

BROKEN STRINGS



MILA CRAWFORD

Broken Strings

Mila Crawford

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Contents

[Author Notes](#)

[Other Books by Mila Crawford](#)

[Prologue](#)

[Chapter 1](#)

[Chapter 2](#)

[Chapter 3](#)

[Chapter 4](#)

[Chapter 5](#)

[Chapter 6](#)

[Chapter 7](#)

[Chapter 8](#)

[Chapter 9](#)

[Chapter 10](#)

[Chapter 11](#)

[Chapter 12](#)

[Chapter 13](#)

[Chapter 14](#)

[Chapter 15](#)

[Chapter 16](#)

[Chapter 17](#)

[Chapter 18](#)

[Chapter 19](#)

[Chapter 20](#)

[Chapter 21](#)

[Chapter 22](#)

[First Epilogue](#)

[Second Epilogue](#)

[website](#)

For all the good little sluts.

Author Notes

Please be advised that even though this story isn't dark in nature there might be some aspects of this book that will be uncomfortable for some readers.

This book contains.

CA and neglect by parents of both MMC and FFC

Alcohol abuse by a parent.

CNC, Cream Pie Clean up, Rimming, An@l Play, Primal Play, Marking, Degradation, Praise, F!st!ng, Snowballing, Free use, DP, Temperature Play, Impact Play, Breath Play, Spit Play, Biting.

Other Books by Mila Crawford

Park Avenue Elite Series

Cruel Intentions

Forbidden Desires

Your Daddy Does it Better

The Dangerous Sinners Series

Bound Together

Room Twenty-Two

Thicker Than Blood

Hide and Seek

The Mask

Prologue

Cash

*I*nternational pop sensation Cash Leigh is nothing more than a slut.

Okay, so she didn't call me a slut. I believe the words she used were "promiscuous jezebel." The wife of a prominent reverend turned politician wouldn't dare utter the word slut. Two weeks ago, the woman was using one of my songs to push her husband's senate campaign—a campaign I wanted nothing to do with. But when you don't have the rights to your first three albums, you don't get a say in how the songs are used and by whom.

"Come on, Cash. You can't just leave it all behind," my manager, Pete, says as he unpacks everything I've been throwing into the bag.

I follow him, picking up everything and shoving it into the ridiculous fuchsia suitcase with sequins all over it. I'd prefer a plain black suitcase if it were up to me, but Cash Leigh vomits pink everywhere she goes.

Pete grabs the end of a black Neil Young hoodie and tugs to pry it from my grip. "It'll blow over. You know how they are. As soon as they sniff the stench of another scandal, they'll move on, and all this will be yesterday's

news.”

“I’m not sticking around to let the leeches feed off me anymore. If this were DiCaprio, people would’ve already put it behind them. It’s ten times worse for women. Don’t deny it. Apparently, we’re supposed to stay virgins until we marry some jerk and cook and clean for an ungrateful dick for the rest of our lives.”

Pete tilts his head and gazes at me as if I’m road kill on the side of the highway.

The action enrages me. I tug hard on the sweater sleeve and whip it out of his hand. “It doesn’t matter. I’ve hated this shit for years. I wanted to make music that mattered, and instead, I was packaged into a cookie-cutter pop singer to make being a woman palatable to the masses. This shit has been killing my soul for years. There are only so many times I can get up on stage and shake my ass or sing meaningless lyrics about how I need a man.” I put the sweater back in my bag.

“Cash, you’re at the height of your career. You have five number-one hits. We need to keep the momentum. We still have to give the label an answer about when we’re going back into the studio. If you get back to work on the next album, I’m sure all this will be done with when the record drops.”

“What isn’t getting into your thick skull, Pete? They busted me on tape, living out a rape fantasy. No one is forgetting anything.”

“Everyone has already forgotten about the latest Tammy Livingston scandal.”

“I’m not a nepo baby internet celebrity who made a sex tape and married one of the richest rap stars in the industry. She wasn’t America’s sweetheart, caught on camera doing unsavory things. I’m sure the Karens have already worn out their pearls from clutching them so hard.”

I shake my head. Poor Pete. After twenty years in the industry, he's still green around the gills when it comes to double standards. In the music business, men can do anything, say anything, and act without sounding alarms. A female has a bad hair day, and it's the end of her career.

They caught me on tape fucking a thrusting dildo machine and licking a paid hooker's shoe while he called me a slut. I should count my lucky stars that it wasn't worse because that guy was tame. To be honest, they're all tame. I say harder, and all they do is pull my hair. I tell them I want to be degraded, and the only word they think to use is "slut." It's anticlimactic. You'd think a professional sex worker would get the job done. It makes me wonder what a girl has to do to be fucked like a rag doll and humiliated like trash.

"No one is going to let this go. I mean, look at what happened to poor Britney, and she's done nothing near as bad as those tapes."

"What about the European tour?" Pete looks pale. I would be, too, if my main cash cow suddenly wanted to jump ship and run. Maybe all this is a blessing in disguise.

"Cancel it. I'm not signing another deal with the record company. If they want me, they need to let me shed this bubble gum image they've saddled me with and be me. I'm sure no one would've batted an eyelash if they didn't manufacture bullshit to satisfy the ideals of rich suburban housewives. If the record company wants me back in the studio, they need to let me record my own songs. No more singing pop songs about being a girl written by a fifty-year-old man."

Pete throws his hands over his head and paces like a caged wild animal. He walks back and forth a lot when things aren't going his way. "I told you not to use that agency. What was wrong with the guys from Girl's Best Friend? They were discrete. In two years, none of this shit happened with them. They're vetted. This other company wasn't. You have an image. Using any

old business was an idiotic move, Cash.”

I can almost see the panic rolling off him in violent waves. He’s telling me how stupid I am, and I feel bad for him. I hate that I do, but here we are again, me sacrificing what I need to make others feel better. “I need some time, Pete. A minimum of three weeks. I need to get away from all this and clear my head. Figure out what I want. I’ve lived this life for others for a long time. At some point, don’t I get to live it for me?”

Pete has the decency to appear sheepish. He casts his eyes down and sighs loudly. “Where are you going?”

“I’m not telling you.” I zip my suitcase and pull it off the bed.

“Cash, you need to tell me where you’re going. What if there’s an emergency?” His question comes out as a whine.

I’m disgusted with myself for the years I let myself be talked into meaningless hit after meaningless hit in exchange for the giant paychecks rolling into my account. I’m frustrated at denying who I am for the pleasure of others. Ignoring my desires to appease a public that won’t care less about me as soon as I stop giving them what they crave. But most of all, I’m upset that I’ve abandoned what I love for fading fame and a spotlight that shines on me in ways I never wanted.

When I started in this business, I played for two people and my heart soared when my music touched them.

But then I sold out, grateful for the life-changing funds that turned my world on its head.

I don’t regret my decisions. They were right at the time and helped my family in ways we’d never dreamt of. My pop career paid my mother’s medical bills when she got sick. Something I could never do without singing about getting

the boy as I shook my ass on stage.

When my mother died, I needed money to support my younger siblings. I was all they had.

After a time, I had more money than I knew what to do with, and I was empty inside. So, I filled it up with dull parties and mediocre sex. Sex that was always utterly boring, men who thought pleasing a woman was about getting on top of her and thrusting pathetically a few times until they came. I had a few lovers who had taken their time. They were gentle and eager to please, but I could never get off no matter what they did.

Until that one guy who was so fucked out of his mind that he flung me around like a rag doll and fucked me like I was trash. That guy made me come like Niagara Falls. I found out later that he was the bass player's coke dealer, which made him off-limits for an encore. One thing I stay away from is addicts, and that's a rule I'll never break.

This scandal has shown me one thing. This isn't the career I want. I want my words to mean something. I want to touch people. I want my music to have a tangible impact on their lives.

"You don't need to know anything. I don't have to give the record executives my answer until next month. You can give me three weeks to figure my shit out." I look Pete in the eye, needing him to know the days when he could run me like a puppet are long gone.

I pull my suitcase off the door, lift the handle, and walk out. Once I'm outside in the fresh air with the scent of freedom, I can finally breathe for the first time in a long time.

Chapter One

Gunner

“**Y**ou playin’ a tune?” Billy, one of the regulars, asks.

I clear his glass and clean the liquid mess he’s made on the bar counter.

“Nah, man. Think I’m gonna skip it tonight. You want another?” I hold up the bottle of Scotch.

Billy nods. I’ve never seen him turn down booze. The man has to be rolled out of the bar most nights, but he’s harmless and doesn’t give the servers any grief. I pour him another and walk away.

The crowd’s decent, and the drinks are flowing. Nights like these keep the doors open.

“They come here hoping to see your mom,” Madeline, the server, says as she grabs two beers and places them on her tray.

I know she’s right. Since my mom made an impromptu appearance and sang a few months back, people have been coming in droves. Everyone wants to see the famous country singer who became an agoraphobe. She’s not really

an agoraphobe, but you gotta spin it somehow. They have no idea what she's like. They only remember the big hair and funny one-liners. My mom was something in her prime, and her ability to work a crowd like a fiddle was her greatest gift. But she made some poor decisions, and combined with an addiction to pills and alcohol, everything crumbled beneath her.

“Happy to serve them drinks and take their money, but they shouldn't hold their breath.” I pass Madeline and continue my inventory count, hoping that will end any questions that may pop up.

I should be at ease because of everyone who works at the bar, Madeline is the best at understanding cues. She rarely sticks her nose where it doesn't belong and doesn't linger for too long.

“Order more Canadian beer, Molson. These college kids have dubbed the stuff as liquid gold,” Madeline calls, changing the subject as she walks away.

“If you're gonna be a snob, at least know what excellent beer is,” I mumble. Stupid kids take one trip to Banff to ski, and the sun rises and shines on Molson Canadian, the shittiest beer Canada offers.

“I agree. Alexander Keith's, please,” a sweet voice says from behind me.

Turning, I'm hit with a ton of bricks to my chest. Standing before me is the most stunning girl I've ever seen. She has the face of an angel, with luminous, rich bronze skin. My eyes travel down her slamming body. The girl has enough curves to occupy me for days, and I mean *days*.

Every inch of her is female perfection. A fucking work of art. Her huge tits pushed up, her midriff top displaying her sexy-as-sin belly. Just enough flesh showing to make my pants grow a little tight and my mouth water.

Damn, it's been a long-ass time since I looked at a woman like this. Sure, I've banged—a lot. But I've never met a woman and immediately wanted to

bury myself so deep that she'd scream for days.

"My eyes are up here, buddy," she says, snapping her fingers and taking me out of my lust-filled fog.

"And they're beautiful, but not your only admirable asset."

"You gonna get me my drink, or am I going somewhere else to get served?"

I smirk and lean over the bar, holding her gaze for a moment before I speak. "You could go down the street, but Buddy is sixty years old, and I reckon his service won't be as satisfactory as mine."

I expect her to blush, but the girl crosses her arms and leans on the bar. "So far, the only service I've had here is lip service."

My eyes fall to her plump lips, and I lose all train of thought. All I can focus on is how hard my dick is and how much I'd like to bite into her perfect tits.

I bark out a laugh. "Coming right up."

I walk to the fridge and grab her the cold brew. I slide the bottle to her on the bar, trying to keep my eyes off her tits. I don't want to seem too eager. "You new to these parts? I haven't seen you before," I ask, cleaning a glass and attempting to appear aloof—cool, even.

"Yes. I'm here on vacation."

Her voice has a soft, raspy lull that makes my cock pound. I didn't know a girl's voice could be such a fucking turn-on. But my dick's throbbing so hard that she may as well have her lips wrapped around it.

She scans the room as if searching for something, her eyes darting from one dark corner to another. That alone makes me a little suspicious of her. With the beer in one hand, she adjusts the hood of her black sweater with the other, pulling it above her eyes.

I stiffen. Hot girls like her usually come to the bar desperate for attention, but not this girl. She wants to blend into the furniture. The last girl who did that was a reporter for Rolling Stones Magazine. The bitch arrived, sweet as pie, getting close to everyone, including me, to get dirt on my mother.

“Odd place to vacation. Not much to do around these parts.” I watch, impressed, as she pounds her beer back.

Ignoring my question, she slides the bottle toward me. “I’ll have another.”

“Better slow down. The night is young. I would hate to peel that pretty ass of yours off the floor, darlin’.” I hand her another Keith’s.

“I’m a big girl. Don’t you worry your pretty little head about it, *darlin’*.” Her eyes wander to the small stage at the corner of the bar. “I hear it’s open mic night tonight?”

Bingo. The bitch is here for my mother. Why else would she scan the room like a damn lion searching for prey?

My jaw clenches, and I grip the bar rag, smoothing the disdain from my face. “Every Tuesday. You sing?”

A cocky grin splits her lips, making me feel like I’ve missed an inside joke. “I’ve dabbled here or there.”

She sips her beer, tracing the tip with her tongue and making my balls constrict in my jeans. I fucking hate how much I want to bend her over the bar and split her open until she begs me for more. This girl’s probably here to ruin my life, yet my balls want to unload in her warmth. Maybe I can bang this chick and get her out of town before she does any serious damage. Two birds with one stone.

She digs in her pocket and slams a fifty on the bar before marching toward a table hidden at the back. I can’t help but notice her thick ass as she saunters

away.

“It’s only five bucks for the beer,” I holler at her back, but she doesn’t even acknowledge me.

Chapter Two

C *ash*

I tap the mic, clearing my throat softly as I settle into the dim corner stage of the local bar. It feels like home. Even though I've been performing in sold-out stadiums for the last few years, this is where my heart formed—a guitar in my hands and a semi-drunk crowd barely paying me any attention. Moments like this have a beauty I've never experienced in a theater. I'll never silence a crowd that's there for me.

I strum the chords on the weathered guitar, sucking in a breath before singing the opening line of a classic country song.

My grandma hummed “Wild Roses” to me plenty of summer nights under the stars, her gentle arms around me as she lulled me to sleep. Grandma loved music of all kinds. She filled my head with stories of her life as a traveling musician when she and Grandpa were first married before the babies came.

It's no wonder I still sing this song, only with my unique slow twist on the familiar lyrics. I begged the record label to get the music rights to the song so I could add it to my last album, but they refused, claiming it wasn't consistent with my brand. These classic country melodies are more my brand than

anything the label makes me record. It's the music that formed me, entrenched in my childhood, and imprinted in my DNA.

The lyrics transport me to memories filled with sorrow and joy, something my current music could never do. The words bring back the smell of apple pie baking in my grandma's kitchen and her tinkling laugh as I kiss her wrinkled cheek.

The sweet chords spin through my fingers with the help of muscle memory. The energy in the room grows with every passing beat until the audience sings along to the final chorus. Their voices are a euphonic symphony echoing through the bar.

This surprise little rendition of a classic tune would likely hit the news cycle before the morning if this were a bar in Brooklyn. But as I scan the crowd, no one whispers or points. I'm just a regular girl with chops. It feels fantastic to merge with the crowd and sing simply because it fuels my heart with joy.

The last note of "Wild Roses" fades, and I set the guitar against the stool. People push closer to the stage as I stand. They cheer and clap as I descend the stairs into the anonymity of the crowd. I nod and smile my way to the bar, surprised to find a lineup of shots waiting for me from appreciative audience members.

I thank them for their generosity but refuse to take a sip. Hard liquor and I don't mix. It took some time to realize. I used alcohol to escape the things I'd rather forget, but those unhealthier phases of my life are in the past, and I'm a beer-only girl now.

I turn to the hot bartender and blush under his heated stare before asking him for another Keith's. He doesn't appear to fit the aesthetic of a small town with his black jeans, *My Bloody Valentine* T-shirt, and steel-toed combat boots. The guy stands out like a punk rocker at the Grand Ole Opry.

The bartender uncaps my bottle, settling it in front of me. “You sounded good up there.”

“Thanks.” I tip the bottle to my lips, letting the liquid coat my throat, yearning for its comfort. Good ol’ liquid courage.

“Only heard one other person sing that song live.” His blue eyes narrow on me, his head tilted like he’s searching for a greater truth than I’m willing to bare for the masses.

I recognize the gleam in his eye, having been exposed to it my entire career. Vultures surrounding me disguised as reporters. Relentless. He’d make an excellent reporter. The guy seems to mistrust everyone and everything. And damn if he doesn’t look delicious doing it.

My gaze travels over the day-old stubble at his rough-cut jaw, the slightly long hair that curls at his ears, and the wide stretch of his muscled shoulders, strong enough to hold a girl like me down without breaking a sweat. And those hands. Those large hands covered in tattoos and sexy-as-sin veins could wrap around my neck until I passed out. I shake my head to clear the fog of rough sex with this random stranger staring at me with so much contempt.

“You sure you haven’t been here before?” The slight southern twang of his words does things deep in my stomach. *Wonder what he’d sound like, choking me with his dick and calling me his dirty little whore?*

I swallow the ball of nerves stuck in my throat and ignore the wetness between my legs. “First night here.”

I tip my beer at him before taking it to my lips, needing to wet my dry throat.

“Well, it may surprise you to know that it’s not the first time I’ve heard that song in my bar.”

I arch an eyebrow, my curiosity piqued. “That doesn’t surprise me at all.”

The lie trips off my tongue because it was my least popular song and released on a B-sides album. Most people heard it for the first time twenty years after it was written. “It’s a fantastic song by one of country music’s legends.”

“Is that so?” He moves closer, icy blue eyes assessing me shrewdly.

“Yup.” I pop my P to annoy him.

It must work because his jaw ticks.

“Hafta say, barkeep, your interest in the song makes you slightly more interesting.” I shoot him a fake grin and finish the rest of my beer. “Mind grabbing me another?”

His lip twitches, and his mouth curves into a cocky smile before he snags another beer from behind the bar. He pops the cap on the edge of the old wood and hands it to me without breaking my gaze.

I press the chilled glass to my lips and draw the cool, sweaty moisture across my cupid’s bow before licking my lips. All the time focused on the bright blue intensity of his irises. “Bottom’s up, sweetheart.”

A single drip escapes down my neck, tickling at the hollow before disappearing between my generous cleavage. The icy rivulet does nothing to cool my flaming skin. It may well be his finger dragging down the length of my naked body while his hand grips my throat. All I can focus on is being held under his boot as he fucks my ass without mercy. My brain works overtime, imagining how he’d make me his bitch and demand I call him Daddy. The thought has me hotter than an erupting volcano.

My mind is in a trance, flooded by dirty thoughts, so I don’t notice how close he is until his mouth grazes my earlobe.

“I’ll tell my mama you did her song proud.”

Chapter Three

Gunner

“**Y**ou’re Loretta Shaw’s son?” the pretty little thing asks, her lips forming a perfect O.

No idea why I told her who my mother was. It’s something I avoid telling people because as soon as they know, they’re determined to unravel my whole life. They’re enthralled at gaining access to the private side of someone they’ve listened to on the radio their entire lives. But something about this girl makes me want to impress her and tell her anything to keep her near me.

She smiles wistfully. “She was my grandmother’s favorite. I learned to play the guitar with her songs. Your mother set the soundtrack for my childhood. I bawled my eyes out to ‘Deserted’ when my first boyfriend dumped me. The goal was to have a career like hers.”

I’ve seen a lot of acts that had the chops but didn’t have the luck. It irks me that this little thing believes her two or three years of trying meant she was out of luck. She’s hot enough to snag a record deal. Long black hair, large warm eyes, giant tits that would be the highlight of any boy’s wet dream and,

fuck, those curves. She's full-figured, and her sinful curves draw my eyes like metal to a magnet.

Her looks would be enough to get her on the Billboard 100, but her voice... she sings like an angel. I've never heard a voice as smooth as hers. She could compete with the greats, including my mother. Shit, the way she sang 'Wild Roses' was something else. The song was a damn weapon when paired with her sultry notes. My cock was so hard that I was concerned I'd burst out of my jeans and get arrested for indecent exposure.

"Yeah, well, she wasn't a walk in the park," I say, taking a swig of my beer and locking eyes with hers.

I hate how people talk about my mom as if she's a saint incapable of doing no wrong. Country music's little sweetheart. The woman who smiles and says "darlin'" and people let her get away with any damn thing.

She glances away, a pretty pink hue blooming on her skin. What would she look like beneath me, my hand wrapped around her delicate neck? I bet I'd come hard fucking her how I want to fuck a girl. I usually hold back, but the need to put this girl in her place has me reeling.

My gaze travels down her tempting flesh, and I smile, contemplating how pretty her skin would look with my teeth marks decorating it like tattoos. "I didn't intend to make you blush, darlin', but damn if it doesn't look good on you."

She straightens, giving me a steely glare, her smokey eyes burning and slicing through me like a chef's knife through butter. I have no idea what's so different about this girl, but she makes me crave things—depraved things. My life's fucking complicated, and I suspect she's about to completely blow it up.

"So, where are you from?" I ask, trying to sound casual.

“New York, but I was born in Alabama. New York has been home for the last five years.”

“You’re far from New York City. How’d you hear about this dive?”

She picks at the beer label on her bottle. Her nails are long and perfectly painted. Will they leave half-moons when she digs them into my skin and begs for me to fuck her senseless? I bet she’s a screamer. If she isn’t, she will be once I have my way with her.

“Picked it out on a map and found a town. Never heard of this place, so I figured it was a good choice. I wanted something small, like where I grew up. I needed something quiet with a slower pace.” She gazes around the bar, taking in her surroundings. “If this is the town’s hot spot, I’m in the right place.”

“My mother ran away too. Ended up here ten years ago, except she was running away from Nashville. I get why she wanted a clean break, but why are you running away? Mommy and Daddy cut you off? Your rich New York City boyfriend bought you the wrong present?”

I said the wrong thing because the sexy little kitten morphs into a predatory tiger. She gets up so fast that her chair barrels over behind her. Her pretty eyes zero in on me, and she glares with pure venom. I smile at her anger. How hot will that fiery anger burn when she’s panting beneath me?

“You know what, buddy? Screw you. You don’t have the first clue about my life. Let’s also not talk about being born with silver spoons in our mouths. I’m sure being the son of Loretta Shaw meant you didn’t want for anything in life. You’re what? Thirty? Her biggest hits were a decade before you were born.” She doesn’t wait for me to answer. She turns around and shows me her ass, making me feel like one.

