That’s not enough anymore. It’s personal now.”

Mesner snarls. “Is it the girl? Fine! Take her. The only reason I bothered with her was to torment Nate. When the DNA test showed that Eileen’s brat wasn’t mine, it didn’t take much to figure out he’d been fucking my woman. Had him roughed up a little too, for a sample just to be sure.”

Shadow whispers to Nitro, and gets handed something. I can’t see what it is, but when Shadow walks past me, closer to the doorway, he says quietly, “Keep him talking. On three, we roll out there and find cover. Surround the fucker. Only one chance, though.”

“So why bother with the wedding and all that shit? Would’ve been a lot simpler to just kill her and send her head to Carnell with a copy of the DNA test, wouldn’t it?”

“But where’s the fun in that? There would be a lot more public sympathy if my newly found beloved daughter was tragically murdered on her honeymoon. Don’t you think?” Harper gasps and presses herself into me. “I wasn’t even going to bother

with Eileen, but what can I say? It's always good to have a backup plan."

Shadow takes whatever Nitro gave him and throws it hard. It bounces off the far wall and then deeper into the room. "One, two..."

"What if he shoots my mother?" She looks up at me with huge eyes that break my fucking heart. Tears staining her cheeks.

"He'll do that anyway if we don't get shit moving." I reluctantly release Harper. "Shh. We're gonna save them, okay? You just hang back and stay safe."

Her nod is jerky, and her expression terrified, but we gotta do something. Here's hoping it works out.

"Three!" Shadow yells.

We all dash into the room, throwing ourselves in different directions for cover. They can't shoot us all at once. Dark smoke billows from where the grenade landed. Havoc runs for a sniper position at the far side. Shadow goes right, Nitro goes left, Outlaw leaps over the couch to hide in a doorway to another room.

Me and Thunder, we charge straight for the fucking middle.

The smoke offers just enough cover for me to find the closest of Mesner's goons and wrap my arm around his neck. A hard twist as I carry him with me is followed by a grunt and a snap. When I drop him, he hits the ground and stays there. Pretty sure he's never getting up again. Good fucking riddance.

A sharp cry of pain followed by a vicious crunch on my other side makes me pretty sure Thunder's taken the other guard out of the picture.

Eileen screams.

Fuck.

As the smoke clears, Mesner and Eileen are gone, escaped through a door at the back of the room. Carnell's been left behind, gagged and tied to his chair.

"Mom!" shouts Harper as she runs into the room.

“Hang back!” I snap so harshly that she stops dead. “Not yet.”

“Nitro, Havoc, check on Carnell,” orders Shadow, and then it’s the four of us giving chase.

We pop out in a hall with dark mahogany panels on one side and big windows on the other. Several doors lead away from it, and a staircase leads down. I make a split decision and go for the stairs. “Check the rooms. I’m going down.”

The stairs wind down two floors and end in a door. It looks solid, but it’s been left open. Looks like I’m on the right track. Gripping my piece in both hands and using the frame for cover, I kick it open. The elevator is right in front of me, and so are Mesner and Eileen. His arm is around her throat and his gun is pointed at her head.

“Let her go, Mesner. The whole fucking club’s down there. You got nowhere to go.”

“Jesus, why won’t you just leave me the fuck alone?”

“Too late for that. Don’t make it worse for yourself.”

The elevator dings and the doors open. “Just fuck off!” he yells and gives Eileen a big shove forwards as he levels his gun at me and fires.

Even throwing myself aside, the bullet catches my arm, tearing through my jacket and burning a line of fire along my bicep. Just a graze, I think, but it stings like a motherfucker. Before I’m back on my feet, the doors to the elevator close and he’s gone.

“Fuck!”

Shadow, Thunder, Outlaw and Harper come running out the door.

“Mom!” Harper dashes for her, throwing herself down on the floor by her. “Are you okay?”

“Watch them!” I run for the stairwell as I pull my phone out and call Snark.

“Talk to me.”

“Stop the guest elevators! Mesner’s on one of them.”

“On it!”

Fuck, my legs are burning. There are footsteps behind me, but no time to see who’s following.

“Lightning? I got it! Got him stopped on the seventh floor! Trying to jam the door.”

“I’ll have your fucking baby, Snark,” I tell him and jam my phone in my pocket.

Tenth.

Ninth.

Eighth.

Seventh.

I burst out of the stairwell, just to see Mesner running from me, heading for a door labeled “STAFF ONLY.” Good job, Snark.