“Hey, wait up!” I call, chasing after her.

I'm ready to give the spoiled princess a piece of my mind. She doesn't understand shit about my life or what I've been through. Did I grow up with money? Sure, but money doesn't keep you warm at night and doesn't mean a fuck when it's the only thing you've got.

I grab her elbow, forcing her to turn and face me. A fierce fire now fuels the eyes that were so soft not too long ago. I've seen that fire before in my mother's eyes when she realized she was everyone's toy—used and discarded by anyone who claimed to give two shits about her. Forcing her to realize that she'd sacrificed her best years for the record executives and a revolving door of men who made her a commodity and not a real person.

“I'm sorry.” Three words I rarely utter, but I mean them wholeheartedly.

“It's frustrating when people assume they know me.” Her hard eyes level on me. “You don't have a clue about me. You have no idea what my life is like. I'm twenty-five years old, and my entire life has been mapped out since I was twelve. You have any concept of what it's like to be responsible for those who are supposed to take care of you? I've been taking care of my family for ten years. Everything I do is for them. It doesn't matter what I want or what I need. God forbid I try to unwind or do something that lets me escape for thirty minutes. I can't create, think, or love. I can't even fuck the way I want. I didn't come here because my life was too easy. I came here because my life was too fucking hard. And I don't need you or anyone else telling me who or what I am.”

The longer her monologue continues, the bigger my smile.

“What the fuck are you smiling at? This isn't funny.”

“No, you're right, this isn't funny, but you're sexy as sin when you're mad.”

She looks outraged. “Are you hitting on me?”

“We could start with dinner. I’m off tomorrow night. Pick you up at seven. I assume you’re staying at the Holiday Inn.”

“You’re arrogant, you know that?”

Heat radiates between us as I move to stand in front of her. Her breathing increases when I dip my mouth next to her ear. “Not arrogant, darlin’. Confident,” I whisper. “Besides, I’m pretty sure my brand of cocky is something you’ll be screaming for. So how about you give me your name?”

“Cashleigh...but most people call me Cash.”

“Cash isn’t the name I would have chosen for you. A pretty little thing like you shouldn’t have a name that hard.”

She smiles and pushes her body against mine. “Looks can deceive darlin’, especially when this pretty little thing likes it hard.”

“Hard is something I can do better than those pathetic NYC boys you’re used to, darlin’.”

Chapter Four

C *ash*

“**A**nd that’s supposed to mean what...?” My breathy reply betrays my rattling heart.

His blue eyes watch me intently, making my stomach flip in the most obscene way. I’ve never been so irritated and turned on by another human being.

“You sing like a sparrow.” He slips strands of my hair between his fingers like he’s flipping the conversation, sending cartwheels cascading through me. “And are a helluva lot prettier than anyone I’ve ever laid eyes on.”

Keep it together, Cas.

“So pretty that I can’t help but think of all the ways I’d like to unravel every perfect little inch of you, revealing all the ugly you try to hide from the world. I’ll make you belt out my name like it’s the last song you’ll ever sing.”

His lips hover a breath from mine, and his sexy blue eyes dance across the angles of my face. He pauses, licking his lips before a cocky grin turns up the

corners of his perfectly full mouth.

“You’re one cocky son of a bitch.”

“I told you, darlin’, I’ve got cocky down pat. There’s so much cock that I don’t think your pretty little ass will handle it.” His fingertips blaze a trail down my waist, whispering under the edge of my waistband. I clamp my eyes shut. His other hand slips against my bottom before his lips connect with mine. “I’m giving you a sample, darlin’, and by the looks of you, you’re itching for more.”

He probes my lips open, tasting me in defiant strokes before his hands are on my skin, eating up the distance between my hips and my breasts, never quite touching where my body is begging for his caress.

“Wouldn’t you rather know how cocky I am right now?” His words hold a teasing lilt, and his eyes sparkle as he taunts and teases me.

He makes me want to buckle like a damsel in distress only to be caught in his muscular arms. He bites his bottom lip as he watches me, like a starved wolf, and I’m the little rabbit he wants to take a chunk out of.

“Mind telling me your name now you’ve had your body and lips plastered against mine?” I ask, mustering my steeliest glare. I want to be infuriated. I want to slap his pretty, smug face. But the bigger part of me wants to have that body and lips on me again until I forget everyone and everything and melt into oblivion.

“I don’t enjoy telling people my name.”

“Well, I don’t like to kiss strange men,” I lie, because I do like to kiss this man, perhaps a little too much.

“It’s Gunner Shaw, but my friends call me Gunner.”

“Well, Gunner Shaw, I can’t imagine you’ve ever kept a damn thing to yourself, despite what anyone else has to say about it.” I catch the door handle behind my back, pushing it open and ducking into the cool night air.

“Can’t decide if I like you comin’ my way or walkin’ away better.” He catches me in his arms, spinning me until I’m pressed against him again.

“What are you, the Shakespeare of cavemen now?”

“Me, Tarzan, you, Jane?” His words make me laugh before his grip on my elbows presses me tight against the slab of his well-built physique.

This time, I feel all of him. And he’s hard *everywhere*. The man isn’t lying; he puts the cock in cocky. I should be outraged, but the truth is, I’m far from it. I’m so turned on that I’m willing to suck his dick in the alley and thank him for the opportunity. Better yet if he turns on that Tarzan charm and drags me there screaming by my hair.

With the ridge of his thick monster cock pressed against my belly, I nearly come unglued in the bar parking lot. Something about the naughtiness of it makes me squirm.

“I’ve never banged a groupie before,” I pant like a cat in heat.

I’ve spent a lot of lonely nights on the road and never dreamed of sharing a minute off-stage with anyone—too much drama banging a band member and way too much publicity banging a fan. That was one reason I hired professionals. Money traded hands, and I purchased a service. It was clean with no lingering complications.

But Gunner Shaw makes me crave all the obstacles he could lay in my path.

“What a coincidence. I’ve never banged one of my mom’s groupies, either.” His large, tattooed hand moves up my body and curls behind my nape, pulling my head back. “Guess there’s a first time for everything. Now, why

don't you stop fighting and let me take care of you?"

"News flash, Tarzan... This Jane has been taking care of herself for a long time. Your services aren't needed." I want to kick myself as soon as the words pass my lips. Mostly because his grin deepens with every word, and spirals of desire twine through my stomach like a vine of rose thorns until I'm dizzy with the proximity of his vast form.

"You're a real piece of work, Gunner Shaw." I'm so frustrated that I want to scream. This guy has been teasing me all night, and my slut vagina is weeping from lack of attention.

"And still"—he lifts his arm in the air, tipping my phone back and forth in the moonlight and swiping to my *information* screen—"got your number."

"You're so arrogant," I stammer, my eyes shifting between Gunner and my phone. "How did you get that?"

"I'll take that as a compliment." His grin deepens as he takes a quick picture with his phone before sliding mine back into the ass pocket he found it in. "I learned to pickpocket for shits and giggles as a teenager. Never actually stole something; I just played around to see if I could do it without getting caught. Cheap Thrills." He smirks, highlighting the deep dimples on his perfect face. "First lesson: never trust a bartender."

"You mean men," I scoff. "Maybe you're a psycho stalker, and I'm not interested in giving you my personal information." He doesn't have to know that I was thinking of giving him more than my phone number.

"That's a lot of damn thinking, Sparrow."

I clear my throat, choosing to ignore his stubborn-ass grin.

His tone lowers. "You forget I'm a bartender, darlin', and my job requires me to read people like a book."

I swallow. “What did you read about me? That I think you’re an insufferable ass?”

“Nah. What I think you need is someone to take control. To dirty up this princess facade you’ve got going on and make you beg for a little satisfaction.”

His words hit me like a blunt force trauma because every syllable is the truth. I’ve been trying to stay in control of my whole life. The truth is, I’m tired. I don’t want to *think* or *do*. I just want to mindlessly *be*. Sex allows me to do this, if only for a few hours. Sweet relief that lets me shut out the world and all my issues. With sex, I can be worthless. Somewhere along the way, the sex I crave has left my skin bruised and my muscles tired. I enjoy being chased, thrown around, and having my hair pulled so hard it’s almost ripped from its roots. I long for a man to use me, to push my limits, and take whatever he wants. The more aggressive the sex, the more undone I become. But most of all, I want to be called names— dirty, horrible names. Names that would make most of society clutch their pearls and think I was nothing more than trash.

The whole point of coming here is to escape the pressure and desires burning inside me. I love music. It’s embedded in the fabric of who I am, but my career is stripping me of my sense of self, causing me to lie and force my desires into the shadows. This trip is about re-discovering myself and learning to fuel my passions without worrying about anyone else’s needs. To get away from it all: the pressure, the leaches at my door waiting for their next story, and the endless work schedule. This trip is about finding my music again, not satiating my sexual cravings. But with Gunner standing in front of me, perhaps a little pleasure wouldn’t be the end of the world.

Why does he make me want impossible things? Gunner isn’t part of the deal. I didn’t come here expecting to find a handsome stranger to get lost in. Then

again, I've never been able to get lost in anything. Even the prostitutes I hired lacked something. There was no passion, just a means to end.

How am I supposed to be a talented songwriter if I don't live a little? Excellent songs are about animalistic sex, fueled with passion, love, heartache, loss, and the abundant beauty of life. My life so far is living in a studio or the back of a tour bus managed by men who care nothing for me, only what I can bring to their pocketbooks.

Gunner's broad arms cage me in, and his chest presses against mine as the cool hood of the car radiates through my thighs. "Bet you'd whimper like a newborn kitten if I pushed you to your knees and shoved my cock between those pretty lips and down your throat," he breathes against my neck.

"You know, it's a little creepy that you want a girl who sang your mother's song to suck your dick. Talk about serious mommy issues."

"Don't you worry, darlin'. I won't be calling you Mommy while I fuck you into oblivion." His large hand grips my throat, making my panties instantly wet. "It'll be you screaming for Daddy to make you come."

This man's definitely daddy material.

"Oh, God." I lose all notion of reality as his scent overwhelms my senses.

"New rule." He sinks his fingers into my hair, grasping my neck and pulling my lips to his. "Don't cry out for God when I'm balls deep inside you. He can't satisfy a girl like you."

"You're so arrogant."

"We've already established that. But it's not God's name I want to hear on your lips when my head is between your thighs for the first time." His tongue does a slow drag across the seam of my mouth before he nips at my bottom lip and grabs my ass. "I want to hear 'Yes, yes, yes! Harder, Tarzan! Tear

Janes, tight little pussy apart, Tarzan.’”

“You’re delusional. You can’t tell when a woman isn’t interested.”

He barks a laugh. “Oh, Sparrow, your pussy is so wet that you need to change your panties.”

“I do not,” I lie.

He dips his head to my neck, and my stomach flutters as he places chaste kisses along my pulse point. Gunner moves his hand, easing over my belly as he dips his fingers into the front of my pants and grazes my clit. “I don’t like being lied to, darlin’. You want to take back the words, or shall I show you how wide you’ll open these sexy ass legs for me?”

I shake my head. The intensity of his words, the way they match my stubborn desires, shake every single part of my being.

“I rented a house on the lake,” I confess, equal parts terrified and exhilarated at the idea of seeing him again. At the thought of him knowing where to find me.

“The big one with the copper gates?”

I nod, unable to form words as the hard length of his dick tightens and twitches against my stomach, and his fingertips brush against my cotton-covered clit. I gulp, wondering what it would be like to take a man like him—so big, virile, and manly—into my mouth.

“How about I pick you up at sunrise?”

“Excuse me?” I haven’t seen the sun rising in what feels like...forever.

He cracks a cocky grin. “Meet you at the copper gates at sunrise, Sparrow.”

“Wait, why? And what time is sunrise?”

He's already backing away, his cocky grin deepening and causing every raw nerve in my body to throb for him. "Trust me... The Robertson's Roadster will let you know."

Five in the fucking morning. That's when I hear the engine rumbling off that damn roadster. Classic cars. I never understood why men love them. They're obnoxiously loud. I attempt to muffle the roar by tossing a pillow over my head. Making noise this early in the morning should be a felony indictment. No trial, no possibility of bail, just a clear-cut jail sentence.

I was eight years old the last time I was up this early. My body sure as shit isn't used to it. I'm usually heading to bed at this time. It's bad enough that I couldn't sleep last night because of the peace surrounding me. I'd rather hear sirens blaring through the night than a zillion crickets chorusing.

I was taken in by the brochure. When I first saw it, I thought this place was a haven—serene and relaxing. That Roadster and the crickets—not relaxing.

You'd be relaxed if Gunner had fucked you like a cheap whore all night.

I scream into my pillow, hating how flustered and frustrated that man makes me. From the moment he stepped into my orbit, it's been like I've been aimlessly wandering in the abyss. My goals sidestepped for a hot tattooed bartender dick.

Standing under the shower two minutes later, I wash my hair and scrub my body. I've always loved water—it cleanses my mind and leaves me at peace. It's the only time my brain completely shuts down and I can be myself, my thoughts uninterrupted.

I stand under the spray, letting the water scald my skin. The sting is rejuvenating, washing the garbage of my life away. My mother's voice

disappears beneath the hot spray. The pressure of ensuring she had everything she needed when she was alive melts away, along with the weight of her health care while she underwent treatment. The guilt of my father leaving her in poverty with three young children and the worry of taking care of my younger siblings so they never have to live in fear like I did.

As soon as that record executive heard me sing at the karaoke bar, my mother saw a paycheck in place of her daughter. I wasn't mad at my mother. For the most part, she protected me, but she wasn't a mom—she was a manager. But she was a manager who ensured I was safe.

Unlike others who put their kids in danger by letting them play dress up and attend bars with men old enough to be their grandfathers, my mom ensured I did my homework and ate properly. She didn't push me to grow up too fast just to produce music so we never experienced poverty again. I don't blame her. I was our family's hope to escape our circumstances and experience security.

Twenty-five, and I've never done something just for fun. Everything is for my mother's agenda. During our last conversation, she told me I was crazy for walking away from a multi-million-dollar record contract. At this point in the game, money means nothing.

I miss her with every fiber of my being, but a part of me is relieved that I'm free of my jail cell. With her gone, I finally got rid of the shackles she placed on me. Fuck, that makes me a horrible person, but it's hard to be a loving daughter when your life belonged to your mother.

I have more money now than I can spend in three lifetimes. My sister will have the freedom to be who she is. Jude will do what she wants, not what others tell her.

I turn off the shower and get dressed. When I run downstairs fifteen minutes

later, I stop in my tracks. Leaning against the doorframe in a leather jacket, a white T-shirt, and faded blue jeans is Gunner Shaw.

Chapter 5

Gunner

“**T**his is a little insane.” Cash’s eyes are wide on the windshield of the Roadster as we make our way along the cliffside road.

“Everything I do is a little insane. It’s part of my charm.” I wink at her. She looks good nestled in the passenger seat of my car like she’s meant to be there. The girl is so beautiful that she takes my damn breath away, and women rarely turn my head. “Besides, if you haven’t seen the sunrise from the top of a mountain in a classic sports car, you haven’t lived.”

“Is that so?” She looks out her window, worry tracing her features.

I rub a hand absently over my chest because her uncertain look cuts straight to my heart like a knife. The emotion is foreign because, other than my mother, I’ve never cared how a woman felt in my entire damn life. My transactions with them have been brief, two people mutually agreeing to use each other to scratch an itch. I want to scratch every part of Cash, but I also want to know everything about her. What makes her happy, and what makes her tick.

“We’re almost there,” I say, tempted to pull over and fuck her until the only thing in her pretty little head is the afterglow of a mind-altering orgasm.

“Oh, my God.” Her mouth opens, and her eyes widen as we turn into the eastern horizon. The clouds part, and the first streaks of morning light peek through, settling on the planes of her face. I pull into the first spot and turn off the ignition.

“This is stunning.”

“The most spectacular view I’ve ever seen.” My eyes are on her. “Come over here.”

Her head turns to me, surprise turning to a smile as she realizes I’ve brought a few warm blankets and throw pillows from my apartment. “I’ve seen the sun rise plenty of times, but I’ve never had a morning date before.”

Pleasure warms her voice and sends lightning bolts of desire to my dick. I’ve had trouble controlling my body’s reaction to her from the second her eyes landed on mine, but having her so damn close in my space is another kind of hell entirely. A fucking sexy kind. If I don’t fuck her soon, my balls may go from blue to purple to withering right off.

“Glad to pop your morning cherry.”

“It’s the only cherry you’ll be popping,” she says with a wide smile on her striking face. Her skin turns a shade of pink as she giggles uncomfortably and swats at my chest. “Why are you up so early, anyway? Didn’t you close the bar?”

“Do it every night. Or morning.” I shrug, playing with a strand of her hair. “Haven’t slept yet, actually. Most nights, I watch the sun come up with a cup of coffee and a guitar in my hand. I write best at night.”

“You write music?” Her voice lifts in surprise.

“Have since I was a kid. Kind of hard not to when your mom is Loretta Shaw.”

“Do you sing too?”

“Not if I don’t have to. I can hold a tune, but I don’t have that performer gene Mama has. Writing music is where my talents lie. It helps me decompress and figure out my life. I guess you could say it’s cheap therapy. I also don’t have a television or an iPad or anything like that, so—”

“Wait, you don’t watch TV?”

I shake my head.

“I don’t think I’ve ever met someone who doesn’t own a television.”

“When you aren’t stuck in front of a television, you learn to appreciate genuine beauty,” I say, looping my fingers through hers. “Trust me, there are so many better things in life than technology. Besides, I’ve spent a good chunk of my life hating reporters. Fuckin’ bloodthirsty leeches.”

“It must be nice,” she murmurs, moving her fingers away and clutching her water bottle.

I snag her wrist, pulling the underside to my lips and lavishing it with tender kisses. She shudders softly, and somehow, every sensation running on a current in her body jumps into my veins.

“Damn, if it doesn’t seem like we’re connected somehow...” I slip a thumb down the angle of her cheekbone. “Every look you give me shoots electricity through my system.” My lips press closer to her ear. “You’ve got me thinking about so many sinful things. I should’ve brought some holy water to cleanse my mind of every sinfully decadent thing I want to do to your body.”

“Oh?” Her one-word reply is soft and wispy.

I trail my fingertips up her arm, and she relaxes under my caress. The scent of her is fucking intoxicating. My mind spins. A feral need to ravish and possess her rises within me, to bury myself so deep that neither of us will know where the other begins and ends. “I’m a vigorous man, Sparrow. A man who prides himself on discipline and control, but when I’m with you, I’m like a wild animal. I don’t want to just fuck you, Cash. I want to consume you. Have you under me begging for mercy. It’s fucked up.”

“Gunner,” my name slips from her lips like a moan.

I trail my hand down her body, pulling her shirt down with her bra to expose her full tits. I pull back, my knuckles whitening as I grip the steering wheel and gaze at the horizon. “You need a safe word.”

“Fever.”

She responds so quickly that I’m taken aback. People usually ask what a safe word is or look confused, but not my sparrow.

I tilt my head, focusing on her pretty face. “Do you know what that is?”

“A safe word? Yes.”

My body relaxes. This won’t be a drawn-out conversation. “What are your hard limits?”

“No golden showers, no scat. Not into knives and don’t want to be shared. No vomit. I mostly like to be degraded, and I have fantasies...” She trails off and lowers her gaze.

“What fantasies?” I coax.

My hungry gaze devours her as she adjusts her bra and covers herself. I don’t like it. I hate it.

“I like rough sex.” She rubs her hands on her jeans and takes an audible

breath. “How do I say this?”

“It’s okay.” I raise my hand in the air. “I’m a judgment-free zone.”

“I have rape fantasies. I need to be fucked like I don’t want to. Rough. I love being called names. Degradation is my favorite. Marking and biting is a favorite. Well, I assume it will top my list. I’ve never done that before. I wasn’t allowed to mar my skin, but I’m open to trying. No, not open to it. I would like to be bitten.” She gazes at me quickly before looking away. “It’s a lot. I totally get it if that’s not your thing. Vanilla is okay, but I won’t come that way.”

My cock is going to burst the fuck out of my pants. I lunge for her throat, using it to pin her to the car door. “Remember your safe word, Sparrow.”

Her heavy breathing pushes her big tits up and down. I tear off her shirt like an animal, exposing her pretty black lace bra. Her nipples pebble, making my mouth water, desperate for a taste. “I want to bite your nipples, Sparrow. Leave my mark on your skin.”

She arches her back, presenting her tits to me in an invitation.

It fucking kills me how responsive she is. How she looks at me with those intensely gorgeous eyes makes me want to drop to my knees and promise her fucking everything.

“Does the idea of me fucking you here like an animal make you hot?”

“Yes.” She nods, and her eyes shutter closed as her breathing picks up.

“I can make all your dreams come true, Sparrow. Take you here, your head pushed into the dirt, my cock aggressively spearing your wet cunt until you cry. I bet you’d like that, wouldn’t you, Sparrow?”

“Yes,” she pants.

“Beg. Tell me what kind of worthless little slut you are and how the only way you’ll be worth a damn is if you have my cock in your wet, worthless cunt.” My thumbs are at her throat, caressing her soft flesh, needing her to say she wants me as badly as I want her—like I need my next breath.

Her hands frame my face. “Please, Gunner.”

I push down on her throat, and her eyes roll back. “I think you can do better than that, Sparrow. A girl like you who wants to get fucked like a common whore must know how to beg.”

Cash moves her hand down my body, and her fingers brush across my crotch momentarily.

I grab her wrists and slam her arms above her head. “If you want me to dick you down, you’re going to have to ask. Nicely.”

“I want you to fuck me, Gunner. I want you to fuck me hard and fast. I want you to take me whenever you want, however you want. Please, do what you want, but just fuck me,” she begs.

Her guard’s down as she trains her eyes on anything but me. I catch her chin, forcing her gaze to settle on mine. “Look me in the eye when you say it this time.”

She huffs a small breath, resentment coursing through her irises as she wages some sort of bullshit war with herself. She knows what she wants. Cash has zero issues with confidence. The girl exudes it. But here she is, denying what she wants.