I tear open the door and find familiar territory. It’s the hall for the chandelier access ramp. Sweet fucking irony.

And Mesner, with nowhere else to go, is backing up on the narrow catwalk, aiming his gun at me.

He fires, and it clicks. Again, and it clicks again.

He’s out.

Fuck, that’s the kinda sound I like to hear. I step onto the catwalk with him. Shake it a little, make it rattle. “Give up, Mesner. There’s nowhere for you to go.”

“What the fuck do you want from me?” he screams hysterically.

Far below us, the ballroom is still being cleaned up. The fountain’s still in pieces, and while the glass and debris has been swept into piles around the remains of the fountain, a lot of the structure is still exactly where we dropped it. And where the chandelier was attached, there’s just a gaping hole, thanks to Nitro’s explosive charge.

“Honestly? I wanna see you fucking die. I’m fucking done chasing you around, and I’m never, ever letting you fucking

threaten Harper again.”

“Lightning.” Thunder’s behind me, but I’m not gonna stop now. And I don’t even think he wants me to. Just letting me know I’ve got backup.

For every step I take, Mesner backs up one. He must see the grim determination on my face, because he’s given up begging. He throws his useless gun at me, but it isn’t even close. Just strikes the glass dome and bounces as it slides down towards one end.

He reaches the end of the ramp. All that’s left is the hole.
“Stay away from me!”

“After what you did to Harper and her family? And so many other fucking people?” I close the final step and grab him by the collar of his shirt, lifting him clear off his feet. “Fuck you.”

I drop him.

Six floors worth of air gives him just enough time to scream before he hits the shattered remains of his precious fucking chandelier. A steel rod goes straight through him, leaving him hanging there, dripping onto the remains of the glass. His eyes and mouth are wide open, trapped in shock.

Done.

“Let’s get the fuck outta here.”

HARPER

“I HOPE IT’S NOT TOO WEIRD THAT I CALL YOU NATE INSTEAD of Dad.”

He sits across from me in the Screaming Eagle’s common room, with Mom at his side. They’re on one of the couches, while I’ve settled into an easy chair. The big TV’s off, and it’s the middle of the day, so most of the bikers and sluts are out. I’m not sure I want Nate and Mom here when evening comes and things get a little wilder.

“That’s fine. I think we’re going to have to figure this out step by step. I’m still processing all this myself. I’ve been on my own for a long time. Thinking of myself as a father is still pretty strange.”

“You don’t mind, do you?”

He shakes his head. “No, but my identity has been wrapped up in one thing for a very long time. I’m not an old man, but I don’t exactly reinvent myself as often as I did when I was younger.”

All four of my guys are over at the bar, giving us space to talk, but watching very closely. It’s comforting to have them there, paying attention. Mom notices too, wearing a faint smile. She’s still weak, but recovering, and while she denies it, I think she and Nate are cautiously seeing if there’s a spark left to kindle.

“So... are you going to stay in Vegas?” I ask Mom.

She looks at Nate, and over to my guys. “For now, I think. I’ve found a good doctor out here, and it seems like if I want to be

near my daughter, I might need to adjust to west coast life. Unless you want to move back? There isn't much for either of us back home, but I still have the apartment to clean up. You could take over the lease."

I open my mouth to answer, but Mom beats me to it. "I wouldn't, if I were you. You've spent way too much time taking care of me instead of living your life. You're young. You should be finding your own way." She looks over at the bar, where Lightning lifts his beer and smiles at us. "It's definitely not turning out how I imagined it, but if they're able to keep you safe and they're good to you... well, I'm obviously not in any position to give good relationship advice. Just come visit me sometimes."

"But who will take care of you?"

Mom laughs. It's a beautiful sound I haven't heard nearly enough of the past few years. "I'm a grown woman, Harper."

"I'll be keeping an eye on her," says Nate. "No matter what happens, we will always be linked by our pasts, and now by something even better."

She squeezes his hand. "Exactly. We can be together in supporting our amazing daughter. And then we'll just see where that takes us."

He nods, even smiling a little. "And if you want to come out to Vegas, You're always welcome. My house is really too big for just me anyway, so there's plenty of room for guests. Just give me warning so I can dust off a room I'm not using. Or don't. My door's always open for you."