“Gunner...this morning has been amazing, but I don’t think you know what you’re in for with this. I’m complicated. Really fucking complicated.”

She appears so broken down with concern like I’ve just crawled on board a sinking ship. I recognize the look in her eyes. My mom had it for years.

Punishing herself for choices others made for her. Never able to live her life the way she wanted to. A pawn in a world run by older, corrupt men who wanted to use her and discarded her when they were finished with their new toy.

I have no clue what Cash has been through before she found herself in my bar. But it breaks my fucking heart that she's shutting down something that could make her happy before it even starts just to keep herself safe.

"We're all complicated. My life isn't perfect. It's a pretty mess. But I'm not a piece of china that will break if you look at me funny. If you're game to see where this goes, so am I." I slip my palm down her neck, wrap it in her hair, and level with her. "I've got a clear idea of what I'm getting into with you, Sparrow. Do I want to make love to you? Yes. Would I love to eat your cunt for hours and make you come repeatedly? Yes. But I also want to hunt you like an animal, chase you into the woods back there and fuck you when you least expect it. Use your body until you're a quivering mess on the forest floor, begging me to stop. You came here to find something. You stumbled into my life. Now that you're in it, I won't let you run from me unless it's to be fucked, hard and fast." I place two tender kisses at the corner of her lips.

"You don't even know who I am," she whispers.

"Three-time Grammy winner Cash Leigh. Pop sensation. Billboard Top 100 Artist of the Year. You've won a ton of other awards, but I'm not sure if they matter to artists." I smile, thinking that my mother called them fluff awards. She always said it wasn't worth a lick if it wasn't a Grammy or a Country Music Award.

"My MTV award mattered very much, thank you," Cash says with a huff and a smile. "I thought you didn't have a television."

"I don't have a TV, but I have access to the internet. I live in a small town,

but we know what modern technology is.”

She freezes. Her pretty, warm eyes appear shocked and frozen. “I wasn’t implying that you didn’t. I’m sorry.”

I pull back, searching her eyes. “Whoa, whoa, who’s accusing you of being insulting, darlin’.”

Cash looks away for a second before returning her pretty eyes to me. “Sorry. It’s just that I’m constantly apologizing these days. It seems like it’s a force of habit. I don’t even mean it for half the shit they’re accusing me of.” She shrugs. “Well, I guess they’re not accusations if they’re true, but I’m not hurting anyone. There are vultures in my business that feast on innocence until nothing is left, but the paparazzi would rather go after me than them. At least my shit was with consenting adults, not some dirty old man with a beer gut and a wide-eyed fourteen-year-old girl.”

I pull back from her, giving her space to talk to me without being crowded. She swallows as if trying to push back the words that want to burst from her lips or maybe find the courage to tell me her truth.

“I came here to find myself, not to fall into the first guy I meet. Not to mention that guys got me in this situation in the first place. I haven’t even figured out what my future looks like. I’ve just been writing songs and trying to get back to that feeling of falling in love with music again. My manager is breathing down my neck to make a decision, but the truth of it is... I’m not good at that. I let everyone else decide my career for a long time, and they created Cash Leigh. I want to find Cashleigh Wilson again. The little girl who sang country songs on the front porch with her grandparents. That girl dancing up on stage and lip-syncing in the music videos isn’t me. That’s the pop princess they created to stuff down the radio waves. I’m messy with dark cravings and a broken, battered soul, but the only thing the world has ever seen is a sunny girl with a wide smile. The truth is, Gunner, I don’t even

know who I am anymore.”

“I know exactly who you are.” I land a protective hand on her thigh and squeeze. “You’re a strong, passionate woman who’s been kept in a cage. Your beauty is so captivating that those around you haven’t been able to handle its full force, so they’ve had to dim the light you radiate. Besides, if you write music half as well as you sing, you’re the next Patsy Cline. You were born with a gift, and you need to let it shine for the world to see.” I shrug, trying to lighten her mood. “It rattled me for a minute when you sang my mother’s song in the bar. Don’t tell her, but I think you may have better chops than she ever did.”

Cash’s sadness evaporates, and unexpected laughter rings through the car. “I swear, Gunner Shaw... I don’t know if I’m coming or going with you”—her eyes sparkle up at me as a dark cloud lifts from them—“but damn if I don’t like it.”

I nod, catching her face in my palms. As the sun breaks the horizon, I kiss her. It doesn’t matter that we’ve only just met. My cock has been raging like a monster since she told me she’s as kinky as I am. Every fiber of my body screams that she’s mine. I’ll do anything and be anyone she needs.

It’s not every day you meet the girl of your dreams.

Her hips grind softly against my thigh, so softly she probably doesn’t even realize she’s doing it. But I sure as hell do. I feel fucking everything when this girl’s around. She’s a fast, furious, and wildly beautiful tornado waiting to blow me away.

“Anxious, are we, little sparrow?” I pull back, my breath taken away by her radiant beauty in the early morning light.

“Call me jaded, but when you said meet me at the copper gates at sunrise, I wasn’t expecting this.”

“What were you expecting?” I shuttle her close to my body, liking how she fits perfectly against me.

“More...pancakes, less romance, maybe?”

“Not sure calling you a slut off the bat is all that romantic.”

She tries to pull away, but I grip her waist and hold her close. “Do you know everything about me?” She pauses, and her eyes flutter away. “Do you know they plastered my face on all the major news rags, telling the world I have a sex addiction?”

I know the story. As soon as she left the bar, I went on the computer in my office and read everything I could about her like a crazed fan, down to her kid siblings’ interests.

I sure as hell watched the little porno she made with the hooker. My cock was hard as steel as she was degraded. Mascara ran down her cheeks, and pretty pink marks marred her delicate flesh. I didn’t even realize I’d pulled out my dick and started stroking, wishing it was my spit dangling from her lips. My dueling emotions confused me. I wanted to rip the hooker’s heart out for touching her as I jerked my cock. I pretended it was my dick buried in her perfect wet cunt as I slapped her sexy face and called her my pretty little whore.

“I know more than you think,” I say, kissing her forehead. “But there is one question I couldn’t figure out.”

“What is it?”

“You’re a sexy-as-sin celebrity. Why did you need to hire male prostitutes?”

Cash groans and buries her head in her hands. “This is much more embarrassing than knowing most of America has seen my tits getting whipped.”

I pull her hands from her face before cupping her cheeks and looking deep into her eyes. “Never be embarrassed around me. I want to know all of you, including the parts you want to keep hidden.”

I wipe away the lone tear that springs from her eye and offer a gentle smile. Cash nods and takes a deep breath but says nothing. We sit, eyes locked, letting the silence of the morning cocoon us.

I want to demand her emotions and have her confess her hidden secrets without hesitation. But life doesn’t work that way. We don’t get what we want simply by closing our eyes and wishing with all our might. I learned that lesson at a young age before I stepped foot into a school.

So, against my better nature, I hold her and move at her speed.

Cash’s chest distracts me as she takes a deep breath, and her perfect tits rise and fall. “I don’t trust men. Things always get complicated if you take a random guy home after a show. Remember Lucy Maties, the rock star? She left a show with a random groupie, and a bellhop found her in a dumpster the next day, chopped up into pieces.”

I laugh, lacing our fingers and easing into my place with her at my side. “Not sure if I should feel flattered or insulted that you don’t think I’m dangerous enough. I should’ve picked you up on the Harley. Chicks dig the bike.”

She bats her long, dark eyelashes at me before lightly punching my arm. “Murder isn’t funny.”

“Of course not. I’m not laughing at what happened to that poor woman. I find it interesting that you’re here with a man you hardly know but assume that all your male fans are potential murderers.”

Cash abruptly pulls away from me, a coy smile on her full lips. Her hand clasps the door. “Gunner, I reckon you’re absolutely right.”

“What are you doing, Cash?”

“I’ve made a terrible mistake. Being here in the middle of nowhere with a strange man. You can do all kinds of horrible things to me. I’m just a naïve little girl. A powerful man like you can take control of my body so easily. Take what you want and ignore all my cries for help.”

Oh, the little minx. Cash is deflecting conversation by offering me herself on a platter. If I were a stronger man, I could resist and force her to get naked without removing a single piece of clothing. But right now, my brain’s shut down, and I can only contemplate with my dick. So, instead of shutting down her little game, I do what any red-blooded man would do. I play along.

“Hasn’t anyone ever told you not to run when confronted with a wild animal?”

She opens the car door and walks backward in the direction of the lush trees of the forest. “Yes. Back away slowly.”

“When I catch you, Sparrow, I’m going to fuck you so hard that you won’t be able to think straight for a week.”

She smiles. “Only a week? Well, that’s disappointing.”

“Hope you like red because that’s all you’ll see when you face the mirror and look at your skin.”

“Gotta catch me first!” she yells before disappearing into the woods.

Chapter 6

Cash

My body is on autopilot. My feet hit the forest floor like I'm running from a madman, and I feel alive. I've never fucked in the woods before. It's always been a no-go with the label and Pete. The risk of someone following me and publicizing it all was too great. It probably still is, but I don't care. Right now, all I can think about is how fucking fantastic it will be to get fucked like a piece of meat. Guess the location is fitting to be fucked like an animal.

I turn my head, but I don't see Gunner behind me. Disappointment racks my mind. Perhaps he's driven off. Guess I shouldn't be so shocked. During our first genuine conversation, I told him I wanted him to pretend to rape me.

I fill my lungs with fresh air, walking among the pretty trees, when I hit a hard, warm body.

Gunner.

My heart accelerates from the rush of being near Gunner and the anticipation of what he'll do to me.

Gunner steps up to me, closing the small space between us. He leans his head forward, his hot breath on the delicate part of my ear. He doesn't say a word. The only sound from his lips is a visceral growl that sends a chill along my spine. I step back, and he moves forward.

“What do we have here? Hasn't anyone told you that there are big bad wolves in the forest that would like nothing better than to eat little girls like you?”

My mouth goes dry, and my heart beats so fast that it's in danger of jumping out of my chest. I'm unsure if I should fall on my knees and beg to suck Gunner's cock or run and extend the game of cat and mouse.

I've had experience of being fucked roughly, but I don't know how to do foreplay. The male prostitutes didn't seem to have the same imagination as the females. But the words that fall from Gunner's mouth may as well be a vibrator directly on my clit.

“I'm a little disappointed you're not putting up much of a fight.” Gunner's hand creeps behind my neck.

My eyes flutter shut as anticipation rises in my stomach of what this man will make me feel.

“Cat got your tongue, Sparrow?” Gunner fists my hair and yanks it back, forcing me to peer up at him. “Maybe we can loosen it up.”

I smirk at him before my fist connects with his stomach. Gunner abandons my hair and loses his footing for a moment as he stumbles back. Taking the opportunity, I run. For a moment, I worry if I've hurt him, then realize that's the game he signed up for. Rough, no-holds-barred sex that will leave our bodies tired, battered, and bruised.

Gunner growls loudly from behind me. “When I catch you, Sparrow, I'm

going to fuck you. Hard and fast.”

I run, glad I wore sneakers instead of ballet flats. My body dances between the trees, avoiding low-hanging branches as I maneuver further away from Gunner. Laughter bubbles within me and bursts in waves at the sense of freedom. Who knew a little game of animalistic sex would allow me to breathe?

Hiding behind a large oak, I peek out toward Gunner’s direction. The man is utterly sexy as he darts through the woods searching for me. My gaze lands on his brawny, tattooed arms. Intricate patterns and images mesh together to create a masterpiece. I’ve always wanted a tattoo, but the label insisted I never get one. The idea of having a work of art that has importance to me on my skin has always seemed beautiful.

Gunner’s eyes land on mine, and my entire body ignites with desperate need. He stalks toward me, a predator with a singular mission to make his prey submit. His long legs pounce, and he stands a few feet in front of me. I leap out to run, but he lunges and tackles me. My body hits the ground, and his hard ridges and edges land on top. He grabs my wrists in one large hand and pins them above my head.

Gunner’s fingers trail lightly down my neck before he fists my shirt collar. He tears my shirt from my body, revealing my lace bra. Grabbing my left breast, he squeezes. “You have any idea what large tits like this do to a man? All I want to do is sink my teeth into them.”

I moan at the image of his teeth grazing my flesh. The anticipation of pain increases the dampness between my legs.

Gunner laughs, using his knee to spread my legs and pushing it against my clit, coercing a moan from my lips. “Look at you, desperate to be filled by my cock.” He grins as I grind my pussy against him.

I groan in frustration as he moves his knee, putting an end to the sensations on my clit.

“Not so fast, my pretty little whore.”

I scream as I fight his hold. I kick my legs, managing to make contact with my feet to his chest, but he doesn't move. “Oh, Sparrow, the more you fight, the more I'm going to assume you want me to make it hurt.”

Oh, God. The mouth on this man. I could probably come from him just talking to me. He grips my chin and his fingers dig into my skin, making me wince in the most delicious way. I like the edge of pain, the balance of hate and violence laced in sex. “Aren't you just a dirty little slut needing Daddy to fill your pretty holes?”

“Yes,” I pant.

Gunner trails kisses between my breasts down to my pubic bone. “I'm going to let go of your arms, and you're going to lie still. If you move or try to run, I'll be very upset.” He bites my skin, making me yelp. “And you don't want to see what I'll do to you if you piss me off.” His hand moves up my body, and his thumb and index finger flirt with my nipple, pinching gently. “Do you understand?” When I don't respond as quickly as Gunner likes, he twists my nipples, and I scream. “When I ask you a question, you answer, slut.”

My screams of blissful agony fill the surrounding area, but I refuse to satisfy Gunner by saying what he wants to hear. I want to unleash the most feral version of him. I've never been so turned on, my need so palpable, so lost in the scenario that everything that's fucked up in my life has faded into the background.

Gunner rises and straddles me. His eyes smolder with lust and desire, matching the emotions unlocked in me. He continues the pressure on my nipple while his other hand releases my wrists. For a moment, I'm

disappointed, thinking he's ending the game and my figurative opium rush. But then he grabs my neck and pushes so violently that I gasp for breath.

His eyes lock on my face, and his lips turn up in a pretty smile. "I want you to hit my leg if this is too much."

My heart blooms at his concern for me, something I've rarely experienced. I nod to let him know I understand so he doesn't have to break the scene.

Chapter 7

Gunner

Sex has always been boring. A methodical rhythm incessantly repeated and anti-climactic, even when I came.

Until eleven years ago, when one of my mother's former backup singers and I hooked up. She opened up a new world and showed me things I'd never conceived. But not once with her or anyone else did I feel like every nerve ending vibrated when I was inside them. Not until this moment. Not until Cash.

She bats her eyes, a seductive call that fires my soul. Her eyes hold no fear. Ironic, considering that if someone were to walk by, it would look like I was about to violate her in unholy ways.

"You sure you want to do this?" I ask, silently praying she doesn't say no.

"Yes. I'm sure."

"You don't know me. What if I turn out to be a psycho?"

Cash laughs. "I hired hookers to rape me, Gunner. As long as you don't kill

me or cut me up with a weapon, I think I'll be okay.”

“You'll use your safe word if it's too much?”

She smiles, hooking her leg around my thighs and flipping me under her. “I'm trained in three martial arts. Unless you have a weapon, I'm not helpless. I promise. I'm okay.”

My eyes roam her body, from her delicate neck to her large breasts and plump stomach. Fuck, I love her stomach. I grip her sides, thinking about how hot it would be to fuck her doggy style.

Panic flares in her eyes. “What are you doing? Why are you touching me there?”

“Because it's beautiful and soft and I want to.”

Cash jumps off me, covering her midriff and hiding from my gaze.

I frown. “What are you doing?”

“No one touches those parts. When I'm on stage, they make me wear stuff to hide. I-I don't like people looking at it.”

“Why?” I'm genuinely confused about why she'd want to shade a single part of her body because she's perfect.

“Logically, I understand there's nothing wrong with my stomach, ass, breasts, and thighs. I'm a bigger girl, always have been, but—” She falls silent, looking everywhere but at me.

“But what?” I'm familiar with what she's about to say, but I don't want to hear her speak the words.

I understand exactly how this bullshit industry she's been caged in works. They create a myth and bombard people with images of the lies. They make

them think that if they don't have it, something is wrong. But they don't tell you that the image they manufactured is bullshit. They strip young girls and women of their beauty and poison their minds with lies.

I jump off the ground and move to where Cash leans against a tree. She appears so small, nothing like the vibrant girl I've witnessed until now. Her head is turned away from me and her eyes are distant. I cradle her head, forcing her gaze back to me. "But what, Cash?"

"It's hard to like parts of yourself when you've been told they're abhorrent."

"It's idiotic to base your opinion of yourself on the words of morons. Come on, Cash. You know what the industry is like. They don't care about beauty or art. All they care about is packaging something they can control. They want a field of dandelions and will kill a wild rose to get one."

She smiles. "Aren't you adorable quoting your mama's song to talk down a girl you want to fuck? Wonder what Freud would say about that?"

"That's my girl. Don't let others dim your light." I move my hand down her body, copping a feel of her tits before moving back to her stomach. "Eyes on me, Cash. Don't focus on anything but me."

I grasp for anything to show her that love for herself is crucial for the sex that we want. She needs to understand that she's the most beautiful speck in the universe, and her light illuminates it all. I need her to love every single piece of herself before letting me ruin her in merciless ways. "I can't fuck you the way you want until you see yourself the way I see you."

Shock flashes in her eyes. "I don't know how."

Cash stands frozen in front of me as her body shakes. I'm unsure if it's from the cold or the fear of real intimacy.

I push away from her and remove my clothes, standing naked before her.

“Take off your clothes. Slowly. It’s easy to fuck, Cash, but it’s difficult to be naked. I want you bare for me, Sparrow. I want to know you, and I want you to know me.”

She drops her clothes, and I take her in every mouthwatering curve of her body. Fuck, she’s beautiful.

Her eyes land on my cock, and I smile as her dark eyes round when she gets a good look at my piercings. I rub the tip of my cock, ensuring that she gets a good look at the three dydoe piercings. “Ever fucked a guy with a dick piercing before?”

“No,” she moans, licking her lips, her eyes fixed on my cock.

“Spread your legs,” I demand.

Cash follows the order, and I stare at her pussy, the perfectly plump lips with a wet pink center. “Grab your big tits and hold them up to your mouth. I want to know if you can suck on those sexy nipples.”

Her manicured hands, with their shiny black nail polish, grip her heavy breasts. She lifts them, and her pretty pink lips part as she sucks on one nipple.

“Drop the tit that’s not in your hand and grab your stomach.”

Cash shoots a look at me, and I direct her eyes to my painfully hard dick. “I like it, Cash. My body can’t lie to you. I’ve never been this hard in my entire life.”

I pump my hand up and down my cock and capture the pre-cum glistening on the tip, bringing it to my mouth. Cash moans, and I repeat the action. “You like that, baby? Does it make you hot to see me taste my cum? Be a good girl, do as you’re told, and I’ll eat it straight out of your pussy.”

Cash glides her hand down to her stomach, and I almost come just looking at her. “Pinch it. Like I would.”

“Gunner,” she protests as her big, beautiful tit falls out of her mouth.

“You need to appreciate those parts of you that get me hard because when I fuck you, Cash, I won’t hold back. I want to touch every inch of you and have you enjoy it. I need you to see how beautiful you are. How sexy. So you’re going to be a good girl and do as you’re told.”

Chapter 8

Cash

My body fights my mind in a battle of wills. I'm so turned on that I'll probably do whatever Gunner demands of me, but that mental block from hurtful words hurled at me my whole life makes the current act painful.

Chills rock my body as my trembling fingers touch the rolls of my stomach. I hum "Here Comes the Sun" by The Beatles, a song I latch onto whenever I want to escape.

Realization dawns on me. I see my body as something to turn away from, and I hate that. I push through the lies the industry has told me and hold my stomach firmly. My eyes flutter shut, and I force myself to get lost in the sensation.

This is the reason I like rough sex. It allows you to shut down the world around you and lean into your basic carnal needs. All I can think about is copulation and the unimaginable pleasure that Gunner can give me.

"That's it. Fuck, Sparrow, that's so sexy."

My eyes fly open. Gunner is standing closer than he was a moment before,

but not close enough to touch. “Gunner, please.”

One hand remains on his thick, long dick, his index finger brushing the silver balls along the tip. His other hand caresses my face. “I like it when you beg, Sparrow. Knowing that you need me as much as I crave you. But before I shove my cock in that tight, wet cunt, I want a show.”

“A show?” What else does he want to see? I just grabbed parts of my body and sucked my nipple for his pleasure.

“Finger that pretty pussy for me, Sparrow. Show me how you like to touch yourself.”

Heat floods my body as he gazes hungrily at my body. My hand moves from my stomach down to my center, and I gently drag my finger between my pussy lips.

“Open your legs wider. I want to get a good look at you finger fucking my pussy.”

My legs open at his demand, exposing more of me to Gunner. He smiles as he brings his hand to his face. He spits on it before bringing it back to his dick. My mouth waters as I watch his hand glide along the smooth length. How would it feel deep in my holes, dominating me, ripping me apart with its massive size?

My tongue slips out and I lick my lips, pretending I’m teasing the silver balls at the tip of his cock. “You’re God’s favorite child.”

Gunner steps closer and smirks. “Or the product of the Devil.”

His eyes hold mine, a game of chicken to see who’ll fold first. “Want to know how full it would feel with my dick pounding into your wet cunt?”

I lose the game as my mouth runs dry. I squeak out a pathetic “Yes.”

“How many fingers can you shove into that little pussy?”

“I’ve put four in there before.”

Gunner licks his lips. “Show me.”

Moans escape my throat, not from the pleasure of my fingers, not from shoving one finger followed by another inside me, but from how Gunner makes me burn simply by staring at me. Wanton, sexy, desirable, powerful, free. Somehow, Gunner has gone past a barrier I set so high, even I was unable to climb it.

Gunner moves closer until his body presses against mine, forcing me back until I’m pressed against the bark of a large oak tree. “That’s it, Sparrow. Push them in. Stretch that perfect cunt for me.”

I gaze at the tip of his cock pressing against my pussy.

“Eyes on me, Cashleigh.”

I smile at the sound of my full name on his lips. As I look into his eyes, Gunner pushes the tip of his cock into my pussy, ensuring my senses burn with the feel of his jewelry. God, had I known a dick piercing would feel this good, I would have ensured all the escorts had one.

I moan as he pushes further, stuffing me full. A scream falls from my mouth, causing the birds overhead to leave their perches within the trees.

“That’s it, pretty girl,” Gunner growls. “Let the world hear you scream.”

His hands move to my face, forcing his thumbs into the corners of my mouth and pulling my lips open. “Stick out that tongue for me.”

Gunner smiles as he thrusts his hips wildly. The pain of my fingers and his massive cock stretching me is beyond my wildest dreams. “My cock won’t be the only thing in this pussy, Sparrow. Anytime I want, I’ll shove something

in this sweet cunt so you know who it belongs to now.”

The mouth on this man. The words he utters are so hypnotic that I’m pretty sure I’ll do anything he wants and say thank you. Not only would I thank him, but I’d also beg him to do more.

Gunner’s groans and visceral sounds enhance the pleasure of his cock. He ruts into me with such force that my back scrapes the tree bark. A month ago, I would have worried about the scrapes, bruises, and tears in my skin that I’d put a stop to it all. But I want more. More pain, more marks, more of Gunner’s forceful pounding in my pussy.

“More,” I squeak around his thumbs. “Give me more. Make me feel.”

“Stick out your tongue, slut.”

I do as he asks, panting like a dog begging for attention and exhilarated by what he’ll do next. I want to tell him to hold my head in the dirt and fuck me like I’m nothing. To rip my hair out as he drags me around the forest floor. I long for his teeth marks tattooing my skin.

Gunner nods as if able to read my mind and spits on my tongue. “You want to be my little slut, don’t you, Sparrow?”

I nod as I swallow his spit. I’ll be whatever he wants so long as he keeps me on the cusp of intoxication. This is the high I crave. I want my blood steeped in his dirty words and the roughness of his touch.

He removes his thumbs, and I instantly want to cry.

Gunner grabs my throat mercilessly. The humor is gone from his eyes, replaced with something more carnal. “Did I tell you to swallow, slut?”

I’m taken aback but also exhilarated by the sudden force of his touch. Gunner seems to possess the perfect balance of endearing and terrifying.

When I don't respond as quickly as Gunner would like, he grips my chin forcefully. "You know, slut, you need to get better at answering questions. Now, let's try that again. Did I tell you to swallow?"

"No," I moan as he slams into me.

"Then why did you?"

"I wanted to."

In a flash, Gunner's arms are around my waist as our bodies fall to the ground, but I don't sense the impact of the hit. My fingers never leave my pussy, and Gunner's cock is still inside me, but my body is on top of his. He winces for a second but quickly recovers. His back must be killing him. I want to ask him how he is and if he needs anything, but something tells me I'm not breaking the scene. At least not for his sake.

"You could've had it easy, pretty girl. But you don't want to be a good girl, do you? Being treated with respect and receiving pleasure seems adversarial with who you really are." Gunner spits again, and this time, it lands on my face, directly above my eyelid.

I close my eyes to rid myself of the liquid, but all I do is spread the spit and make his face appear blurry.

"Bad little girls get treated like fuck toys. I'm going to destroy you, Sparrow. When I'm done with you, you'll be nothing but a dirty cum rag."

I pull my fingers out of my pussy, pushing until Gunner is above me. "More," I whisper as I hold him, longing to meld my body with his.

Gunner growls in my ear as his hips rise, going deeper than I thought humanly possible.

Passion ignites as I dig my fingers into his back and draw blood. Gunner

doesn't seem to mind. In fact, it encourages him to push faster and further as he thrusts into me with wild force.

His warm breath hits my ear. "That's a pretty girl. Show me how much you want to be treated like a pathetic cum dump."

"More, please, Gunner, I want more."

Gunner smirks before grabbing my throat and squeezing. "Insatiable little whore."

I shiver as lightheadedness hits me. This man could fulfill all my sexual desires without breaking a sweat. He holds my throat with one hand as the other slaps my face. Each tap of his palm has my pussy on fire.

Gunner moves from my face and slaps my tits, one, then the other, never once breaking his violent thrusts. "The world thinks you're so good, don't they, Cash? But you and I know you're a worthless little whore."

Still holding my throat, he pulls my head forward by my hair. "Look at how your pathetic pussy swallows me whole. You can't get enough. I bet you'd let me shove anything I want into your holes. Not only let me but beg for the privilege."

My head falls back as he releases my hair. I think about the one time I snorted coke and how this high is so much better. I never liked drugs. I hated feeling out of control and in a haze, but with sex, all I wanted was to be at the mercy of a man. A man who knew how to control my body and understood what buttons to press to get me where I wanted to be.

I was looking for a needle in a haystack, but Gunner Shaw is that needle. He's considerate, sweet, and fucks like a goddamn animal.

"You're gonna come on my dick, Sparrow. My perfect slut, fucked like an animal on the forest floor, and you're about to gush on my cock like a

champ.”

My body stiffens. I grip his flesh as a soundless scream falls from my lips, and I float into oblivion. Never in my life have I come like this. I didn't think it was possible.

I go to push Gunner off me, but he pins me down by my throat.

“Not so fast, my little whore. I'm nowhere near done with you.” Gunner's look is a mix of passion, lust, and care. He slowly circles my clit and smiles. “I think you've got another one for me, don't you, Cash? Your pretty little pussy is begging to be unleashed.”

“Gunner,” I croak.

He releases my throat to allow me to speak.

“I can't. If you keep going, I'm going to pee.”

Gunner laughs and keeps the pressure on my clit as his cock quickens. My body feels like it's going to explode. I shut my eyes to control what I fear is about to happen.

A slap on my face. “Eyes on me. Don't make me tell you again.”

“Gunner, please. I'm going to pee. This is so embarrassing.”

“You'll know what embarrassment is when I tie you up naked outside the bar on a leash like a pathetic, panting puppy. Now shut the fuck up and come over my cock like a good girl.”

Yup. That does it. Gunner mutters unhinged dirty words, and my body convulses as I come again. This time, liquid floods between us, and I want the ground to open up and swallow me whole.

“Fuck, Cash,” Gunner groans as his legs stiffen and he pulls me toward him.

“This pussy is perfect. A man could get addicted to it.”

“Get off me!” I scream, pushing him off me. I sit on the ground, horrified that I just peed myself. “I’m so embarrassed. Why’d you make me pee?”

Gunner barks out a laugh as he pulls me by the legs. “For a girl who hired hookers to fuck her senseless, you’re pretty naïve. You didn’t pee, Cash. You squirted. I’m a little jealous that you drenched my cock instead of my face.”

Gunner lifts me until his mouth is centimeters from my center. He licks his lips and pushes his cum back into my pussy before lifting his drenched digits and sucking them clean. His eyes hold mine and he chuckles. “You think you’ve been a good girl, Sparrow?”

I nod, anticipating what this man will do next.

My body jerks as he slaps my pussy. Hard. “None of that nodding bullshit. Use your words like the good girl you are.”

“Yes,” I croak.

“Good, because I’m starving.”

Gunner covers my pussy with his hot mouth and pushes his tongue deep inside me. I moan, desperate for more. If my body weren’t immobile, I’d ride his mouth to another orgasm.

But Gunner wants that. He wants to turn me into a puddle with his touch.

Mission accomplished.

“Fuck, you taste so good,” Gunner mumbles. “This pussy is a drug, Cash. One hit will never be enough.”

“Holy shit. Men are selfish little fucks. Cream pie cleanups should be a requirement to having sex because, good Lord, this is mind-blowing.”

I jolt as Gunner nips at my clit. “The lord has nothing to do with the devil’s tongue.”

“Well, if the devil teaches tricks like this, I’m joining the Church of Satan.”

Gunner barks out a laugh before delving back into my pussy. His tongue lapping my wetness drowns out the sounds of nature. He grips my hips as he licks my center before entering me again with not one but three fingers. He pushes up and twists, doing some sort of finger aerobics I didn’t think was possible.

“Move, Gunner. Please, move your face,” I beg. “It’s going to happen again.”

Gunner doesn’t move. Instead, he doubles his efforts with his fingers and licks my clit in perfect circular motions. The man does a better job than my vibrator. My hands fist and I buck, but it’s no use. His hold is too firm. Once again, my legs shake, and I explode directly into his mouth.

Once Gunner has his fill, he places me gently on the ground and covers me with his body. “That was spectacular. Champion squirter.”

I smack him in the chest before groaning and covering my face with my hands.

Gunner takes my hands and pins them to my sides before crushing his lips to mine. Our tastes mingle as he opens his mouth and our tongues dance. He breaks the kiss, smiling as he strokes my matted hair from my face. “You all right?”

I nod. “Yes, Lightheaded, but I feel better than I have in a long while. If the bartending thing doesn’t work out, I know a great escort service I can connect you with. With your skills, you’d have them lined up around the block.”

“My services are already spoken for.”

I push up, and he tumbles back. My eyes are slits as I look at him. “Who do you work for?”

Gunner laughs and grabs my waist, drawing me to him. He places a peck on my nose. “You. I never want to be with another woman so long as that pussy can drench my face.”

Chapter 9

Gunner

“Well, well, looks like TMZ is here to sing us another pretty song,” one of the regulars says from the end of the bar.

“Shut the fuck up, Norm.” I place the last glass on the drying rack, toss my rag under the counter, and walk the length of the bar with my eyes trained on Cash.

After our time in the woods, Cash was spent. I wanted to take care of her, but she insisted she needed some time to herself. A part of me was worried she’d freak out and walk out of my life as quickly as she walked into it.

“What’s your pleasure?”

Silence hangs a few beats between us as she assesses me, a tiny grin turning her lips before she leans in. “Not here for the beer, but if you’re offering...”

Her eyes are a wild shade of blue, her gaze so intense it’s like a sucker punch to my gut every time I look at her.

I crack a bottle, setting it on the counter. “I’m always offering.”

If she wants, I'll offer her much more than the beer. Hell, I'll gladly send all these sorry sacks home just to eat that fuckin' cunt again on this very bar.

She doesn't drink, just plays with the cool bottle as her eyes move around the room. "I hoped there wouldn't be many people here." She finally takes a small sip of her beer, her mind still working. "I've been playin' around with a new song. It's slower, though. I haven't done anything this slow before. If you don't mind, I might try it out."

My ego is a little bruised that she came here for my stage and not me. But I also want to hear what she wrote about me. It has to be about me. She curled up with a guitar at home and wrote a song after I banged her brains out. "Hell, yeah. My place is yours. I'll flip the corner lights on, hit the mic, and you're good to go."

"No lights. I like it dim. This is perfect." Her eyes are on me, a small smile lifting her lips.

"Whatever you say, Sparrow."

"You gonna give us more of that Loretta Shaw special?" Norm calls from across the bar, a drunken slur to his words.

"Shut the fuck up, Norm. Don't make me throw you out on your ass again."

"No Loretta tonight, Norm," Cash replies, tipping the neck of her beer bottle toward him. "Tonight, you're only getting me."

He nods, a grin curving his lips. "If you say so, sweetheart."

Anger bubbles in my chest at his endearment. He's not the first to call her that and won't be the last, but it makes my fucking blood boil. An unfamiliar possessiveness blooms in my chest. I fist my hands at my sides, trying to control the animalistic need to knock his teeth out of his head for daring to label what's mine. I shoot him a warning glare, letting him damn well know

how I feel about his attitude.

Every rational thought leaves my mind when another man dares to show her attention. “Cash,” I call out.

She turns, and all I can focus on is her pretty face and the throbbing of my dick. I take in her full, pouty lips, picturing smearing her bright red lipstick and making her mascara run down her soft cheeks. It doesn’t matter. I’ve got a business to run and no one to watch the place as I fuck the pretty little songstress’s throat until it’s bruised and battered. “Before you start, can I see you in the back?”

She nods. “Sure.”

She walks past Norm, and I growl as his eyes move down her back to her big, round ass. “Watch it, old man. I won’t tell you a second time.”

I wait until Cash is in front of me, shielding her tempting ass with my body until we reach my office door. My fingers tremble with the high of having her near me as I turn the knob, letting her in before I follow.

Cash walks into the middle of the room and glances at every corner. I stand with my back to the door, needing the support for my knees, seeing my goddess in my space.

The room isn’t fancy. It probably looks like a closet to her. Little Miss Hot Shot’s bathroom is bigger. The place is basic, with its wood paneling and sparse furniture. A desk holds a computer, and there’s a loveseat in the corner.

Cash’s eyes brighten as she spots the shelf of old vinyl records. Her fingers shake as she pulls out one of my many LPs. “Do you have any idea what this is?” Her fingers brush against the sleeve as if she’s discovered the meaning of life.

I step close, and Cash shivers as my lips brush her ear. “First edition pressing of The White Album by The Beatles.” I wrap my arms around her, lifting the record from her hand and carrying it to the player. I gently remove it from the sleeve, place it on the turntable, and bring the needle up. The sweet melody of John Lennon singing *Don't Let Me Down* oozes through the overhead speakers in my office.

Cash's eyes meet mine. “You have all these masterpieces in an unlocked room that anyone could walk into? What if the place got robbed? There must be millions of dollars worth of records on those shelves.”

I nod, fully aware of the first editions sitting there. “First, we're in a small town in Tennessee, not New York City. Second, the common person wouldn't know what any of this is worth. To them, it's a bunch of old junk.”

“Still, it's sad that these jewels are withering away here.”

“Better for them to be enjoyed than sitting in some glass case. Music is meant to be shared, not locked up as a trophy.”

Cash places her hand in mine, and I pull her toward me, swaying to the music. Fuck, I love having her body against mine. It's as if she's meant for me. She sighs and places her head on the left side of my chest, right over my heart. I'm sure she can hear its frantic rhythm. We sway to the harmonies The Beatles blended so perfectly, and I let the lyrics wash over me.

Until she breaks my reverie.

“So what's up, Gunner?”

Her question catches me off guard. I thought we were having a sweet, romantic moment, and bam, she kills the mood by dousing me in ice water.

What's up? She's asking me what's up? She tells me she needs space, doesn't call me for two days, and then shows up here wanting to sing. Maybe all I am

to her is a good fuck. Perhaps I'm the chump for thinking that the two of us have a connection that few people experience.

Reluctantly, I push her away from me. I step forward, forcing her to step back. "That's what I want to know, Sparrow. What the hell is up? I thought we had a pretty good time in the forest. If I recall, you told me I blew your mind with my tongue acrobatics. So I want to know where you've been for the last two days."

"I told you. I needed some space."

Another step in her direction until her knees hit the back of the loveseat. My body crowds her, but she doesn't hate it from the way her breathing accelerates and her pupils dilate. "I'm done giving you space. I sure as hell won't stand by while another man calls you sweetheart."

My cock lashes out in my pants like a damn snake wanting to be freed from its prison.

Cash bobs her head and swallows. "I can't control what another man calls me."

I lift my hand and capture a soft lock of her hair. "I know you can't, Sparrow. But I can."

"What are you going to do about it?"

I yank her hair back and pull until her legs give way, and she falls to her knees. "I've got a couple of ideas. Remember your safe word."

She smirks. "Your idea involves me on my knees?"

Fuck. I love how pliable she is. How she's ready anywhere, anytime. "Shut the fuck up and take out my cock." My legs go weak as she pulls down the zipper of my jeans and unleashes my rock-hard dick. "Suck."

Cash places her hands on the base of my dick, and the tip of her finger slides along the ball of my piercings.

“If you’re a good girl, I might get more jewelry for you. But be a bad girl, and it’ll be you getting the hardware.”

She opens her mouth, sliding the tip of my cock into her warm, wet mouth.

“Good girl. Take my cock all the way down your throat.”

I allow her to get adjusted to me, enjoying watching her at work. Fuckin’ beautiful.

Her hands move off my dick and she grabs my ass, pulling me further into her mouth. She pulls back suddenly. “Can I—”

“Can you what, sparrow?”

“Can we pretend I don’t want to? I, um, I want you to force me.”

My cock jerks at her request, eager to fulfill her fantasy. “Little slut, you want it rough, don’t you?”

She bobs her head and looks up at me, her eyes begging me to take what I want.

“Tap the back of my knee three times if it’s too much.”

“Okay,” she whispers.

With that one word, I’m on her. Cash winces as I grip the hair at her nape and yank her head back. “Open your mouth.”

“No,” she cries as she scrambles back until her ass hits the leather of the loveseat.

In this position, her head is directly by my crotch. I grab her jaw and press

down until she opens her mouth slightly. “Be a good girl and do as you’re told, or I’ll make it hurt.”

She grips my thigh and digs her nails in viciously, forcing me to let go of her and step back. Cash scrambles off the sofa and heads for the door. I lunge after her, grabbing her hair and pulling her back. A pang of regret blooms in my chest because there’s no way that didn’t hurt like a bitch. But Cash said she wants me to be rough, so who am I to deny her?

“I’m not done with you, little girl. You’re not leaving this room until you’ve taken a hot load of cum into your pathetic mouth.”

Cash whimpers, grabbing her hair as I toss her on the loveseat. “Please don’t do this,” she begs. “I don’t want this.” Her chest heaves in a frantic rhythm.

I stalk toward her. “Pull up your skirt.”

Cash does the opposite, pulling her skirt down and pressing her knees tightly together.

I smirk before putting my hands on her knees and wrenching her legs apart. Cash whimpers at the loss of control, her eyes searching my face and her long black lashes blinking at me. With her legs wide open, I witness the wetness of her white panties. I drop to my knees, making direct eye contact with her pussy. “I thought you said you don’t want this, slut.”

“I-I-don’t,” she pants.

I fumble with the elastic of her panties, tearing them from her flesh. “Good girls wear white cotton panties. You’re just a worthless fuck hole. You won’t be needing these.”

Fuck, she looks so sweet, so perfect. I caress the side of her face. “It’s such a shame I’m going to make a mess of your pretty makeup.”

She opens her mouth to protest, and I glide my thumb on her bottom lip, smearing her lipstick over her cheek. “Now, are you going to open your mouth and take my cock in the back of your throat like a good girl, or am I going to gag you so hard you’ll throw up?”

Cash doesn’t move. She sits silently, her lips held firm in a straight line.

“Have it your way.”

I pinch her nostrils, cutting off her air. I have to give her credit; she doesn’t open her mouth right away. She waits so long that I start to panic and wonder if I should stop, but then I remember she has her safe word.

Her face goes red and her fists flail as her hands fly.

But this time, I’m ready for the fight. “Go on, Sparrow. Get it all out. But you know as well as I do that you’ll open wide.”

Cash finally gasps for breath, and I take advantage, pushing my dick between her lips and thrusting violently down her throat.

“Fuck, Sparrow. I don’t know what’s sweeter, your whore mouth or slutty pussy.” I watch as she hollows her cheeks and sucks me deep. “Touch my cunt. Drench your hand for me.”

I slap her face when she doesn’t move as quickly as I’d like. “Touch your pussy now, or I’ll be forced to whip your clit. When I give you an order, you do it, slut. Remember, you’re nothing more than my little fuck toy. My cum receptacle. The only thing you’re good for is to receive my cum in your dirty holes and clean up the mess a pathetic whore like you makes. If I want you to lick the cum off my dirty boot, you’ll do it and say thank you.”

Cash groans on my cock and swirls her tongue around my shaft. Seeing her hand moving between her legs and her fingers disappearing into her wet cunt drives me to the edge of madness. I grip her hair and push my cock further

into her mouth. Cash gags and her discomfort mixed with her excess saliva are heaven. “This is all you’re good for, Sparrow. A pathetic toy with holes that need stuffing.”

She hums on my cock as her hand picks up speed.

“Look at you, slut. Look at you. So perfect.” I wipe her mascara as tears stream down her face, placing the same finger on my lips. She’s so beautiful. “Even your tears taste good.”

Cash spits and coughs as I pull out and slam back down her throat, fucking her mouth like it’s her pussy. I show no mercy and grip her throat, holding her tight and closing her airway. Her mouth constricts around my dick, and my eyes almost roll to the back of my head. The way she moves her mouth and tongue on my cock is enough to bring me to my knees.

Banging on my office door. “Gunner, I need some Johnny Walker.”

I’m so far gone that I don’t even recognize the voice. My hips thrust harder into her mouth, stretching her lips like I stretched her cunt in the woods. The only thing I can focus on is coming. I sure as fuck am not leaving this room until I’ve cum deep in Cash’s pretty little throat.

She moans the deeper I fuck her throat, so I don’t hold back. I fuck her face harder, getting lost in her constant gagging. I wonder if she’ll barf. The thought both disgusts and turns me the fuck on.

I can’t take it anymore; I’m about to blow. I pull out and grab her hair, holding her still as ropes of cum splatter her lips, cheeks, and neck.

“Stay there,” I pant, grabbing my cell from my jeans. I snap three pictures of her. “Gotta keep something for the spank bank if you decide to ghost me again.”

She leans back on the sofa with a satiated smile. “Show those pictures to

anyone, and I'll cut your dick off while you sleep."

Walking over to her, I lick my cum from her face and kiss her lips. "Sparrow, I'll gouge out the eyes of any man who comes into contact with you. Trust me, the only person who gets to see my little slut is me." I offer her my hand and help her up.

"You got any tissue? I need to clean up before I go back out there."

"Your face is clean."

She points to her neck. "What about this?"

"That's me marking my territory."

We leave the office, and I head to the bar while Cash saunters to the stage. She adjusts her skirt, and I slip my hand into my jeans pocket, rubbing her damp, ripped panties while possessively staring at the glistening shine on her neck. No one in the bar will know what it is. Most will assume it's moisturizer or makeup, but I know. She's wearing my cum.

Only half a dozen regulars dot the bar after midnight on a weeknight, but something tells me that's exactly what Cash needs to work out her new music. Hell, if giving her access to my open mic keeps her coming to my bar, I am all in.

Thoughts of Cash were in a constant loop in my head after I dropped her off yesterday morning. I alternated through moments of wanting to fuck her senseless and worshiping at her feet. I shot her a few texts and waited by my phone like a lovesick teen. But the only response I got was her silence. So I was fucking glad when I saw her walking into the bar.