Pressure builds behind my eyes, but I'm not going to cry. Definitely not going to cry. After so many years alone with Mom, and then the years trying to make sure she gets well again, I thought I found my father only to end up in a giant mess. That we came out the other side with not just Mom getting better, but my actual father, who is turning out to be an decent guy, feels unreal. Not to mention, that with Outlaw, Thunder, Lightning and Shadow, I've found a whole new kind of family of my own. And if you count the Screaming Eagles

and the Harem Brunch Club... well, suddenly, I've got so much family I don't know how to deal with them all.

It's amazing how quickly your life can turn around when you least expect it. All it takes is having a fake crime lord father, getting kidnapped by four dangerous bikers, getting shot at a whole bunch of times, nearly lose everyone, and tada! Easy peasy.

Maybe I should become a life coach.

Or maybe not.

"You're looking beat, Eileen," says Nathan. "Maybe we should get going, and you can take a nap in the car." He stands and gives her his hand to help her up.

She nods. "You're right, but Harper? Will you come up and see me this weekend?"

"I'm sure at least one of the guys will be happy to give me a ride. Probably it'll be all of us." I grin. It's been a couple weeks now, and the guys have been remarkably easy on me. No pressure, no demands, just an awful lot of being spoiled rotten with good sex. It's a heck of a lot easier to get over what's pretty much definitely the most traumatic time I've ever had in my life when you have backup like them.

We do our hugs and say our goodbyes. "How did I end up this lucky?" I whisper, watching her leave with Nate. My father.

"We need to talk," declares Shadow in a scarily authoritative tone. "We can't keep going like this."

"Huh?" I turn to find him right behind me, seated right where I was a moment ago. Outlaw's leaning against the wall next to the TV, while Thunder and Lightning have taken the couch Mom and Nate sat in. They all look incredibly serious. "What about?"

"They asked some good questions. Are you considering moving to be closer to your mother?" Outlaw asks. "Or back where you were living before?"

I blink. "Why would you even think that? Do you want me to?"

“Fuck no,” declares Thunder. “But it’s a big decision, and while we have strong fucking opinions about this, in the end, it’s yours. But let us get in our piece first.”

“Uh, yeah. Sure. Okay. Go ahead.” What are they talking about?

Shadow takes the lead. “We realize that you finally have the chance to really be with your family, and if anyone understands the value of good parents, well, fuck, it’s us. And if you’re gonna go with them, we’re not gonna stop you, but... we don’t want you to.”

“I—”

“We’ve always been a solid team,” continues Lightning. “Fuck, one of the best, but we’ve never been so fucking close as we are now. You even convinced Outlaw, and that’s a damn feat.”

Outlaw flips him off. “Don’t go.”

“But—”

Thunder stands up, taking a step closer. “We don’t wanna hold you back, but we fucking love you. All of us. Head over fucking heals for a girl who’s taken everything life has thrown at her and thrown it right back into their fucking face. You were the best fucking hostage ever. So what we want—really want—is for you to stay. With us. As our old lady. That house would feel real empty without you in it.”

I blink. “You guys are idiots.”

Shadow’s expression darkens. “What—”

“Of course I’m staying. What would you do without me? You’d be lost. Mom’s got Nate to take care of her, and I’m not far away. I haven’t thought about leaving in ages.”

They all blink at me, but Outlaw finds his words first. “So you’re staying? With us?”

“If you’ll have me, but if you think you guys are the only ones who can fall in love around here, you haven’t been paying attention.”

Lightning's expression brightens as if the sun just rose. "So, if we wanted to pick you up and drag you over to the house for a little celebration, you'd be game?"

And just like that, the way they're looking at me changes, like they're all trying to peel my clothes off with their eyes.

It's a little intimidating.

"Um... yeah?"

"Good." Thunder sweeps me up in his arms and throws me over his shoulder. Then we're going full speed out of the clubhouse. Catcalls are thrown after us by the guys who're around, but we ignore them. I'm staying, and that's worth celebrating.

HARPER

WE DON'T EVEN GET TO A BEDROOM. THE COUCH IS CLOSER, and Thunder drops me right into it with a feral growl. Shadow pulls the coffee table aside, leaving all four of them standing in front me, in a half circle. Them, and me. It makes me feel small, like a bunny cornered by a pack of bears.

Big, sexy bears.

“Take off your shirt,” orders Shadow in his dark, raspy voice that makes me all melty. He unbuckles his belt and starts undoing his jeans.

I don't want to miss the show if he's about to pull himself out, so I grip the hem of my shirt with both hands and eagerly twist it up over my head. It's not long since doing that in front of a bunch of guys was absolutely out of the question. An everyday girl, with everyday lumps and curves isn't what most guys want, or at least that's what I'd been convinced of. But now?

The pure lust in their starving expressions as they watch my every move, as their eyes rove over my body like they're trying to strip me by gaze alone... They make me feel like the goddess of a sex cult, and they're the four big, rough, incredibly well hung high priests preparing to worship me.

As I undo my bra, all four of them are pulling down their pants, exposing the proofs of their lust, all long, thick and so incredibly hard—just for me.

“Fuck,” Outlaw hisses as I toss my bra aside, making my breasts bounce. “Come here.”

Shadow grabs a cushion off the couch and tosses it on the floor to give me something to kneel on. As soon as I'm stable, Outlaw hooks his hand behind my head and pulls my mouth onto his cock. It's already seeping salty precum, and as I swirl my tongue around to taste it all, I play with his frenulum ring, flicking it back and forth. He groans and tightens his grip.

When he lets me up so I can draw a breath, all four of them are right there. Licking my lips like I'm about to have dessert, I wrap my fingers around both Lightning and Shadow, the two standing on the outsides, and start stroking. Then I take Thunder's thick, tempting dick between my lips and suck on it. Outlaw, who's still got a grip on my head, pushes me deeper, making me take more. God, I love it when they get bossy and needy.

Thunder bumps against the back of my mouth, and when I let out a little cough, Outlaw steals me away, pulling me onto his cock, right up to the entrance of my throat and holding me there for a second or two. I draw air through my nose, smelling leather and musk, before it's back to Thunder, who sighs happily when my lips wrap around his shaft again.

Shadow and Lightning cover my hands with theirs and use them to stroke themselves off. They pulse under my fingers, hot blood coursing through their thick cocks, getting slicker as more precum leaks from the tips. So eager for me.

"Fuck, that's our good girl," moans Outlaw as he pulls me back to him.

I love hearing him say it. I love it when they praise me, telling me that I'm making them feel good. That I'm doing them right. He thrusts between my lips a couple of times, draw's a sharp breath as he yanks my head away, then pushes me back onto Thunder.

"We're gonna make you come so fucking hard," Shadow threatens. Or is it a promise? God, that voice, anytime he uses it. Just makes me putty between them. "But you've gotta earn it first."

He makes it sound like this is a chore, and not something that's already got me super hot. I want to touch myself, but I'm still

wearing my jeans, and I don't think I'm getting my hands back anytime soon. So much hot, sexy dick, and it's all for me.

My laugh turns into a gurgle around Thunder. Who even am I? I was a virgin just a few weeks ago, and now I'm happily on my knees in front of four biker gang members. Though the fact that by the end of this I'll be a dripping, panting, cummed out mess might have something to do with it. They make me serve them, but I know they're going to pay me back tenfold.

They shift, and then I'm pushed down on Shadow. I shift my grip, stroking Outlaw instead. Then Thunder, and Lightning, back and forth between two completely identical dicks, and then back onto Outlaw. God, I've never felt so much like a bad girl in my life. They just keep putting hard dicks in my face, and I keep sucking on them, loving the sounds of their rough moans and pleased sighs.

"Fuck!" exclaims Lightning and pulls back out of my mouth. "You're too fucking good, babe. Almost lost it." I stick my tongue out for him, inviting him to finish, but he pushes me back to Thunder instead. I suck him in happily.

Lightning kneels behind me and unbuttons my jeans, working them down over my hips and my panties with them. He has to stop at my knees, at least until Shadow and Outlaw grab me under the arms and lift me up. Thunder groans as his cock slips from my lips. The ease with which they can just move me around and put me exactly where they want me is thrilling. My pants disappear as soon as my knees are off the floor, and then I'm naked except for my socks. Leaving them on feels a little naughty and I don't know why.

"Have a seat," says Lightning as he lies down with his head on the cushion, so that when they lower me back down, my pussy is right over his face. If I thought it was difficult to concentrate before...

He hooks his powerful arms around my thighs, locking me into place over his mouth, and then his talented tongue drives right through my folds, sending a shiver through me that has my whole body twitching with pleasure. The ease with which his tongue slides over my skin makes it obvious how

incredibly wet I am. Looks like I'm already getting my first reward. For this I'll be their good girl forever.

I suck and stroke, doing my best to keep it up while Lightning feasts between my thighs.

Outlaw's grip goes so tight in my hair that it stings a little, and he yanks me back. "Jesus fuck," he lets out in a shivery breath. "Time for a switch-up."