Cash snags the acoustic guitar I left propped in the corner for impromptu jam sessions and settles herself on the lone stool in the center of the tiny stage. I flip on the surround sound speakers, and my cock jerks in my pants as I hear

her soft breaths at the mic. The same soft breaths that she released as she choked on my dick.

Fuck, she's so pretty and soft and peaceful up there. It's like seeing her for the first time in her true form. Sure, I've seen her kink, but this... this is different. This is like getting a glimpse into her soul. The damn record label was so busy covering her in thick makeup and fake hair that they concealed her natural shine and beauty. They deprived the world of the real treasure.

My heart fucking aches, realizing she's been chewed up and spat out in the same way my mama was decades before.

The Elvis effect, Mama called it. The ruthless side of the music industry. Making music for money, not passion.

But here's Cash, standing up for her heart and music by turning the tables and fully living her life.

"Evenin', everyone." The soft, midwestern lilt of her voice puts a grin on my face. "I'm still working out the last part of this new song. I'm hoping singing it out loud will help me..." She trails off, eyes searching the nearly empty room until they finally land on mine.

I nod when our eyes lock, my grin growing to chase away the insecurity I see shimmering in her eyes.

"*Knock 'em dead.*" I mouth the words, remembering when my dad said the same to my mama before she went on stage at the Grand Ole Opry when I was ten.

Cash's eyes widen before a calm smile turns up her lips, and she strums the first few notes of a slow tune. The music arrangement is soft and more romantic than I expected. And then my sparrow opens her mouth. The first few lyrics of her opening lines almost take my knees out from under me.

Your eyes met mine at sunrise.

Copper light reflecting through the pain.

You saw through the heart of me.

And for that, I'll never be the same.

I can hardly focus on the rest of the words. The raw emotion and quiet pain weaving through the notes grab my heart in a fucking vise grip. I haven't figured out how this woman has crawled inside me, but I'd willingly crawl inside her, too.

"This is some sappy shit," Norm huffs, tipping his beer to his lips.

"I told you, you grouchy old fuck..." I snag his beer and nod to the door.

"Aw, come on, Gunner. I'm your best customer."

"Not today, you're not. Today you're an epic fucking pain in my ass. Get the fuck out and stay out for a while. Find a new watering hole to shine your fucking positivity on."

Norm shakes his head, backing away and slinking out of my bar as Cash moves onto the second chorus.

"Copper Sunrise."

That's what she's titled the song. While she may have been scared about how slow and sweet and romantic it is, I think it's the best thing she's ever written. I can picture brides playing this song for their first dance decades from now. Whatever Cash is doing up at that lake house is certainly working.

She ends the song with a few quiet notes, then calmly stands and places the guitar back where she found it, moving off the stage as if the entire moment was a dream.

“Well, Sparrow, I’m not a man who hands out compliments freely, but that’s the best thing you’ve ever done.”

She tips her chin, her grin so fucking wide it nearly splits her cheeks and makes my heart beat double time. “That isn’t saying much.”

“I’ve spent my life surrounded by the best musicians and producers, and nothing has made me feel like you just did up there.”

“Are you trying to get in my pants again?”

I chuckle, bending to whisper in her ear, “Sparrow, you and I know that the only words I have to say to you fuck you are, ‘dirty slut.’”

She giggles and swats me.

I enjoy seeing her like this. She looks happy. I wrap my arms around her and pull her to me. “I’m serious, Cash. Your voice and lyrics are something special. You’re special.”

“Wow, Gunner, that’s a pretty incredible thing you just said.”

I trace a thumb along her hairline. “I meant every word. Seems country life agrees with you, Sparrow.”

“It’s not just country life that’s inspired me.” Her words are soft. She crooks her finger, telling me to bend. Once I’m close enough, she gets on her tiptoes and whispers, “That dick of yours ignites my imagination.”

The overwhelming urge to kick every poor fuck out of my bar and have my way with her all over this place is overwhelming. I need to kiss her, to let her know how fucking beautiful and perfect she is. “Imagine how much more material you’d have if you hadn’t avoided me for so long.”

“A day and a half?”

“Thirty-six hours of me wondering when I was gonna see you again was too long.” I touch my lips to hers in a slow kiss, swiping my tongue along the seam until she grasps my biceps and leans in for more. “Whaddya say I kick the rest of these guys out of here, and we go make some more music together?”

She pulls back, a surprised reaction on her pretty face. “You wanna shut the bar early?”

“Hell, yes, I do. I’ve got some ideas to inspire you with that last stanza.”

“What other instruments do you play other than the guitar? I have an idea to add piano and maybe some light jazz drums.”

“Mmm, I said nothing about using instruments to inspire you.” I press our lips together again, kissing her with deep, deft strokes. “We’ve got thirty-six hours to make up for.”

Chapter 10

C *ash*

Gunner's apartment isn't what I expected. I thought it would be a stereotypical cowboy's house—animal heads, wood walls, and brown leather. I'm shocked to find he's a minimalist—dark brown leather furniture with off-white accents. His kitchen is to die for, an open-space concept with a giant island and tall breakfast bar stools. I think how sweet it would be to see a family gathering around, breaking bread while discussing their day. A big bay window in the back leads to a backyard with a gazebo in the middle made for entertaining. The place is peaceful and serene, a refuge from the world. His house feels like home.

I smile at the fireplace and the pictures in classic frames lined up on the mantle. "Who decorated your place?"

"Me."

His answer shocks me. "You?"

"Were you expecting dead animals on the walls or something," he asks with a smile, opening a beer from the fridge and handing it to me.

“Well...”

“What do you take me for, some kind of over-the-top macho alpha male?”

I move to stand in front of him, and my body ignites with each brush of his breath over my skin. “Gunner, if it talks like a duck, walks like a duck, and looks like a duck, it sure as hell has to be a duck.”

I bring the cool bottle to my lips and take a large sip of my beer. His gaze is so intense that I’m surprised my clothes haven’t incinerated from my body.

Gunner moves close, a sly smile on his lips. He places his bottle on the island with a soft clang and cages me in with his arms. My body tingles with goosebumps as he nuzzles the tip of his nose against my neck. “Wound my ego, why don’t you? A real man doesn’t need to present as a caveman, Sparrow. I hunt and own multiple guns, but I have no desire to show people how lethal and primal I can be. When I need to, I show it by forcing my opponent to crumble in total submission. Men who claim to be alphas are simply scared little boys.” He nips at my earlobe, and his hard dick presses into me. “Do I look frightened to you?”

“How am I hurting your ego, Gunner Shaw?” I lean back, allowing my body to relax, something I haven’t been able to do with anyone for a long time. My nerves evaporate. It’s easy to be natural around Gunner. Allowing him to manipulate my body is the most liberating and cathartic form of therapy. Other than being on the stage, my favorite place is in his presence.

Gunner leans forward, pushing me until my back is flush against the cold marble countertop. His movements are slow and deliberate, less like a man and more like a predator on a hunt. He gently takes my beer bottle from my hands, placing it on the white marble table.

He brings his lips to my ear and whispers, “I’m not a man who takes kindly to being envious of a beer bottle. What are you doing to me, Cash?”

The warmth of his breath tickling my neck brings my nerves to full alert. “Well, maybe you should do something about the jealousy.” The words escape my lips brazenly.

Gunner smiles against my neck and places sweet, seductive kisses across my collarbone. Pulling away, he holds my face, forcing me to gaze into his magnetic blue eyes. Gunner Shaw has eyes that trap you. They create a world so enticing that you want to leap into their azure depths and drown in their beauty.

When I’m with Gunner, everything is possible, and nothing matters. He allows me to contemplate things I was petrified to want and push for things I thought were unreachable. Gunner Shaw breaks down all the walls and ceilings that have boxed me in my whole life, making me ponder if it’s possible for a bird with a broken wing to fly.

Gunner’s magnetism is so powerful that he appears like a supernatural force. The magnitude of him takes me over, causing lightheadedness. The freedom alone is enough that I’ll do anything to ensure it doesn’t evaporate. For a girl who’s lived her life in a glass bottle, Gunner is fresh air and green hills.

“You’re so beautiful. I find it hard to breathe around you.” He says the words so softly I almost don’t hear him. “I’ve seen some beautiful things in my lifetime, but then you walked into my bar and shifted the world on its axis.” He moves his lips closer to mine until I feel their feather-gentle touch.

My toes curl as his lips meet mine. This kiss isn’t the dominant touch I’m accustomed to from Gunner. This brush of his mouth is delicate yet profound, like the emotions he stirs in me—a perfect mix of carnal need and reverence.

He brushes the tip of his tongue against my lips, and I savor the taste of cold beer and peppermint gum. I part my lips, surrendering to him. Our tongues blend in perfect harmony, and I know without a doubt, one thousand percent

for sure, that Gunner Shaw has stolen my heart.

Chapter 11

Gunner

My cock pulses, demanding to be unleashed, preferably in one of her holes. Every time Cash is near, I want her naked beneath me, writhing with lust.

But as my body covers hers and her soft, warm eyes stare up at me, my heart's passionate desire outweighs my cock's carnal need. "Stay with me tonight. I hate the idea of you all alone in that big-ass house."

Her body shifts against mine, putting every one of my nerve endings on high alert. Her soft curves beg for my touch.

"I've spent a lot of nights by myself,"—her words are soft—"and you're the only one who's ever mentioned it. The record label always booked me the penthouse. It was so lonely, so I went straight to the hotel bar. It was the only place I could get the hum of life in my ears. I've written so many songs on bar napkins, it's a joke. I've never even had a relationship. Sure, I've had sex." She gives me a pained look. "But it was more of a business transaction than anything else. The label agreed to that because they could control it... until they couldn't. No one has taken the time to understand, encourage, or

care for me. I didn't realize how much I craved it until I got to this town."

As much as I hate that Cash has never had anyone, I love that she's never had a genuine relationship. We're on the same playing field in that respect. Two fucked up people who fuck a lot, and that's it.

At that moment, I feel ten feet tall. Our heartbeats sync as I thread my fingers in her hair and pull her lips close. "This town is pretty small. I'm not ashamed to say my bar is the liveliest place you'll find within twenty-five miles of here, but as long as I have something to say about it, you'll never be lonely again."

"You're only a call away?" She grins and warmth resonates in her dark-brown eyes.

"Or less," I whisper in her ear as my hands circle her thighs and hike her onto my hips. Her ankles lock at my waist, and her core presses against the tip of my cock, radiating heat like a fucking beacon.

My need for her vibrates in every atom of my being. The pull to her is like a junkie craving heroin in his veins. Everything about Cash is tempting, from her soft smile, warm eyes, beautiful voice, and banging, full-figured body that makes my mouth water and my cock ache. She's so *alive*, sparkling with energy and music and happiness. And I'm addicted.

"I mean it, Sparrow. Stay with me." I cover her lips with a kiss before she can answer, letting her off the hook but planning to convince her with my hands, tongue, cock, and anything else I can think of. If I have to, I'll tie her to my bed and render her speechless with orgasm after orgasm.

Her arms lock around my neck and desire blooms as her hips rock subtly against me. She is so fucking turned on that she doesn't even realize she's humping me, and it only makes my cock throb harder.

I stumble up the stairs and go straight to my bedroom. I can't help thinking how much she belongs in my bed as I stare down at her dark hair feathered around her face.

I open my nightstand, grab the handcuffs, and snap them on her wrists, connecting her to the headboard. Rising, I gaze down at her, helpless and at my mercy and so fucking beautiful. "I've wanted nothing in my life like I want you. I'll do anything, Cash, even if it means handcuffing you to my bed."

"Gunner," she whispers against my lips.

Her small pants turn to breathier moans as my fingers slip between her legs and rub her warmth through the thin material of her skirt. I speed up, determined to make her come for me before I have her naked.

"Instead of forcing you to stay because you're cuffed to my bed"—her legs shudder and her muscles tense as her hips rock in search of relief—"I plan to fuck you so completely you'll be chained to my dick." I catch her lips in a hard kiss, forcing our tongues together as she shakes and comes unglued around my fingers. Warmth spreads across the front of her skirt, and satisfaction fills the caveman inside me. "Remember when you said the only time you've cum is through rough sex?"

"Yes," she incoherently mumbles, basking in the afterglow.

I smile smugly. "Not anymore."

Cash freezes as her eyes search my face. "That's never happened before. I didn't think it was possible. My whole life, I thought I was broken." Her lips twitch as she recovers from her trip to the stratosphere. "How come you didn't fuck me like you usually do?"

"You're already addicted to my dick, Sparrow, but I also want you addicted

to my heart. I love it rough and dirty, and most times, our sex life will be just that. But I need to show you tenderness, too. I want you to feel special, beautiful, and powerful. It's important to me that you know without a doubt that I want all your pieces, the broken ones, and the beautiful ones."

I push her skirt up and outline her plump pussy lips. She bucks and arches when my cool fingertips slip between her lips and brush her swollen clit. "I like the lack of panties. Think I'll make you go commando regularly, so I can fuck you whenever and however I want."

The bed shifts as I move between her legs. "Such a good little slut," I growl into the wetness of her cunt, licking my lips in anticipation of her delicious cum flooding my mouth. "Does it make you hot when I look at you?" She bucks, teeth clamped down on her lip. "Does it make you hot knowing how fucking hard you make me? How I can't think about anything but you? It only took one look to get me addicted to you, sweet sparrow."

"Gunner," she moans. "Please."

"Tell me what you want, Sparrow. I want to hear the words."

"Please, fuck me, Gunner. Please. My pussy is so wet, and I need you."

"How do you want it, darlin'?"

"I-I want it to hurt. I want you to force me to do whatever you want. Treat me like you don't care about me. Make me your worthless whore."

"Jesus, you're so hot and silky." I kiss the inside of her thighs as my finger glides through her wetness. "You're going to scream for me, Cash. I want your pussy red and swollen from the depraved acts I'll throw at you. I want to hear you begging for me to whip this cunt until you think you're going to pass out from the pain. I want to fuck you until my dick is raw and soaked with your cum." My fingers speed up, working her to the edge of another

orgasm. “And then, I want to fill every one of your sweet holes and take you to the brink of insanity until you can’t tell the difference between pleasure and pain.”

“Gunner, oh my God, your words are so... You have no idea what you’re doing to me when you talk so...”

A cocky grin lifts my lips. “Filthy?”

“So filthy.”

Bending over, I grip her jaw and make her wince. I know I’m being rougher than I should, but I’m giving my girl what she wants. She craves the roughness because it gives her peace. She needs the loss of control to gain a sense of worth. My violence is her relief, my words of humiliation are her calm, and the pain my hands inflict allows her to release her fear.

I cup her mouth and nose with my hand, limiting her ability to breathe. “Shut the fuck up and spread your legs.”

Cash presses her legs together, doing the exact opposite of my request.

A smirk forms on my lips. My sparrow is ready to play. The little brat. “You’re going to regret that, whore.”

I rise and unbuckle my belt, pulling it from the hoops of my black jeans. Wrapping the leather around my hand, I gaze down at my girl and smile. “I’m going to give you two options. You can open your legs willingly and only get five strikes on your pussy, or you can refuse, and I’ll pry your legs open and strike you ten times.”

“Neither,” she says defiantly.

I grip her shirt with one hand and tear it off her flesh, exposing her big tits in a white lace bra. My free hand dips into the cups, pulling out her giant tits.

Without warning, I strike her with the belt on one nipple and then the other.

Cash cries out, arching her back, almost begging for more. “Oh, darlin’, you seem to be under the impression you have a choice.”

I hold her gaze as I undo my pants and unleash my cock. It points directly at her like an arrow. The bed squeaks as I get on top and straddle her. My ass is above her head, my dick pointing at her mouth with my piercing hovering over her lips. Cash moans, desperate to hold her resolve. I dip down, rubbing the tip of my cock along the seam of her lips. She pushes her head up and sticks out her tongue, licking my piercing.

“Such a cock whore, aren’t you, Sparrow? You’ll do anything for a taste. You want my dick in your pathetic mouth hole?”

“No.”

The tip of her tongue licking my cock tells me she’s a liar. Cash wants me to make her, force her, take what I want.

I turn my torso and squeeze her nose, holding her nostrils firmly to force her mouth open before ramming my cock down her throat.

“Fuck,” I moan, holding myself back.

In this position, in the wet warmth of her mouth, I could blow in less than five seconds. With her mouth preoccupied and hands indisposed, I grip her thigh and force her legs open. Her cunt is wet, her clit hard and ready for anything I see fit. I pull my arm back and flick the belt directly to her center.

Cash’s scream vibrates through her throat and makes my cock twitch in her mouth.

“That was one, slut. You’ve got ten more to go.”

Her hips lift on the bed, and I snap the belt on her clit, counting with every

single strike. Her pussy is red and swollen, where all the blood has risen to the center. She'll be sensitive, and that excites me.

As soon as I administer the last strike, I bend and take her clit in my mouth. My fingertip breaches her entrance, twirling and spinning her into oblivion before she crashes in waves around my hand. Wetness gushes and soaks my bed. Her cries are a symphony that would put Beethoven's Ninth to shame. I pull out of her and release her hands from the cuffs.

"You didn't come," she huffs.

"I know."

"Why? I want you to come."

I pull her toward me and wrap her in my arms. "Oh, I'll come, Sparrow. But I need to take care of you first. That was a little intense."

Cash nods and cuddles into me.

"Was that too much," I ask, worried I went too far.

Not all the strikes with the belt were hard, but some were. I'm a little ashamed that the louder and more anguished her screams, the more turned-on I become. Cash liking pain is a discovery I relish, but I need her to know she's safe. My deviant actions are for her because it's not attractive to me if she's not into it. But the fact that Cash is a little freak is something I like very much.

"It hurt," she whispers against my chest, "but I liked it. I know if I used my safe word, you would've stopped."

I sure as fuck would've. Guys who push past their partner's comfort zone are straight-up monsters. I'll push my luck, but Sparrow is the one in control. She's the conductor, and I'm her orchestra, performing only for her.

My lips brush her forehead. “Good, but use that safe word if it’s too much. Maybe next time, we’ll go through the light system. Red for stop, yellow for slow down, and green for go. I think I hit you harder than I should have a few times.”

She nods against me.

“I’m gonna draw you a bath and make you something to eat.”

I feed, bathe, and bang her again in the shower. Now we lie naked in bed and holding her in my arms feels like the most natural thing in the world.

“So...” I whisper, sucking at her neck as her heartbeat returns to normal beneath my lips. “I take it you like it filthy?”

“Gunner...” She’s still breathless, and knowing I have this effect on her does things to me. Real things scare me a little. I’m not used to healthy relationships involving feelings, but with Cash, I feel like I can build something that’s just mine. Something better than what we’ve both known.

“Cat got your tongue?” I tease as I crush her to my side.

Her eyes sparkle with mischief as she gazes up at me, all soft and sweet and thoroughly fucked. “I’m at a loss for words, Gunner Shaw.”

“Good.” I yank her hips closer to mine. “Step one of my plan to make you addicted to my dick is complete.”

She shakes her head as her laughter echoes off my bedroom walls. “This sounds like a ride and a half you’ve got planned...”

“Buckle up, baby.” I spank her bare ass cheek. “This ride’s about to get wild.” I kiss her deeply then, already obsessed with the taste of this woman on my tongue.

Her hands trail over my cheeks, eyes hovering on mine as our breaths mingle.
“You don’t realize what you’re in for with this. I’m so fucked up.”

“You’re not fucked up, Cash.”

“It’s not normal to have these urges.”

“Rape fantasies? Being degraded? Hate to tell you, Sparrow, but those things are popular with women. It’s just that most are too scared to ask for it or don’t have anyone they trust enough to fulfill them.”

“It’s not just those two. There’s another one.”

“Oh?” I raise my eyebrow and coax a smile from her lips.

“Do you know what free use is?”

Fuck, yes, I know what it is, and so does my dick. It rises to full mast as if nestled in her pretty pink cunt. “Um, yeah.”

“I want that. I want you to fuck me any way you want, where you want, and I want absolutely no choice...”

I smirk. “To be my fuck toy.”

She nods. “Yes. I want to be treated like your fuck toy.”

I smack her round ass cheek again, enjoying how it bounces and makes my dick throb like it has its own heartbeat. Everything about this woman seems hard-wired to my dick. I’m not complaining, but it makes conversations like this more difficult. I can treat her like a fuck toy, bang her brains out, and have her coming back for more. But I don’t want that to be the reason she wants me. Which is why I’d need to take it out of the bedroom if I have any hope of getting this woman addicted not only to my dick but to me.

I nudge her legs apart and push my dick into her as I place kisses on her face.

Her pussy hugs my cock, and I groan, fighting back the need to thrust. This isn't about me fucking her body right now. It's about using what she loves about my body to win her damn heart.

“I want to sleep like this, with me inside you.”

She smiles, dragging her leg over my waist to pull me closer, and drifts off.

Chapter 12

C *ash*

I wake up in Gunner's bed, cocooned in his blankets.

I smile, remembering last night and how we talked into the early hours. For the first time in a long time, I'm happy.

Sitting up in bed, I take in the space in the morning light. Gunner has good taste. A few photos hang on the walls, mostly of him and his mother over the years. She's beautiful. It makes sense since Gunner is a stone-cold fox. The man oozes sex appeal, and his face is a chiseled work of art.

My eyes land on his collection of guitars, all Fenders and Gibson's, but one in particular catches my eye—a famous Gibson played by John Lennon. I'm shocked to see something so expensive sitting in the corner of a bedroom. It must be worth at least two million dollars.

“My mom gave me that when I turned twenty-one. I think it was her way of apologizing for all the fucked-up shit she did in my childhood.” Gunner's voice breaks me out of my shock.

I turn to see him leaning against the doorway, holding a breakfast tray. A

pang of sympathy jolts my heart as I approach him. If anyone understands messed-up mothers, it's me.

I pluck a raspberry from the tray and put it in my mouth. "Hundred thousand plus records in a bar office and two-million-dollar guitars in the corner of a bedroom, and here I thought you were just a small business owner."