I moan plaintively when they ease me back, disconnecting my tingling pussy from Lightning's magic tongue. Turning me sideways on the couch, they pull my legs apart as Shadow settles between them, slowly priming his cock before putting it in me. Outlaw stands next to me and I cling to his thigh as my eyes lock with Shadow's gold-flecked hazels. He nudges the tip in between my folds, and finding me absolutely soaked for him, pushes all the way in with one firm, determined, slow thrust. I draw a deep breath as I dig my nails into Outlaw's thigh, making him hiss at the sudden pain.

Thunder produces a by now familiar little bottle of lube and pours a solid dollop into my cleavage before he pulls my hand to him. "Show me your palm," he orders, then squirts more into it, before he wraps my fingers around his big cock and climbs onto my torso. Guess he wants what his brother got last time. I'm game. It was hot.

Outlaw and Lightning settle in each of their chairs, taking in the show while they slowly stroke themselves. Maybe taking the edge off a little. They seemed pretty close earlier. Either way, the sight of them, tattooed and naked, sliding their powerful fists up and down their dicks while they watch me like I'm the sexiest woman on the planet, has me heating up deep inside.

Thunder presses my breasts together and starts fucking them, the lube making dirty, slick sounds as he pushes and pulls the thick head through my flesh. He teases my nipples with his thumbs, making me quiver with pleasure. Every time the thick crown peeks out, I swipe my tongue over it and delight in how it makes him shiver. It gives me power, itty bitty me bringing a

big monster like him to his knees with a simple touch of my tongue. God, it's so sexy.

Shadow speeds up, driving his thickness into me with firm thrusts that have my thighs shaking. His heavy balls bounce against my ass with every push, and he moans deep in his chest every time he bottoms out. He reaches down and starts flicking my clit with his thumb, timing it to his faster and faster thrusts, and then I'm the one who's moaning and shaking, like he just found my orgasm button and turned it on.

It grows inside me, stoked by his powerful cock thrusting over and over, and sending sexy, tingling shockwaves rushing through me. My breath shortens as they use me and please me in equal measure. I grip Thunder's powerful biceps, digging my fingers in as I start to come, crying out as the feeling overwhelms me. He captures my nipples and rolls them in his fingers, letting his dick rest between my breasts while he does what he can to bring me off. As I jam my shoulders into the couch and arch against them, Shadow goes into overdrive, powering his hardness into me with strong, needy, deep strokes. Just as the orgasmic tidal wave washes over me, he groans and swells. We sail through our pleasures together, feeding off each other's reactions.

When he pulls away, I feel so empty, like my natural state is filled. Luckily, he's only the first. As he drops into a chair, breathing heavily and drawing the last few moments of pleasure out before he rests, Lightning gets up and comes to the couch looking eager and determined.

I suspect I'll be back in my natural state soon enough.

"Fuck, not ready yet," moans Thunder and yields his spot to Lightning. "You're too fucking hot for us, honey," he says as he rests on the couch arm while watching us. He keeps himself hard, sliding his big fist up and down his slick cock.

"Flip around," Outlaw orders, and I do, getting up on all fours while Lightning settles on the couch in front of me, his precum-slicked dick just begging for a kiss. Who am I to say no? As I lean in, Outlaw gets behind me, and slides his big dick into my pussy. Already slicked up from the excitement of

fucking Shadow, I let him in easily, even when he stretches me. “Toss me the lube.”

I’ve got Lightning as far into my mouth as I can get him, swirling my tongue around his thick shaft, when cool liquid pours right onto my ass. It’s immediately followed by Outlaw’s thumb, rubbing slick fluid into my skin while closing in on my virgin pucker. Lightning has his fingers dug into my hair, keeping my mouth on him, but I wiggle my butt a little—though I’m not sure if it’s protest, or encouraging him. It’s a little strange, but I’m curious too.

Apparently he takes it as encouragement, because he rubs his thumb against the muscle keeping him out until I relax. Sliding on slick lube, he pushes the tip of his thumb in, just lightly fucking me with it in time with his dick in my pussy. And with each stroke, his thumb goes just a little deeper.

The tingles radiating from his naughty touch excites me more than I expected. Like I’m doing something sexy that I’m not supposed to, though who else would it be with than with a bunch of big, bad bikers? This time, when I wiggle my butt, it’s definitely encouragement. Especially with all the delicious feelings tingling up from his thickness buried in my pussy.

He withdraws his thumb long enough to add more lube, then pushes in again, slipping in a lot easier this time. I take sharp breaths around Lightning, realizing that the illicit touch is teasing out another orgasm from me, or at least it will soon. I moan on Lightning’s dick, and he groans from the vibrations. So I do it again, until his grip goes so tight that he holds my head still and breathes heavy. I love how close I can bring them, and I’m determined to make him come in my mouth.

But then Outlaw withdraws, both with his thumb and his dick, but I’m pretty sure he didn’t finish yet. And when I suddenly feel pressure again against my ass, I realize that’s something much bigger than a finger. Holy crap.

He pours more lube on us, the cool liquid spilling all over both of us. “You okay?” he asks. A last opportunity to say no, but I want the guys in every way possible, and I know I’m going to

regret it if I don't at least try. So I just give him another butt wiggle.

And then he pushes.

"Fuck, that's so goddamn sexy," he hisses as I do my best to relax and let him in. I feel it when his head pops inside, and it's strange. Sexy. Amazing. I don't know. There's a slight ache as he pushes deeper, just a little bit more with each little stroke, but there are all these naughty sensations, too. Ones that are exciting, that make me breathe harder, and my heart beat faster. And even a little pride that I'm taking him like this, being a dirty girl for him.

It's not long before he's moving with even, determined thrusts there, too. The ache is almost gone, replaced by fullness and pleasure. God, they're teaching me so much.

Shadow leaves his chair to kneel next to the couch and start rubbing my clit while Outlaw fucks my ass. It's the final puzzle piece that makes everything come together, and then I'm moaning and panting around Lightning's dick as I shudder between them. Outlaw groans, and his thrusts grow erratic. He thickens in me, while Shadow makes my clit tingle. "That's it, Harper. Be a good girl for us. Come with his dick in your ass," he growls.

Oh God, that does it. I explode, just as Outlaw buries himself and comes deep in my ass. I'm too busy seeing stars and clinging to the couch to keep from floating away, or at least that's how it feels, to notice him slip out of me and roll away, but when I finally come back down to Earth, I'm feeling satisfied, and yet so empty in a whole new way. And exhausted. I love my guys, but it's work keeping them all happy. Amazing, glorious, sexy work, though. And Lightning and Thunder haven't even finished yet. I drop to my side, spread my legs and look up at them. "How do you want me?"

"Holy shit," murmurs Thunder.

Lightning grins and slides down the couch, so I have to either move away or climb on top of him. Obviously, I climb on top of him.

“I want you on top. I wanna watch your amazing tits swing as you ride me.” He grips his hard cock, so it’s sticking right up in the air for me to sit on. “And then we’re gonna rock your world in a way you wouldn’t think possible.”

Well, with a promise like that...

I straddle his waist and wiggle my hips until the head of his amazing dick is seated right at the entrance to my slick pussy, then push down. His length spreads me wide open as I impale myself on him, inch by amazing inch, sliding all the way down until my butt rests on the fronts of his strong thighs. My breath hitches. “So good.”

“You ain’t seen nothin yet,” he promises, then grabs my thighs and starts helping me move. Good thing too, since riding a big man like him is a lot of work. It’s not too long before I’m starting to feel some of the burn, but I’m determined to make him come before I give up. Right up until he suddenly lets me go and I drop with a surprised groan, full of all of him. He wraps his big arms around me to pull me close, my breasts mashed into his sternum and my head resting on his chest. His heart pounds in my ear.

I take the opportunity for a little breather and press a kiss to his broad chest. Cool liquid covers my ass all over again. The couch shifts as Thunder climbs on, and then he’s pressing against my pucker just like Outlaw did earlier.

Only this time, I’m already full of Lightning.

“Um...”

“We’re gonna go easy, babe,” says Lightning. “But haven’t you wondered what it’d be like to be fucked by both twins at once? To be completely full of us? Because I can promise you this, you’re not gonna walk away unhappy.”

“I worry I’m not going to be able to walk at all,” I reply.

He laughs and strokes my hair. “Just relax. Trust me, you can do this. We’ll start slow.”

I swallow nervously, but nod. In for a penny, in for a pounding? It’s soooo much. I do my best to not clench up as

Thunder starts to push. “Fuck, that’s tight,” he moans. I agree wholeheartedly.