Moving past me, Gunner places the tray on a side table. His fingers glide over the neck of the guitar lovingly. "It was the only way my mother knew how to apologize. She threw money at anything she wanted to make right, usually with random stuff unsuitable for a kid. In her heyday, she gave me a bottle of fifty-year-old Scotch." He shrugs. "I was fifteen. I think in her drunken haze, she forgot I was a minor."

Sadness lives in his eyes as he turns to look at me. It's the same sadness I see staring back at me in the mirror.

"Why didn't you sell the guitar? I mean, that would give you enough coin to create a new life, even a new identity, if you wanted." I move to him, needing to touch him to ease some of his pain.

Our hands collide, and I feel his skin and the rough strings of the guitar at the same time.

"This baby was the only thing she ever got me that meant something. Before my dad died and my mom went on a bender, she sang to me—well, we sang together. We blasted Beatles records and sang at the top of our lungs. When I was small, she sang 'Beautiful Boy' to me instead of the usual lullabies. I remember how tall I felt after she was done."

Gunner pushes the sweet memory away, but not before I glimpse the pain caused by a mother he adored in his eyes.

"She used to replace the word daddy with mommy." He forces out the words

as if they're stuck and he's choking on them.

I pick up the guitar and place it on my lap. The familiar chords flow from my hands as I sing the song that brought him so much joy. My connection with the music floods my heart. The little girl who prayed for a parent who would sing to her at night when life got too much to bear. I let the sadness for that little girl pour out of me, along with the longing that my mother cared for *me* more than my ability to bring in a paycheck.

Gunner's voice harmonizes with mine in the chorus, and we sing away the pain, getting lost in each other. It's a connection that transcends anything I thought I would find in my life.

We don't stop at that one song. Gunner grabs another guitar, and we strum together as we follow it up with other well-loved Beatles songs: "In My Life," "Help," "Dear Prudence," "Blackbird," and ending with my favorite, "Here Comes the Sun."

Some songs I pick, and Gunner sings the opening lyrics. When the last chord plays and the final words are sung, Gunner and I look at each other, enjoying the silence and letting the calm of being beside each other comfort us and take away the pain we've both suffered.

"Where have you been all my life?" Gunner asks, finally breaking the silence.

"In New York City, being a pop sensation," I joke.

Gunner cracks a smile, and I swear it's so bright it could put the sun to shame. He moves over to me, lowering to his knees and leaning forward slowly until his lips are a breath from mine. "Well, I'm grateful you're here now."

"You told me you couldn't sing?"

"I can't."

Is he kidding? Gunner's voice is an instrument, deep and rough. He can hold a note like no other, and his rasps pull emotion from your soul. "Gunner, you've got one of the best voices I've ever heard."

He scoffs, waving his hand in the air. "You've got to say that because you want into my pants."

"No, seriously. Why haven't you tried to pursue a music career? It probably would have been easy for you, being a nepo baby and all."

"I have. But as much as I love the music, there are things I love more. You know firsthand what the industry does to you, breaks you down. And don't get me started on the tabloids and the fans. They think just because they love your music, they somehow know you. I don't want any part of that."

I drop my gaze to the floor and nod because those were the two things that made me run.

Chapter 13

Gunner

I hate having to work tonight. I want to stay in bed with Cash, but when you own a business, you can't fuck nonstop day and night.

The bar is busy tonight. Locals and the university kids from a town over mingle, and based on the amount of liquor the other bartender, River, is slinging, it's going to be a good night.

"Hello, handsome."

The world stands still, and the crowd at the bar disappears as her sweet voice cascades in my ear.

I don't say a word to her. I grab a bottle of Gray Goose, a small tub of ice, and a glass. "Cover for me, River. I've got some shit to take care of in the office."

River nods and moves to the next patron. He's surrounded by a crowd, but he's too smart to tell me no. I'm a decent boss, and this is a sweet gig.

I tug at Cash's hand, and she giggles as she follows me. Fuck, I love her

laugh.

Once inside the office, I lock the door behind us. I don't want one of the serving staff running in here with a crisis.

“What are you doing? You're swamped out there.”

I don't respond. Leaving Cash at the door, I sit down behind my desk. “Come here, beautiful.” I slide my chair back and pat my lap.

A small smile spreads across her lips as she stands and walks toward me.

“On your knees. Crawl for me.”

Cash licks her lips and falls to her knees. It almost takes me out. My queen is on her knees for me.

She places her hand on the wood floor, moving it toward me, followed by the slide of her knee.

“Stick out your tongue.”

She doesn't fight my demand. Her pink tongue pushes out, and all I can think about is sinking my dick into her hot mouth.

I lean back, eyes on her. As much as I love degrading her, I also want to worship at her feet and kiss her from head to toe while vocalizing my adoration with flowery words.

I watch her face as she lands at my feet. I grip her waist and force her onto my lap, her hot center against my hard shaft. Pushing my fingers into her hair, I pull her lips to mine. I start soft and slow, and her arms curl around my shoulders, kneading my back.

She moans into my mouth and rocks her pussy against my dick. The friction is pure heaven. I press against her lips with need as my kiss becomes hungry.

I devour her, taste her, lick at her mouth, and take her in. I want to own her, be inside her, on top of her, all around her.

“You’re so beautiful. So sweet and sexy.”

Her eyes flash with desire and something else, desperation, perhaps.

“Let’s see how dirty America’s sweetheart can be.”

Cash blushes, and her pupils dilate.

“I mean it.” I slip my fingers through her damp folds as my teeth graze the edge of her nipples through her shirt. “Don’t make me repeat it.”

She sucks her bottom lip between her teeth. I yank the shirt over her head. My eyes flick down to her chest, taking in the black lace of her bra, her heavy tits flushed and begging for my teeth to sink into them.

I move my hands behind her back and unhook the clasp. Her eyes are wide and round as the fabric drops to the floor at my feet. My gaze trails down her soft body. I want to feast on her delicious curves for days. My cock throbs harshly, the bite of the zipper a cold reminder of the warmth awaiting me.

Unable to take it any longer, I palm my rock-hard cock through my jeans. My other hand molds her breast, tweaking, twisting, and massaging her nipple until she squeals and gyrates on my hand.

“Could stare at you all fucking day, Sparrow.” I flick my thumb over the nub.

Her beautiful eyes gaze up at me, so raw and vulnerable, everything I didn’t know I’d been so damn desperate for.

Pulling her off me, I stand and gaze at her. Goddamn, her body is perfect. A fucking work of art, a creation that could put any Renaissance painting to shame. “Stay there.”

It pains me to turn my back on her as I walk to the loveseat on the other side of the room. Sitting on the dark leather, I take her in. Her long dark hair, the curves of her body hugged by tight jeans, her large breasts with perfect pink nipples, her pouty red lips, and the dark charcoal liner on her eyes.

“Take off your jeans and panties.”

Cash’s hands visibly tremble as she follows my orders.

“Such a whore. I can see your pussy glistening for me. See the bucket,” I nod toward the Grey Goose and ice bucket.

Her head tilts and her eyes widen as she nods.

“I want you to get on the table, spread your legs, and take your time feeding three ice cubes into your cunt.”

Cash’s thick ass sits on the edge of my desk, her legs open, giving me the perfect view of her trimmed little cunt. The pink center has me groaning with the urge to lodge my tongue deep and have her gush all over my face.

She moves her hand to the bucket of ice, removing a piece. She holds the ice in her hand and makes eye contact with me. Her body jerks as she glides the freezing cube over her center, moving it up and down before pressing the tip into her entrance.

My eyes land on her panties on the floor, and I pick them up. “Push it into that hungry little cunt.”

Cash whimpers as the biting cold invades her, and my dick twitches. With my sparrow, I’m conflicted between making love to her and watching as she debases herself at my command. Knowing that she experiences comfort from pain and humiliation makes my cock pound with need. I’m providing a service for her, taking care of her, and I feel ten feet tall.

We gaze at each other, ice blue to warm brown. I tangle my hands in her hair, yanking her head back, and watch her face contort with torment and delight. Placing the tip of her panties to her lips, I force my fingers and the fabric down. Her mouth widens for me, and I shove it all in.

Sex with Cash is the meaning of life. It's a full-circle experience that transcends all barriers and blockades in my soul. The way we fuck is an exploration of the human condition and unravels why we see the world as we do. Our scars become buttons that unlock truths. The world is created with moments of pure pain and immense joy. The scars we collect in life, both on our skin and in our soul, are the fabric that creates who we are. Without moments of suffering and darkness, there could never be times of happiness and light.

Cash takes a breath, trying to calm her body with the shock of the ice lodged in her warm cunt.

“Use your foot to tap the back of my head three times if it gets too much. Avoid my head if you want me to continue.” My hands trail down her thigh to her foot. Grabbing her ankles, I lift her ass, giving my ravenous eyes a bird's-eye view of her holes.

“Add another,” I order as my hand moves to the lube on my desk—something I've made sure to have in my office since meeting Cash. Thoughts of her naked body run through my mind like an all-day movie marathon, making me need immediate relief on the regular.

“I like you like this. Mouth gagged. Ass and pussy open for business. Can't hear your pathetic screams as I tear your holes apart.”

Placing her ankles over my shoulders, I lube up my fingers and press the tip of my index finger against her puckered hole. Cash squirms as I push slowly into her ass, letting her adjust. Her ankles lock around my neck as I push my

finger to the knuckle and add another, stretching her out. “I can’t wait to see my cum leaking out of here, Sparrow. To know I own every one of your pathetic holes. I should force you to walk out of the bar naked, let everyone see what fuck hole slut you are. Let them see how you like to be used, that you’ll do anything to be fucked.”

Grabbing the Gray Goose with my free hand, I pour it into her navel and her pussy before slowly inserting it into her wet, open cunt, pushing the ice cubes in further.

I chuckle as Cash grips the edges of my desk and pushes her sweet cunt up. “Look at my little whore, desperate to get her holes stuffed. I bet if I made you horny enough, you’d go out in that bar and let any man shove his dick in you until he blows his hot load.”

Her eyes widen, but the heaving of her chest and her dripping cunt tells me my dirty talk sets her on fire. One thing I’ve learned about my girl is the filthier the talk, the hotter she becomes.

I move my fingers in and out of her ass as I push the bottle further into her cunt, salivating as the liquor pours inside her. The more she thrashes, the harder my cock gets. Now, the monster is rattling its cage to break free.

I maintain a rhythmic speed with my fingers as her muffled moans become louder, drowning the noise of the crowded bar on the other side of the door. I fuck her until her body writhes and she shakes. With my fingers in her ass, I drop to my knees. Replacing the bottle with my mouth, I drink from her pussy, letting her cream and the vodka drench my face.

Cash’s hips buck, and her legs close firmly around my throat, almost choking me with the sheer force of their grip. If I die right now, I’ll be content because nothing, and I mean *nothing*, is as divine as the taste of her sweet cunt.

“How rude of me, Sparrow,” I say as I shove another ice cube into her pussy. “I should’ve offered you a drink. Let me just fix that.”

I push the lip of the bottle into her cunt again and pour more vodka into her. I pump the bottle into her wet pussy a few times and hold the glass under her ass. “Push it out.”

Dislodging the bottle, I watch as liquid trickles out, followed by two pieces of half-melted ice.

Chapter 14

Cash

The way Gunner manipulates my body is God-like. He doesn't show mercy in these moments, giving me things I didn't know I wanted. He knows my body and desires so well that I wonder if he can read my mind. His words of utter humiliation flip a switch inside me, turning me on without even touching me.

Lifting my head, I see the arrogant look on his face masking his need. His nostrils flare and his pupils dilate as he gazes between my spread legs at my pussy. His impressive cock is hard, a clear indication of his discomfort and need.

Gunner holds up the martini glass in one hand while his other is busy with my ass. He maneuvers his fingers in me so nonchalantly, and it's the hottest thing I've ever experienced. His confidence and ease are so damn attractive. He doesn't care about how others react. He lives his life for himself, something I admire and envy.

His fingers move out of my ass, and a hushed sorrow befalls me. The emptiness I knew before him is a heavy weight on my heart. I never thought

sex with another person could fill the barren holes in my soul, but it does with Gunner.

The vacant feeling is short-lived as his hot tongue invades me. The act is taboo and unnerving. I've never had a man lick my ass before, but Gunner has his tongue in there, lapping like a man dying of thirst who's found water. My head falls back, and I relax with the melodic movement of his long, hot tongue. I wonder if Gene Simmons would feel insecure around Gunner's tongue.

"Fuck, even your ass tastes good," he growls like an animal.

Cool air hits my ass, and I shiver. Resting on my elbows, I stare at Gunner, emotion and lust consuming me. Gunner opens the lube and pours a generous amount on my ass and his cock. I don't know when he pulled down his pants, being so far gone in my lust, but I'm glad he did.

He holds the Martini glass to my lips. "You look thirsty, cum dump. Open up."

The cool glass presses against my lips, and I open. Gunner tips the glass, and the liquor burns a trail down my throat.

"Good girl."

Gunner praises me as easily as he degrades me. But what shocks me is how my body responds to both, like when he made me come the other day. I've never responded to sweet touches and kind words during sex, but I come undone so easily with him.

He notices my starved stare as his tattooed hand glides from the tip of his cock, where his piercing gleams, to the base of his shaft.

"You want me to fuck your tight little ass, don't you?"

I swallow and lick my lips, barely able to get the word out. “Yes.”

“Tell me you’re a dirty whore, only good for fucking. Admit you’re a filthy cum dump. My personal fuck toy.”

No one I’ve ever been with has asked me to degrade myself, but it’s so dirty, pathetic, and mind-blowingly hot.

“I’m your worthless fuck hole. Just a pathetic slut, only worth something when you fill my holes. Please, Gunner, shove your dick up my ass and make me your little bitch. Let me know that I’m a pathetic little whore.”

“Words are cheap. I’m a man of action. Slap your whore face and spit on yourself. I want to see what you’ll do to get a taste of my dick in your tight asshole.”

Arousal floods through me, and my face stings from the rapid slaps of my open palm. My spit lands above my cleavage and glides down slowly.

“Good girl,” Gunner growls. “Now scoop up that spit and eat it.”

I’m utterly humiliated and on fire simultaneously. I realize I’ll never say no to this man when it comes to sex. He touches every nerve ending in my body until I combust and manipulates my mind in such provocative ways that I crave more. My hands shake as my fingers wipe the spit and move it to my mouth. Opening wide, I make a show of it. My tongue slips out and connects with my finger. I hold the spit on the tip, leaving it on display for Gunner.

“Swallow, you little slut. Swallow it for Daddy.”

Pulling my tongue back, I swallow my depravity, and Gunner smiles.

He presses his cock at the entrance of my ass, pushing slowly until the head invades me. There’s a sharp pain. Fuck. I know he’s big, but I wasn’t expecting to get my ass fucked by his horse cock.

“You doing okay?” he asks, breaking his bad-guy role-play to check on me. His eyes are soft and warm.

The pain quickly ends, and I’m immersed in pleasure. “Yes,” I moan. “I like it.”

Gunner’s hand skims up my body, and he seizes my stomach. His touching the fat on my body doesn’t feel foreign like that first time. I no longer want to shy away and hide the parts of my body others told me not to love. His hands wash away the lies I’ve been told and allow me to bask in my beauty. His hands on my flesh, exploring parts I was convinced to hide, are the rainbow after a storm.

Most people would find these acts with Gunner disgusting, shameful, and depraved. But it’s a source of liberation I’ve never known before. All those parts of me I had to hide are now visible like neon signs in the darkness. Gunner sees me, the real me, the me I view in the mirror. And he wants me. Sex with him, although dirty and rough, means so much more. With Gunner, sex is peace. With Gunner, sex is safe. With Gunner, sex is home.

“Fuck,” Gunner groans as he moves from my stomach to my breasts and grips my nipples. Pinching the nubs, he pulls them with force, ensuring I feel the pain in my pulsating clit.

His eyes close, and he lifts his face as if praying to heaven. He groans as he stiffens and releases deep within me before collapsing on my body.

I wrap my arms around him, and there we stay, with Gunner in my ass, surrounding me like a blanket.

Gunner kisses my lips. “I’m gonna go clean up, but I don’t want you to move. Stay right here as you drip my cum from your ass like a well-used whore.”

Chapter 15

Gunner

I clean up in record time. Didn't think it was possible to wash up so fast, but the only part I focus on is my dick. I scrub like I'm Mr. Clean, wanting to impress. Thoughts of fucking Cash flood my mind like God flooded the earth.

I rush to my office from the attached small three-piece bathroom to find Cash still on my desk, legs open, and my cum dripping from her sexy ass.

"Good girl. You did as you were told. I think that deserves a reward.

"I want to taste you," she whispers.

My heart slams in my chest. She's beautiful and all mine. Mine to break and put back together with my tongue, my fingers, my dick, and my love. The urge to claim her again by ramming my dick in her pussy and making her admit I own her overcomes all logical thought.

"You don't know what you do to me," I confess, my cock throbbing with the need to consume her sweet body again and again.

Picking her up, I walk us back to the loveseat. “Baby, every time you look at me with those innocent eyes, it feels like a vise wrapped around my cock.” I tuck my nose into her hair as my control wavers. “I want you so badly. No matter how often I bury myself in your body, I always want more. I’m addicted to you, Cash. I’m not sure if I can survive without you.”

Her soft fingertips massage my scalp, soothing the hollow parts of my soul. Her eyes search my face. “I never thought I’d find someone who sees me, Gunner. Who looks past everything else to who I am. I ran here to find myself, but I found something better. I found you.”

I place her on the loveseat, and she moves to her knees, looking up at me with innocent seduction. She is the embodiment of Madonna and the whore. She’s the complete package; my fantasy made real. Her long fingers circle my length, and she guides the tip of my cock into her mouth.

“Cash...” I suck in a breath from her slightest touch.

My heart beats fast, and my cock throbs angrily as I look at her. At this moment, I have no doubt. She’s mine.

My breath comes in rough pants as she teases the tip of my dick at the edges of her pretty red mouth. I lick my lips and watch, riveted, as she takes my shaft in hand. Trailing her tongue up my length, she plunges me fully into her mouth, moaning as she takes me to the back of her throat.

A savage growl escapes me as she tries to swallow me whole. “Such a good girl. That’s it, baby. Swallow that cock. Tell Daddy what a good little slut you’ll be for him.”

Cash peers up at me, and our gazes lock. She slips her hands up my body, her fingers dusting over the cut muscles of my abdomen. She sucks and swirls that talented little tongue before taking me to the root and swallowing me whole again.

“That’s it, baby. Take me all the way,” I growl as I rock my hips slowly. “Such a good girl on your knees for me. You like it when I fuck your mouth, Sparrow? How does it feel to know that’s the only thing you’re good for?”

I groan as I set the pace with my hands on her head, my fingers in her hair, guiding her head back and forth on my shaft.

I spy the small pool of cum under her ass. My cum. She’s my girl, and that’s my cum. I push my foot between her legs to shove them apart, preventing her from gyrating her pussy. A sense of pride blooms at knowing how turned on she is because my cock is choking her.

I want to reach a hand down and slide my fingers through the wetness of her pussy. “Touch your pussy and show me how wet my cunt is for me,” I demand.

I almost come as she gags on my dick and swirls her tongue around my piercings. Her hand disappears between her thick thighs. She casts her head up, her pretty, mascara-smudged eyes blazing into my soul. Black smeared on her cheeks, and red lipstick smeared around her mouth.

I tap the back of her head on my cock and hold her to me. “Show me how wet you are for me.”

Cash pulls out her wet, glistening finger and raises it to me.

Bending down, I suck her digit, savoring her delicious, distinct flavor. “Mmm, filthy girl. You like being a whore for me, don’t you, baby?”

Cash sputters under my hold, her nose against my flesh, my cock attacking her throat until my balls tighten.

“I’m gonna cum in that slut mouth. You’re going to take it all in and hold it for me. Don’t swallow. Got it, cumdump?”

Cash nods, and I explode into the heat of her mouth.

Pulling back, I watch as spit and thin ropes of my cum connect her lips to the tip of my dick. She's so fucking beautiful, debased for me.

My hands move under her arm as I sit up on the loveseat. "Spit it in my mouth, baby. Give me all that cum."

Cash leans over me and drizzles her spit and cum into my mouth. Gripping her hair, I push her toward me, crushing her to my mouth. My cock stirs back to life as we swap the fluids back and forth between us. I push her down, get on top of her, and spit it on her before smearing it all over her face.

Pulling her legs up, I bury my face in her sweet pussy, desperate to taste her again. I lick and swirl my tongue, pressing it into her entrance before flicking at her clit again. I suck and pull at her throbbing clit with my teeth until she's completely clean of all the wetness dripping down her thighs. Finally, I thrust one finger inside and hook it. "Don't come."

I pull against her walls as I add another finger and suck on the bundle of nerves. She moans and arches, losing control as I knead her breast in one hand.

"Gunner, please. I need to cum. Please, let me cum." She squirms and begs for more.

I nip at her clit. "Hold it, Sparrow. Be a good girl and do as you're told. I want you to come with me thrusting in and out of this sweet pussy."

"Gunner, I can't. Oh, God, I can't anymore," she moans as I suck and pull at her nipple and thrust my fingers in and out of her.

A sick desire tugs at me, and I add a third finger, watching as she stretches for me. My dick jerks at the image of invading her up to my wrist. She'd scream as I stretched her cunt, punching deep, making her squirt harder than

ever before.

“The longer you hold it, the more intense it’ll be. Wait for me; let me get you there,” I growl and ease up on the pressure. My fingers push in and pull out, swirling around her clit, spreading her arousal, and trailing it up her body. “Love playing with these hard little nipples.” I flick, spreading her arousal there. “Put it in your mouth.”

She leans up, desire swirling in her eyes, then screams as I squeeze her nipple.

“Be a good fuck toy and put your nipple in your mouth.”

“Everything you say is so hot...” Her voice is throaty. “Even if I wanted to say no, my body wouldn’t let me.”

I press the flesh of one breast up high to her lips, squeezing and forming the creamy flesh into a round globe until her tongue flicks out at her nipple.

“That’s my pretty slut. Suck those tits for Daddy. He enjoys watching you be a whore for him, a complete pathetic fuck hole to use. Such a good girl. Look how happy you’re making me, baby. Look at your cock. I’m gonna fill that pretty cunt, flood it to the brim.”

I flick at the other nipple while I watch her lips. She takes the nipple in her mouth and sucks and pulls. A fresh wave of desire floods between her legs as she sucks and pleasures herself.

“That’s it, Sparrow.” I thrust three fingers into her again before adding a fourth, delving and overwhelming every nerve. I move slowly, taking my time to build her up again. My head dips between her legs, and my lips attack her clit as I continue to watch her lips around her nipple.

“Fuck, I can’t anymore, Gunner. I can’t. It feels too good,” she pants against her breast as her pussy twitches with an impending orgasm.

“You gonna come for me, baby?”

“Yes,” she moans.

My dick’s long and thick and aimed straight for her. “Not without me, pretty girl.”

Her warm eyes watch me keenly as I pin her arms over her head and sink into her. Our eyes lock as I thrust deep into her cunt. “Gonna keep you, Cash. I own you. You’re mine.”

I groan and grasp a luscious breast, kneading it. As much as I want to fist her, there are things I want more at the moment. I mold her other breast, flicking my thumbs over her nipples.

“Gunner,” she moans my name as an orgasm rips through her body.

My nerve endings fire through my system as she comes. I continue to thrust, grabbing at her thighs and pulling her close. Her legs wrap around my hips.

I nip at her neck and a fresh wave of arousal pools between her legs. “Mmm, love this pussy.”

Gripping her hips, I pound in and out. “I want this every day. I want you so well-fucked, you’ll never have time to feel what life is like without me inside you.”

“Feels so full when you’re inside me.” Her voice lowers another octave as I thrust my cock in and out of my pussy.

“I can’t take it anymore,” she gasps.

“Sure you can, Sparrow. Feel it. Feel me taking you. Owning this sweet body. This pussy, this ass.” I enunciate each word with a thrust. “It’s mine. If you ever think about letting another man near what’s mine, I’ll kill him.” I groan as I slip into her further, and a new orgasm shakes her.

“Stretch my pussy, Gunner. I want you to fist me, to fuck me with your cock and a dildo, stuffing me until I can’t take anymore. I want you to fuck me so hard and so deep that I pass out from the pain. When I first saw how big you are...I was terrified it would hurt. You’re as thick as steel. I wasn’t sure how it could fit, and even if it did, there was no way it could feel good. But now all I want is for you to destroy my pussy, to make me beg for you to stretch it nice and deep.”

I still, running my hands up her back, around her torso, caressing her skin and sending shivers racing through her body. “You’re in charge here, baby. No matter what. I will do what you want. I will fuck you hard, and destroy you, shove my fist up your cunt until you arch off the floor. But it’s all for you. I’ll make all your fantasies and dreams come true. Whatever you want, I’ll do.”

I stop and take deep breaths as I knead at the flesh of her ass cheeks, rocking us. A low moan escapes her throat as the sensations become overwhelming—twinges of desire mixed with the headiest of pleasure and the most delicious sensation of being fucking alive for the first time.

I thrust steadily as my fingers tug and massage her clit. Waves of pleasure unfurl from deep inside and roll out slowly, causing her body to go limp and her eyelids to flutter closed on a soft moan. She whimpers as the pleasure rushes through her system.

My thrusting speeds up, and my fingers tighten on the flesh of her ass as my entire body shudders and quakes. I groan, feeling my cock twitch and empty deep inside her. My balls tighten with my release as my chest heaves. My pumping slows before finally coming to a stop, and I lean over, caging her against me.

My palms smooth up her torso, tracing across her skin, causing goose bumps to form and feel-good pheromones to erupt and release.

I sigh and smile into her arm. “My favorite part is holding you after fucking you like an animal,” I whisper in her ear before slowly pulling out of her.

I tuck her under my arm and trail my fingertips along her shoulder with my nose buried in her hair. “I want to stay here all night and hold you, but I’ve kind of gotta head back to work. Go back to my place, get into my bed, legs open, and wait for me to come back and fill this tight cunt.”

Cash Leigh might not realize it yet, but I’m never letting her go.

This little sparrow is mine.

Chapter 16

C *ash*

I turn to the clock on Gunner's side table. I've been watching the time tick by slowly for the last hour. The last month has been amazing—beyond amazing. Gunner Shaw wasn't what I was looking for. He definitely wasn't what I expected to find when I left New York, but he's everything I need.

Gunner, simply put, is perfect.

Turning to my side, I see his face peacefully sleeping. The moonlight illuminates his pouty lips and long dark lashes, juxtaposed with the dark tattoo etched on his neck—a skull with a blade going through its eye. I'm not sure a man who looks like he could cut out your heart and eat it should be so beautiful.

A smile forms on my lips as a sweet melody swirls in my mind. I gently caress his face, careful not to wake him as I rise from the bed, draped in Gunner's soft cotton Ramones t-shirt. I walk to the guitar in the corner and pick it up. My fingers glide along the neck, and I close my eyes, cherishing the warmth the wood and nickel strings ignite in me. It's been a long time since my love for music has been pure. A long time since it was solely for the

artistry and not for the money.

Plucking the strings is so natural, like an extension of my being. I'm so lost in my mind that I don't notice the knock on the door right away. The sound becomes louder and louder, and a woman's shriek is so ferocious that it almost splits my ear drums.

"Gunner! Gunner, get up," I say while shaking him out of a deep slumber.

When his eyes open, they appear like they might bulge out of his head.

"Fuck," he mutters, stumbling around the room and throwing on his discarded clothing. "Get dressed. Quick," he orders, shoving my clothing at me, one piece at a time.

"That's something I don't hear often from you," I mumble.

Confusion bubbles inside me. I'm unsure why Gunner's being so stern. After last night, I assumed we'd gotten closer. The way he's acting now makes me uneasy.

"You don't have a girlfriend, do you? Was all this some fucked-up game? Are you a cheating piece of shit?" I ask, shoving my sweater over my head and pulling it down.

"I have a girlfriend."

Red. Big blotches of red blur my vision. Without thinking about it, I grab the wineglass on the nightstand and throw it at his head. "You fucking scum bucket. I know a lot of assholes. I never thought I would get tied up with one."

I rush to leave the room when he grabs my arm and pulls me to him. "I have a girlfriend who goes from being a good little slut to a hell demon in two seconds flat. You're the only girlfriend in my life, Sparrow. Relax."

My eyes lift from his grip on my biceps to his steel-blue eyes. “Then why are you freaking out as if another woman is about to catch you having an affair?”

“She isn’t another woman. Well, I guess she is, but it’s not what you think,” Gunner says in a frantic rush.

“Isn’t that what all cheating scumbags say? *It’s not what you think.* I know I’m young, but I’m not a complete moron,” I spit at him. I shake off his hold and push him aside, blinking back tears.

“Hey...” Gunner grabs my arm again. “It’s my mother.”

My feet freeze to the ground at his words. The room spins, yet I’m firmly in place. Loretta Shaw, the woman who ignited my love of music, is on the other side of that door.

I tidy my hair and try to smooth the wrinkles on my shirt.

“Are you prepping?”

“It’s Loretta Shaw. She’s about to find me in her only child’s apartment. I don’t want her to think I look like garbage. I need to set a good first impression.”

Gunner stares at me with a panicked smile. He grabs my hands in his. “My mother is difficult.”

“It’s Loretta Shaw!” I yell.

Her slurred voice reaches us from the other side as she jiggles the door handle. “Who the hell is in there, Gunner? Open the damn door.”

Gunner gives me an apologetic look and rushes to open the door. I’m rendered speechless as I finally see my musical hero.

This isn’t the same woman I’ve seen in magazines, full of life, wearing

beautiful ball gowns. She was a feminist in denim-washed jeans, her fiery red curls tied back in a loose ponytail, wailing on a guitar as if she were born to play.

The woman staring back at me now looks like a ghost. Unkempt hair. Eyes sunken and ragged. Her once glowing skin now pale and withered.

This isn't the Loretta Shaw I grew up watching. This is a mean drunk on her way to rock bottom.

This is Gunner's mother.

Chapter 17

Gunner

“**W**ho the hell is this, Gunner?” Mom walks into my room, the smell of her morning shot still on her breath.

I certainly didn’t intend for Cash and my mom to meet this way, but there’s no turning back now.

“Mama, meet Cash. She’s”—I turn to my sparrow, twining our fingers—“my girlfriend.”

Cash’s fingers twitch in mine, and her eyes catch and hold my gaze. I smile at her, more sure of this thing between us than ever. I would have called her my life, my future, my forever, but my mom is already volatile, and tipping her over the edge isn’t wise.

“Girlfriend? Since when? Not every girl you mess around with is girlfriend material, son.” My mom’s eyes have trouble focusing on me.

Cash tenses beside me. Her hand grips mine like a vise. I hate seeing her upset. I hate that it’s my mother upsetting her. I can sure as fuck guarantee that if my mother becomes too much and I have to choose, it’s going to be

Cash by my side.

My mother has been a mess for most of my life. I have pockets of memories to remind me that she can be a loving mother, but those are few and far between after the age of eight. My mother's first love isn't me, my father, or her many lovers. Mom's first love is the burn of whiskey that numbs the world around her. Maybe that's the reason I opened a bar. Fucked up, I know.

I grit my teeth, glaring at my mother. "This is a helluva lot more than messing around."

"That's what you said when you fucked Celia after you fucked all my other backup singers." My mother turns to Cash. "He's good at makin' you feel like a star, baby girl, just like his daddy. I promise you, sweetheart, you're only the new flavor. Once that pussy loses its sparkle, my boy will stop being interested."

Dropping Cash's hand, I approach my mother, getting in her face. "That's enough, Loretta. You don't get to come into my house and talk to my girl like that. I love you, Mom. I always will. But don't test me. There's been no one for me but Cash. The first night we met, she sealed the deal. I love her."

Mom arches one drunken eyebrow before spinning on her booted heel and clacking down the hallway.

I groan, turning toward Cash. "I'm sorry about this. She's not usually so..." I trail off, unable to think of the right word.

The fact is, these last few decades have been hard on Mom. The music industry is brutal, and it eventually consumed her, along with the whiskey. That's probably why I ran off with all those older women. They gave me something Loretta couldn't. It took years of therapy to find out how fucked up it was to use sex to deal with a lack of love. It's not like my mother didn't love me. She did, she does. But she loves booze more. Much more.

“You love me,” Cash whispers so low that I almost don’t hear her.

I frame her face, bending and bringing her forehead to mine. “With every fiber of my being, Cash. I love you so much that the thought of being without you makes me feel like the world is about to end. You’re it for me, Cash, and I’d rather be buried six feet under than lose you.”

“Lemme cook you kids some bacon and eggs,” Mom says as she opens the refrigerator.

She pulls out all the condiments. Salad dressing. Ketchup. Mustard. Mayonnaise. Her frown grows by the second as she juggles them in her tiny arms. She’s so plastered that she doesn’t realize she’s pulling out everything except eggs and bacon. It’s not like they’re hidden. I see them in the fridge door.

“Mama, let me take those.” I grab the items and deposit them on the counter. “We’re okay with breakfast for now. I was thinking of takin’ Cash out for greasy diner hash browns. You don’t need to—”

“Stop, stop. Leave me alone.” Mom is annoyed with my fussing.

That’s Loretta Shaw, a fucked-up drunk who can’t handle anyone pointing out that she’s a fucked-up drunk. Taking care of her has been the story of my life, but I’m tired of it. I’ve put so many dreams on hold so she wouldn’t be alone. I moved across the country to keep my eye on her. I’ve lived my life for her.

The urge to yell at her is so strong. It simmers at the edges, about to boil over. But I do what I always do: bite my tongue so she doesn’t spiral out of control. She may look frail, but when that woman digs her heels in, God help anyone who tries to move her.

“Mama, please. Sit and tell me what you’ve got going on today.” I loop her

elbow in mine and try to steer her to the barstools at the kitchen island.

“Gunner, let go of me.” She swats my hands away.

My eyes land on her gnarled fingers, trembling with the need for more alcohol. Or less? It’s hard to tell anymore.

Her cocktail of pills and alcohol clouds her judgment and pollutes her perception of reality. The more I press her into treatment, counseling, or plain connection, the more she rails against me. As far back as I can remember, I’ve never known when my mom was up or down. All I knew was I had to keep her calm before she blew. And right now, I would do anything to keep my mother from blowing with Cash here.

“Mrs. Shaw, let me make you a cup of coffee.” Cash stands across the counter, battling with the coffeemaker.

“Unless you’re puttin’ a little nip of something good in it, I don’t want it.” Her words are abrupt as she digs inside her huge designer purse and pulls out plastic medicine containers. God knows if she needs any of it. Those hack doctors prescribe narcotics like Tic Tacs.

Finally, her fingers wrap around a tiny flask decorated with red rhinestone roses, and she uncaps it. “Johnny Loveless gave me this pretty little thing. I’ve carried it every day since.” Mom winks at Cash and tips her head, drinking a few quick swallows before recapping it. “You know who Johnny Loveless is?” She wipes her mouth, eyes not even looking in Cash’s direction.

“Sure. I grew up on his first three albums. He’s one of my favorites.” Cash’s eyes dart from my mom’s to mine. I sure as fuck hope she isn’t planning an escape route because I’ll end up in jail for kidnapping.

“He sure was a cowboy in the bedroom, let me tell you.” Mama shakes her

head, a deep smile turning up her lips. “The night we played the Opry together, he gave me this. Said he had it made for his wife, but she didn’t sing anywhere near as pretty as I did...”

Fuck, here we go. My mom reminiscing about all her affairs and the marriages she broke up isn’t a conversation I want her to have with my already skittish girlfriend. “Okay, well, always lovely revisiting memory lane, but—”

“Oh, don’t get all jealous of me because you gave up on the career you could’ve had, Gunner. I opened doors for you and gave you the best shot in the business. But instead of climbing that ladder and reaching for the moon, you dropped everything, moved here, and opened a pathetic bar,” my mother rambles.

Good old Loretta Shaw, the queen of country music, the pioneer for women in the industry, and a sloppy drunk who never appreciates what she has unless it can put her in a damn alcoholic coma.

“Hey, Mrs. Shaw. I’d love to hear all about your time in the industry. I’m just coming off my first world tour. There were so many things I want to do better next time. Would you like to take a walk outside with me? We’ll get some fresh morning air and talk music—”

Mom’s eyes hold Cash’s for long beats before she trails her gaze up and down her body. “Do you write your own music?”

“It’s my favorite part,” Cash says with a nervous smile.

“Well, ain’t we two peas in a cute little pod?” Mom grins at me, loops her arm with Cash’s, and lets her guide her out the front door.

I have to do something about my mom, but I haven’t figured out what yet. She wants to fight with me about everything I say rather than find a solution. The only thing I know for sure is that there’s no way I’ll let Cash be in the

orbit of a mean drunk.

I stare through the window like a peeping tom as my mother and Cash wander the front yard. They pause, and Cash says something that makes my mother's face contort like she's just heard the most disgusting thing imaginable. Before I know it, my mother pulls her arm back and slaps Cash in the face.

Chapter 18

Cash

The sting from Loretta's slap leaves me speechless. We came out here to talk about music, life, anything, but I sure as hell didn't expect her to turn on me the second we were alone.

"Get the fuck off my property!" Gunner yells as he barrels out of the house toward us. He pulls me behind him, shielding me from his mother's death glare.

Her eyes widen in disbelief. "You can't be taking the side of some hussy over your own mamma."

"I'm taking the side of the woman who's saved me over the woman who's drowned me."

Gunner's words shock me. I can't imagine how bitter their bite is for Loretta.

"Gunner Finnigan Shaw, how dare you talk to me like that! I'm your mother!"

Gunner fists his hands, and the muscles in his back go taut. It's almost as if

he's holding himself back with an invisible string. "You call yourself a mother? *I've* taken care of *you* my entire life, Mama. I was eight years old the first time you drank so much you fell into the glass coffee table. I'll never forget how you pretended everything was okay as you tucked me into bed and left blood-stained hand prints all over my Spiderman sheets."

Loretta steps back as if Gunner has slapped her like she just slapped me.

But it doesn't slow Gunner down. It's like the dam holding back his emotions has shattered, and the cascading water of his pain drowns everything in its wake. "You want to talk about me fucking around, Loretta? How about when I came home from camp, and you were so fucked out of your mind that you forgot to kick out the three leach musicians in your bed? Want to know why I never did drugs, Mother? Especially since they were in every damn nook and cranny of your house? It was seeing one of those men snort cocaine from your ass crack while you sucked the dick of another because they covered it in blow."

Tears stream down Loretta's face. I'm unsure if they're due to sorrow, shame, or anger. She stares at her son for a moment before she drops her gaze and roots in her bag. I assume she's searching for her flask. "Ungrateful. After everything I've done for you. I should've aborted you like your daddy wanted."

Gunner's snarl is deep and scary. "Don't you dare. That man was a saint. He was there despite everything you put him through. He loved you with all his heart, and you didn't deserve one second of it."

"Gunner," I stammer, grabbing his forearm, desperate to make him stop before he says something he'll regret. "Why don't you walk away? Revisit this once you've had a moment to think about it?"

He turns to me, his blue eyes as cold as ice. "I've had decades to think on it.

I've spent my life deciding for her. Abandoned a successful career with what is now the most successful band in America."

"Successful? Those clowns in masks," Loretta scoffs. She bends to the side to look me in the face. "He and his friends started a weird little band where they wore masks and screamed emo lyrics. Those boys wouldn't have made it anywhere. Absolute no-talent trash."

"Is that why I'm a millionaire, Mother? Because of all the worthless songs my trashy friends perform to millions of fans. Gutless Void has gone triple platinum four times, won ten Grammys, and played to sold-out stadiums. I should've been on that stage, but I gave it up to be near you. To ensure you didn't end up killing yourself."

My feet are heavy like I'm sinking in quicksand. I'm unsure what's more shocking: Gunner being the principal songwriter of one of the world's biggest alternative metal bands or giving up his dreams to take care of his alcoholic mother.

"Go home, Mother. Go home and don't come back until you're ready to get help because I'm not willing to spend another twenty years watching you disintegrate while trying to kill yourself. It's my turn to live my life, and it's your choice if you want to be a part of it."

Gunner entwines his fingers with mine and tugs me inside, leaving his mother mumbling incoherently as she wobbles on his front lawn.

"Gunner, you can't just leave it like this. She's your mother."

He doesn't say a word, stomping to the sink and pouring himself a glass of water. He chugs it back, his hard eyes staring out the window.

I don't know what to say or do, but I can't stand here and let him seclude himself in anger and pity. "When were you gonna tell me you were in the

business? Gutless Void is a pretty big deal.”

Gunner shrugs. “I’m not in the band. No one knows who Gunner Shaw is.”

I move closer, one hesitant step at a time. “Everyone knows who Dirtbag is, though.”

Gunner cracks a smile. “God, that name is so idiotic. Eighteen-year-old Gunner was a moron. The guys did a much better job picking their names than I did. You’d figure the songwriter would pick something more prolific. I thought about changing it, but the labels said it would fuck up brand recognition. I would’ve told them to fuck themselves, but the guys were getting traction, and Dirtbag was helpful.”

Wrapping my arms around his waist, I place my cheek on his back as I croon, “I’m an empty vessel crying into the night, begging for salvation.”

He turns, gazing down at me. “Never thought I’d get so turned on hearing a sexy woman sing my lyrics to me.”

I push him off. “Oh, no, you don’t. You will not fuck me senseless to avoid talking about what happened back there.

Gunner sighs and pushes his hands through his hair, making the dark strands stick up in all directions. “I don’t know what you want me to say, Cash. I was born to a celebrity with so many issues that she self-medicates. So, for most of my life, I’ve raised myself. I should’ve lived my life and let her rot alone, but the guilt of leaving her alone killed me, so I left my dreams in the dust to ensure she didn’t kill herself as quickly.”

“That’s a start,” I whisper.

“Her getting better is a dream I’ve held onto practically my whole life, but I can’t sacrifice my future for her anymore. I’m not giving you up.”

“Who’s asking you to? I’m here, Gunner, but I can’t have you hurting. As much as you want to deny it, you love that woman. I won’t allow you to cut a piece of yourself out to be with me.”

“Your life isn’t here, Cash. It’s in New York. I can’t have you give up your dreams for her, too. I won’t allow it.”

I brush my hand against the stubble on his cheek. “And I won’t allow the man I love to hurt anymore.”

“I don’t know what to do, Cash. I have no idea how to reach her.”

“We’ll figure it out. Together.”

Chapter 19

Gunner

My arms reach out to capture Cash's warmth, but my dreams become nightmares, and I clutch at empty sheets. Reluctantly, I open my eyes and take in the crumpled sheets on her side of the bed.

Getting out of bed, I walk into the kitchen to find that empty of Cash as well.

The lawn appears much different today than it did two weeks ago. That was the last time I saw my mother. I cut all communication. A therapist I saw ten years ago told me to cut ties with Loretta Shaw to allow her to cope alone, hoping she'd give up the bottle. But I couldn't do it. Maybe I was weak. But the day she took out her anger on Cash, something in me snapped.

Picking up my phone from the kitchen counter, I shoot Cash a text.

Hey, beautiful. Where'd you run off to?

Leaving without saying a word isn't Cash's style. I sit by my phone for what feels like hours, staring at the screen like a teen girl waiting to be asked to the prom. I realize how pathetic it is to be so consumed by a woman that you need to know where she is at all times. It's also a little unnerving, but in the

time I've known Cash, she's become the air I breathe.

After three hours of waiting at my kitchen island, tapping my foot nonstop, and drinking five cups of coffee, I grab my car keys. I'm about to search for Cash in the town when she and my mother walk through the front door arm in arm.

"Where have you been," I ask Cash, ignoring my mother.

"You got a text at midnight. I tried to wake you, but you were out cold. Did you take one of my sleeping pills?" The redness in her warm eyes reveals her lack of sleep. She yawns before patting my chest and wandering toward the coffee maker. Taking a mug, she pours a cup and takes a sip. "Instead of calling the cops, I decided to go get her." She digs in her front pocket and tosses me my keys.