But he’s gentle, nudging back and forth, little by little until I open for him, just like I did for Outlaw. When the head of his cock pops inside, right next to his just as thick brother, I let out a moan, but it’s pleasure, not pain. He keeps adding so much lube that it’s a wonder we don’t all slide right off the couch, but it eases his passage until he’s deep inside me.

I’ve done it. Taken the twins at once.

“Jesus fucking Christ, that’s hot,” growls Outlaw. He and Shadow are watching us and stroking themselves. Amazingly, they’re almost fully hard again, but I don’t know that I’ll have anything left for them after this.

I feel so small between them, barely coming up to their chins, but now that I’ve got them both deep, I’m proud to be enough woman for them too.

Lightning moves, just a little, and I gasp. Stretched around them, every little motion is enough to drive me over the edge, and when both of them start moving at once, I nearly black out. I brace myself on Lightning’s chest and try to even push back a little. Despite being twins, they each follow their own rhythm, and it only makes it better. Sometimes they’re almost completely opposite, one pulling out as the other pushes in, but then sometimes they double up and I get both of their full lengths at once, driving the air right out of me.

My core is boiling over, my whole body shaking between them, straight bursts of electricity shooting through me until I’m gasping for breath and curling my toes. And as I adjust to both of them in me at once, and they speed up, I know I’m heading for the big finale, my biggest orgasm of the night. It’s building everywhere. Every little muscle I’ve got is tightening up at once. My brain fogs over as I lose myself in the sensations, and colors burst across the backs of my closed eyelids.

When they both push deep, first Lightning and then Thunder, and start coming inside me, it sets me off too, the final push I needed. I managed to bring both of them off at once, bringing

them fully over the edge, and I scream as the wild rollercoaster I'm on goes over the final climb and rushes down at a thousand miles an hour. And then everything goes hazy.

I must be only out for a moment, because when I come to, I'm still breathing hard and my heart's racing. As Thunder pulls out, and I roll off Lightning, Outlaw and Shadow are right there, groaning as they finish themselves off all over my breasts. "Fuck, I had to," breathes Outlaw, while Shadow only nods, and then we all collapse, exhausted, sprawled wherever there's space. I close my eyes and swirl my fingertip through the slick cum that's all over my breasts, then fall asleep.

I'm woken up by Outlaw with a washcloth, wiping me off. "Hard work being our girl, huh?"

"Yeah, no kidding."

"Any regrets?" He leans in to place a kiss on my lips, while the washcloth moves further down. Honestly, I need a full shower to clean up after all this, but it feels really nice.

I shake my head. "No. Only that you didn't kidnap me earlier."

Shadow, who's returning from the kitchen, still naked as the day he was born, dangling beer bottles between his fingers, laughs. He hands each of us one, and while water would probably be healthier, the beer goes down smooth and cold. "Had we known, we woulda fucking been there. Fucking A."

"Well, we'll just have to make up for lost time," says Lightning, though he sounds beat.

I chuckle. "I'm going to take a raincheck until I can walk straight again." Then I waddle to the shower, sweaty and dripping cum, feeling thoroughly claimed.

HARPER

“COME ON!” EMILY YELLS, DRAGGING ME WITH HER. “MOM’S in labor!”

After a couple of months here, I’ve gotten used to her dragging me around. I’m starting to feel like part of the gang, and now that the Harem Brunch club has started having regular meetings, I’ve gotten to know all of the harem old ladies in the club a lot better. Even Summer a little bit, though with three newborn baby boys, she’s pretty frazzled, even with the help of her guys. I was taken back a little when I found out that one of her guys is also her stepbrother, but two of mine are twins, so maybe there isn’t too much I can say.

We’re on our way to the hospital. Faith’s car is idling with her behind the wheel as Emily tears open the backseat door and shoves me in. Alessa and Kaylee are there already. Emily doesn’t care, shoving me as she squeezes into the car too and slams the door shut. “To the hospital, Jeeves!”

Natalie’s in the front passenger seat, squeezed in with Summer. “We ride!” she yells.

This can’t be legal.

No way I’m going to find the buckles for the belts when we’re four people back here, so I dig my fingers into Faith’s seat and hope we get there in one piece. She drives like she owns the road. No doubt that her father is the president of a motorcycle club. I’m sure we’re safe, but I’ve gotten very partial to how my guys ride, and I’m turning into a horrible backseat driver. I cling harder. Why didn’t we take two cars?

Faith parks across two spaces and jumps out, leading the way. “No time to fix it!” she yells.

We pour into the waiting room in the birthing wing. King, Alpha and Viking are waiting.

“Did we miss it?” Natalie gasps.

King shakes his head, looking at us like we’re crazy. “Nah. Eagle-eye’s in there with her now. Shouldn’t be long, I figure.”

So the seven of us drop into waiting room chairs, and I’m still feeling all jittery from our rush to get here, which makes it hard to sit still and wait.

Have I really only been a part of this for two months? In some ways my life seems calmer than it used to be, and in others it’s just downright crazy. Like when it’s like this. My boys are out on patrol today, otherwise I’m sure they would’ve given me a ride instead of clown car-ing it with Emily. Just the idea that my life is now sometimes staying at home while my four biker men patrol the city is just a little wild for a girl who never seemed to be in the middle of anything exciting.

At least until I very definitely was.

Viking jumps to his feet. “Prez!”

And there he comes, straight-backed and barrel-chested, his one good eye sharp as ever, and with a squirming bundle in his arms. I don’t know if I’ve ever seen a man look so proud.

We pile around him, everyone wanting to get a first look, but in the end we defer to Emily and Faith. It’s their little half-sibling, after all.

“What flavor did you get?” King asks with a laugh.

Eagle-eye grins widely. “Ladies! Fuckheads! I want you to meet Damien. My son!”

Faith runs a finger of the baby’s wrinkled, red face. “Hey little bro.”

Emily smiles. “Can I say hi before going in and checking on Mom?”

Eagle-eye looks at her like she's trying to ride off on his motorcycle after stealing his beer, but he nods. "You break it, you buy it, got it?"

"Yes. Because I've never held a baby before." She takes Damien gently and immediately nuzzles against him. "Hey, little brother. Welcome to the wildest family you'll ever meet. It's going to be awesome."

"Miriam's showering. She was a fucking trooper," Eagle-eye says. "You can come in a little bit and see her, but let the poor girl rest a little, huh? Neither of us are spring chickens anymore. Damien's already beaten a lot of fucking odds to be here."

And then Damien makes the rounds, to Faith, Summer, Alessa, almost everyone, until Kaylee gives him to me.

"Um, I've never—" With just Mom and me, there weren't any babies around. And I lost contact with most of my school friends long before they were baby-making age.

"You'll be fine," says Emily. "Just put him in the crook of your arm like this. Make sure you're supporting the head, and... there you go. Perfect."

I know babies don't really see things this early, but it still feels like he's staring right up at me with those big blue eyes. I think I read somewhere that all babies have blue eyes at birth, but maybe not? I have no idea. But having him right there, close and gurgling now instead of crying, feels strangely comfortable.

"Hey there, little guy. Welcome." I feel a little silly talking to him like that, but everyone else did. "You're going to have the coolest group of uncles you've ever seen, so I hope you're looking forward to it." I give him a little squeeze.

It's still early, just a couple months, but it makes me wonder. Will that be me someday? Holding a little guy or girl that's my own? Our own? It's weird to imagine, but here I am, and the way the guys keep dragging me off for naked fun times, it's probably only a matter of time, given statistics, right?

I can't decide whether it makes me want to put them on break, or hurry home and mount them wherever they sit. Freaking hormones.

"Hey, you going to pass him on, or is this a kidnapping?" asks Natalie.

I shrug, give him a nuzzle on his cute little nose, then hand him over carefully. She grabs him like an expert mom. "I don't know, sometimes kidnappings aren't all bad."

"Ain't that the truth," Emily agrees.



I went a little crazy and wrote a little extra after the deadline, but I've put it on my newsletter so if you [sign up for my newsletter](#), I'll share with you an additional scene that I put together after the book was sent off for publishing.

Thank you so much for reading *Bride for the Bikers*! It was fun to write four bikers again, and I hope you enjoyed reading about Harper finding her Outlaw, Shadow, Thunder and Lightning.

The next *Screaming Eagles* book will star Sledge, Phoenix and Havoc, and it's going to be wild. It'll show up sometime in April, 2024, so keep an eye open!

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

International bestselling author Stephanie Brother writes high heat love stories with a hint of the forbidden. Since 2015, she's been bringing to life handsome, flawed heroes who know how to treat their women. If you enjoy stories involving multiple lovers, including twins, triplets, stepbrothers and their friends, you're in the right place. When it comes to books and men, Stephanie truly believes it's the more, the merrier.

She spends most of her day typing, drinking coffee, and interacting with readers.

Her books have been translated into German, French, and Spanish, and she has hit the Amazon bestseller list in seven countries.