I glance at my mother, noticing her trembling hands as she plays with strands of her wet hair. Mom turns to face me, her eyes filled with emotion as she wipes the salty tracks from her cheek. "I think it's time." Her eyes look a little clearer than the last time I saw her. "Well, Cash here has made me realize..." She chokes up, trying to rein the emotions bubbling out of her. "You're so lucky to have found each other...and I'm so lucky to have you for a son."

Mom flings herself at me, crushing me in an embrace. This is the hug I've missed all these years. One of a mother and her child. One filled with unconditional love and pure devotion.

Her eyes meet mine and hang there. "She reminds me of myself when I was young, but she's so much smarter than I ever was. Her gifts are spectacular, and it's not just singing and songwriting. She's made me see what I've been missing. I'm sorry, Gunner. I'm so damn sorry."

In my entire life, I never thought I'd see the day Loretta Shaw expressed

sweet words of regret and love to me. Sure, I'd hoped for it, but I never imagined my childish dreams would come to fruition.

"I was at a bar two hours away. I don't know how I got there or who drove me because my car wasn't anywhere on site. There I was, sitting by a sewer with my vomit decorating my shirt, and I had no one to call for help. Even the only person who'd never abandoned me hated me, and it was my fault.

"I've never hated you, Mom. All I've ever wanted is for you to get the help you need."

"I'm going to get help so I can finally be a better mother to you. I know it's late since you're grown and all, but if you'll let me, I'll try to make it up to you, Gunner." She pats my shoulder, her voice resolute. "Do you still have the phone number for that treatment facility in Nashville?"

I swallow the lump lodged in my throat. "Yeah, I got it." I crush her into a hug. No more words left to say. I've been begging and praying for this day year after year. "We can get you packed up and on the road by noon, Mama, but... why now? Why today, after everything?"

Her weary eyes soften, and a broad smile turns up her lips. "When I was talkin' to your sweet songbird, I saw my future grandchildren in her eyes. I knew I had to be there to shower them with hugs and kisses and love. To mend all the damage I've done to you, my sweet boy."

"You know what, Mama?" I encircled her in a hug and pulled my sparrow in under my other arm. "I've been thinking about those babies, too."

Mom's eyes twinkled with mischief.

"Wait a minute, Gunner Shaw. When were you going to tell *me* about all these babies?" Laughter laces Cash's words.

My heart fucking sings. "Welcome to your future, Sparrow. Classic muscle

cars, Gibson and Fender guitars, and a shit ton of babies. But we can talk about that once Mom is out of rehab.” I turn to my mother. “Do you need me to pack you up?”

“Shouldn’t you call to see if they have a spot for me first?” Mom asks.

“I’ve been paying for a spot for ten years, hoping you’d agree to go. They have a spot and a private room.”

Mom nods. “My suitcase is in your car. I’m ready. Make the call.”

Chapter 20

C *ash*

The drive isn't long, and we're in front of the rehab center three hours later. I feel a sense of relief. This is a step to getting Loretta sober and giving Gunner his mother back.

"You take care of my Gunner now, you hear?" Loretta says as she encases me in a fierce hug.

"Don't worry. I'll make sure he doesn't get into trouble," I reply, hugging her back.

Loretta isn't a bad person. She lost her way. Between the drinking and the depression, she went down a hard road. Now, she wants to live her life instead of letting it pass her by. I'm happy for her and for Gunner. She's finally ready to get the drinking under control so she can heal the wounds she's suffered from for years.

Stepping back, I watch Gunner hug his mother, witnessing their unwavering and unconditional love. It's bittersweet watching them together. I'm beyond happy for Gunner. Loretta taking this massive step shows her desire to finally

make it right. Unlike my mother, Loretta has a sickness that keeps her from being a wonderful mother to Gunner. Mine was just greedy. Even with my mom's attitude, I couldn't leave her to her vices when she got sick. There was still an invisible pull that ensured I was there for her in the end.

Thinking about my mother hurts my heart. She never cared about my siblings or me. It was always more about what we could do for her. My grandmother was the woman who taught me about Loretta Shaw and Johnny Loveless. She was the woman who nurtured me, taught me how to play two instruments, and wiped away my tears when I hurt.

"Hey, beautiful. You okay?" Gunner sneaks up on me, puts his arms around my waist, and pulls me to him.

I quickly wipe away my tears, hoping to hide it from him.

"Hey, Cash, baby. Why are you crying?"

"I'm thrilled for you. You're finally getting your mother back," I say, turning to hug him, desperate to hide my pain in his strong chest.

Gunner pulls away, holding my face in his hands as he searches for the truth. "Don't give me that shit. Something is wrong. What is it?"

"I was thinking about my fucked-up relationship with my mother. It hurts sometimes, you know?" A tear betrays me, escaping from my eye.

"Oh, baby..." Gunner pulls me to him, his touch wiping away all the pain. In his arms, I can finally breathe.

With Gunner, I'm finally free to be who I am. He asks nothing of me. He has no expectations or judgments. He only wants to love me as I am, not what I could be for him.

"I love you, Gunner," I whisper, letting the tears tumble down my face,

soaking his shirt.

He doesn't push away. He continues to hold me, letting me know it will be okay and I'm safe. I appreciate that more than he can ever know.

"I love you too, Cash. More than I ever thought possible. I knew you were a firecracker when you walked into my bar, but now you're *my* firecracker. I wasn't joking about those babies. With you, I see a family, a home filled with love and laughter. I want to grow old with you, to sit on our porch with little grandkids running around, asking us to play guitars and have singalongs. Now that I have you, I'm never letting you go."

"Are you asking me to marry you, Gunner Shaw?"

"No. When I do that, it will be special. My girl deserves the perfect proposal. I'm telling you I'm going to, soon. It's up to me to keep you on your toes, *pop star.*"

Gunner's words make a rumble of laughter escape my lips. With him, even in the sadness, I feel so much joy.

"This was pretty perfect," I whisper, gazing into his eyes.

"No, baby, *you* are perfect. I'm going to make sure you always have my best. *Forever.*"

Chapter 21

Gunner

I tap the side of my leg, proof that my nerves are riding right at the edge. It's not every day you ask the love of your life to marry you.

I want the entire world to know this woman is mine.

Now, all I have to do is ask.

The moment my eyes land on her front door, my heart pounds. I knock instead of walking in without warning as I usually do. I love catching Cash off guard because she usually walks around in panties and one of my T-shirts. My hand moves to my thickening cock, adjusting it as she opens the door.

Her hair is in a messy ponytail, her reading glasses perched on her nose, and a giant smile lifts her cheeks.

A smile just for me.

I push through the door, encircling her in my arms and spinning her. "You're a vision, future Mrs. Shaw."

She giggles as she tries to wiggle out of my grip. "I don't need your sarcasm

today, Shaw. I was up most of the night writing my next Billboard number-one album.”

“Is that so?” I hum against her neck, walking us through the massive wooden doors and kicking it closed with my boot. “I’ve been working on something, too.”

“Oh, yeah?” She nods at the guitar on the worn leather sofa.

Instead of dropping her at my feet, I carry her to the couch, settling her into the oversized cushions before depositing a slow kiss on her warm lips.

“Ready for some magic?” I tease, nipping at her bottom lip as I pull away.

Her tiny fingers clutch at my collar, pulling me back in. I settle between her thighs, already desperate to be inside her. I saw her yesterday afternoon when I dropped her off before my shift at the bar, but it feels like a fucking eternity.

“Hit me with your magic, Shaw. I want to hear Gutless Void’s next number-one hit written by the magician known as Dirtbag,” she murmurs against my lips.

I grin, getting control of myself long enough to pull away and slide the guitar between us. “Okay...”

I strum a few notes, and she leans forward, legs entwined with mine, as I play the opening tune. Finally, the first few words of the song start, and before I’ve even finished the first verse, she’s wiping away tears.

Life without you left me lost.

Searching, longing in the nightly frost...

I look away when I reach the chorus, or there would be no way I could finish the song while staring into the sweet eyes that inspire me. When the final chorus whispers past my lips, a line about love bringing two busted souls

back to life, I can't finish the remaining chords because she launches herself into my arms. The guitar falls to the floor with a clatter before our lips connect.

"You're the sweetest man I've ever known."

Her words cut through my heart. The realization that I'll never be alone another day in this life is like a dark cloud lifting from my shoulders. "I love you, Sparrow."

I kiss her softly, hands slipping her pants down her thighs to cup her round ass cheeks.

Her fingers fumble open my zipper, and we quickly remove our remaining clothing. I thrust into her as gently as I can manage.

"You're my entire heart." I kiss across her shoulders and between her breasts, sucking and nipping at her creamy flesh before I can't take it anymore. "You've ruined me in the best ways."

I thrust fast and deep before she shudders and moans, her release trembling through her muscles and emptying into mine. Searing-hot pleasure spikes through my system and burns through my spine and dick as I lose my head along with her. "Looks like my little slut can be a very good girl."

My hips thrust faster as waves of release sink through me into her. I desperately try to catch my breath and let my brain calm from the blissful high. Our chests heave as I release her hips, slipping my palms up the curve of her creamy form before caging myself between her thighs.

"My bed sheets are cold when you're not there. Your heartbeat helps me sleep. Your breath soothes my soul. I love you more than I knew I could ever love anyone. When we're apart, I think of nothing but you. You're my everything." I take slow, deep breaths and stare into her warm eyes. "I want

to make love to you, show you how much you mean to me.” I push a finger in her pussy, letting the knowledge of my cum inside her soothe me. “But the way your well fucked pussy drips my cum brings out something feral in me.”

My fingers fumble in her hair, forming a fist and pulling her head forward. “Look at my pussy, Sparrow.” A glob of cum slips out of her, and I quickly push it back in. “I’m gonna put a baby in you, Sparrow. Can’t have a single drop wasted. I’m going to fill this pretty cunt with my seed until your big, beautiful tummy grows large with my baby. I’ll still fuck you then, Sparrow, fuck you hard and make you scream. You’ll be on all fours getting fucked like a bitch in heat while my baby is in your belly.”

Cash’s legs shake as I add another finger, pushing them to the knuckle. My gaze lands on my cum bathing my digits. “Look how pretty my pussy looks, full of my cum.”

“Gunner,” she moans as she tries to push her legs together.

I shove her knees apart and insert a third finger. “I want to stretch this cunt. See what it can take.” Pushing my fingers in and out of her, I bend and lick the excess cum forced out with the intrusion. Leaning up on my knees, I smile and spit the cum on her face. “Not sure what’s sexier; your face covered in my cum or your juicy well-fucked cunt.”

My perfect girl slips out her tongue and licks at the sperm and spit trickling down her face. Fuck, she’s perfect. So fucking perfect.

I push in another finger, now four fingers deep. “Look at me.” Her head remains bent. “Look at me, Sparrow.” I pull her head up by her hair, forcing her eyes to meet mine. “You *consume* me. You’re so deep inside me that I can barely breathe without you some days. When we’re together, you take my breath away, and when we’re apart, I’m lost.”

Her eyes move to the bottle of olive oil on the counter.

“Dirty girl. Do you want me deeper?”

“Yes. I want you to fill me. Stretch me deep. Since that day in your office, I constantly think about having you inside me all the way to your wrist.

I pull my fingers out of her, keeping my eyes on her exposed cunt as I grab the oil. Getting back into position, I glide four fingers easily into her well-lubricated pussy. Holding the oil, I pour a generous amount on my hand and along her cunt before I edge my hand into her, watching as her pussy swallows it up to my wrist. “Fuck, baby. You’re doing so well, Sparrow. You’re such a good girl, getting this pussy nice and stretched for me.”

“Gunner,” she moans, her head moving quickly from side to side. “Gunner. I’m so full. So, so full.”

Cash’s hands move to my head, and she shoves my face into her cunt. Using my tongue, I lap at her pussy, making circles around her clit before sucking it into my mouth. Her legs shake, and she crushes my head between her thighs as she comes.

I slowly pull my hand out of her wet cunt, admiring how she’s drenched the sofa and the floor below. I lick my palm before offering her my fingers. Cash opens her mouth wide, engulfing me from the tip to the knuckle. Her tongue twirls as I shove my cock in her again, getting lost in her beauty and pure depravity.

I pull her to me, my cock nestled in her warmth. My fiery gaze holds hers. “Marry me. Go to bed with me every night and wake up with me every morning for the rest of my life, Sparrow. Be mine forever.”

“Forever,” she whispers, crashing her lips to mine.

Chapter 22

Cash

“Oh, shit. Wait a second,” Gunner says, jumping off the sofa and leaving me completely exposed.

He picks up his jeans and pulls out a tiny black velvet box. Turning, he lowers to one knee before he looks at me, and a slow, sexy smile forms on his lips.

“This moment was supposed to be super romantic, but seeing you naked, with those sexy-as-hell nipples begging for my mouth, has me forgetting everything,” he says, looking at me with lust and desire burning in his eyes. He discards the box on the side table and climbs on top of me.

“Oh, no. You can’t seriously expect a round two before you open that little box,” I say, my arms extended as I try to hold Gunner at bay.

He pushes against me, holding his weight on his elbows. “You ladies only have one thing on your mind. Can’t wait to be my ball and chain, huh, baby?”

“Gunner Shaw, you better be giving me that ring. This instant!” I swat his shoulders while laughing uncontrollably.

Gunner bends and kisses me quickly before grabbing the discarded ring on the floor. “Cash, my beautiful, sexy, talented girl,” he says, standing and holding the box in his hands, his fingers tracing the edges. He gets down on one knee as I move to the edge of the sofa.

I have so much love for this man, *my* man. He’s strong, kind, and warm. He’s everything I didn’t know I wanted and everything I’ve always needed.

“I never thought I would find someone so utterly perfect for me in every single way. And then you walked into my bar and turned my entire world upside down with your smart mouth and beautiful soul. You even won over my mother and helped her clean up her act. You make my life perfect, *You’re* perfect. I know you can do significantly better than me, but I’m so grateful you don’t want to. Cash, will you make me the happiest man in the world by agreeing to be my wife?”

The tears come thundering down my face. I don’t look graceful; I’m full-on ugly crying. I gaze at my sweet man, feeling so full and beyond happy.

Gunner places the huge rock on my finger. I jump on him, wrapping my legs around his waist.

“Yes!” I shout, placing kisses all over his face. “Yes. Yes, yes, yes, I will marry you. I love you so much, Gunner.”

“I love you too, beautiful. Now, how about we make those babies?” He carries me to the bedroom and tosses me onto the bed and covers my body with his, obliterating the darkness of my past with a promise of a brighter future.

A future with him.

First Epilogue

Gunner –*Two Years Later*

“**A**nd the winner in the Best New Country Album category is...” The latest Hollywood star fumbles open the award envelope while Cash digs her nails into my thigh.

I clasp her hand, shooting her a cocky grin just as an audience camera swoops in front of us. Our faces are projected onto the big screen just as time blurs.

“Cash Leigh and Gunner Shaw for *Copper Sunrise!*”

We stand as Cash’s hand trembles in mine, tears shimmering in her eyes. She still shocks me two years into this wild ride with her. We’ve already won Best New Single for our song, “Lost Without You.” The first duet we released together was enough to send us into the stratosphere.

And less than twenty minutes after that, they’ve given me the New Artist of the Year award.

I help my sparrow up the steps to collect our second award together, thinking how wild it is that I’m here. I nod to my former bandmates, Gutless Void. Two of the guys jump up and down in white masks covered in blood while

the other three clap enthusiastically. I chuckle, thinking how that completely goes against their dark metalcore look.

“Congratulations.” The fancy presenter double-kisses Cash’s cheeks before shaking my hand and passing me the golden statue.

Our names, engraved side by side for all eternity.

I will forever cement the day Cash became my wife exactly one year ago as the best moment of my life.

But sharing our lives and our music every day is a pretty damn close second.

“Thank you for listening, everyone.” I nod appreciatively to the crowd, an inky black cloud of faces behind the glaring stage lights, before nestling the award in Cash’s arms.

She smiles when she catches sight of our names, pressing up on her tiptoes to kiss me on the lips.

It’s only a moment, but the crowd goes wild. The chorus of our song plays in the background until the cheers finally drop a decibel, and Cash speaks.

She begins with a thank you, wiping her eyes before turning to me. “My eternal gratitude goes to this man beside me. He brought me back to life before he knew he was doing it. He saved me, saved my words, and made me fall in love with music again. He just plain made me fall in love with him.”

She pauses, and much of the crowd is still on their feet, swiping at their teary eyes.

It is such a powerful moment of love that it nearly moves me to damn tears. A floating camera boom swoops in to catch a close-up of our faces, and it’s all I can do to hang onto her eyes to keep myself from crashing over an emotional edge.

This woman saved me from the start, and she still doesn't realize it.

"He gives me the world. He gives me unconditional love. He gives me so much every day." She clutches the award to her chest, barely hanging on to her crashing wave of emotions as tears fill my sparrow's beautiful eyes.

"I love you, Sparrow." On impulse, I dash my thumb across her cheek to catch some of the wetness. The crowd says, "Ahhh," and I die a little from embarrassment in front of Hollywood.

"Love you back, Shaw."

I intertwine our fingers as the rap music begins, sending the crowd a final wave and walking my girl off the stage. She's a shaking mess with every step.

As soon as we're behind the velvet curtains, I haul her into my arms, sending her spinning in circles as she screams and then plants her lips against mine.

With her fingertips dusting my jaw and the heavy award sandwiched between us, I stride through the maze of backstage performers, reporters, and the production crew. Everyone we pass congratulates us or pats me on the shoulder, but my thoughts are only on her.

"What have you got on your mind, Gunner Shaw?" Cash breathes a seductive shudder against my lips.

"You. Me. Now."

She squirms, making my need to lose myself inside her rocket through my balls.

She smiles against my mouth, her lips softening as she relaxes deeper into my arms. I carry her through the auditorium lobby and into the waiting car we arrived in.

Cash giggles and straightens her dress in the back seat of the car. “I’m sure a million cameras captured that little display of caveman behavior.”

“Let them see how much I love you. I’m not hiding a thing for them.”

She cracks a grin. “You may rethink that statement when you find your handsome mug plastered on the gossip blogs tomorrow morning.”

I shrug. “A sex scandal brought you into my life. As far as I’m concerned, it’s going to bring us nothing but good things.”

I haul her onto my lap as the car crosses the few blocks of city streets before pulling into the valet station of our luxury hotel. By the time we’re in the elevator to the top-floor suite, my fingers are delving into the lips of her warm pussy.

She moans softly, adjusting her thighs and trying to push her dress down.

I grip her face and spit on her cheek. “Do I need to beat that pussy with my belt? Open up. I’m not gonna to tell you again.” I push her head over to the camera, holding her still as her legs spread for my touch. “Tell the camera what you are.”

Cash looks at the corner of the elevator, spit sliding down her face to the top of her mouth. “I’m a pathetic cum dump who sucks and fucks your cock.”

I stroke quicker, and her breathing increases. “That’s it, baby. Tell everyone what a depraved whore you are. Let them know how deep my finger is buried in your hungry little cunt.”

I run my thumb in circles over her clit, and her muscles tense around my intrusion. My cock pulses and leaks, eager to be free of the snug suit pants and inside her.

Her fingernails bite into my forearm as she comes in soft waves around my

fingers. She's so slick and warm.

I pull my fingers from her cunt and push them into my mouth, licking off every drop of her sweetness. "Who knew a dirty little cunt like you would taste so sweet?"

My hand fastens around her throat, holding her tight against the elevator wall. I place my lips to hers while working at my belt buckle with one hand and ripping it out of its loops.

I smile at her, flushed and beautiful, as I hold the strip of leather to her face. Pulling her head forward by her hair, I fasten the belt tight around her neck, holding the end like a dog leash.

Cash's eyes widen. "What are you doing?"

I smirk as I shove her against the wall and pull her dress up, bunching it around her waist. "Why don't you shut up and let me fuck what belongs to me?"

"Gun—"

I pull the belt, cutting her off. I used to hate doing this. I thought it was going too far, but Cash enjoys being completely taken over. She constantly asks me to go further. I always watch her hands to see if she taps the wall. Three times. If she taps three times, and I step back.

But there's no tap now. Instead, Cash moans and pushes her ass back.

"It's better when you can't talk, slut. You're so much prettier when you're a pathetic toy for me to enjoy and toss aside like trash."

I grab her thigh, digging my fingers into her flesh, and line up the tip of my cock against her slick pussy. I thrust forward, impaling her slowly, letting her feel the hardware on my cock before I drive fully into her warmth.

I pull the belt harder, relishing the choking sounds whimpering from her mouth, and push four fingers into her mouth, coating them with her spit.

“Fuck, baby. What does it say about me that I crave the pussy of a pathetic whore?” I pull at the side of her cheek, ensuring her face is visible to the camera. “I’m going to release the video to the press tomorrow. Everyone will know you’re a dirty slut. Maybe we should have an after party at the next concert. Tie you to a table and let your fans take turns fucking all your holes. We can even livestream it. Imagine everyone seeing your pussy with hundreds of men’s cum leaking out of you.”

My fingers fall out of her mouth, and I smear her spit all over her face before forcing her to look at the camera. “Tell your fans you’ll pay them to fuck you. How much do you think they’d pay for a dirty girl like you? Be sure to give them a price per hole.”

Cash remains silent, avoiding my request. I slap her face, and she moans as her pussy tightens around my cock. “Twenty dollars for my mouth, fifty for my pussy, and one hundred for my asshole.”

I pull her hair. “Who’s pussy?”

“Fifty for *your* pussy,” she corrects.

I laugh, sensing she’s close to blowing with the little game we’re playing. “You think you’re worth that much? A slut like you?” Leaning over her, I lick her face all the way to her hairline. “I think one dollar for that mouth, five for my well-used cunt, and ten for your tight ass since it isn’t as wide as your pathetic pussy.” I bite her earlobe before whispering, “We can offer a three-for-one special. Buy an ass and pussy fuck, and get the mouth hole for free.”

“Gunner...” Cash moans, her hands gripping the elevator door as she falls over the edge.

My fingers fall to her pussy, and I work her in tiny circles in the spot that sets her off. “That’s it, baby. Come all over this fat dick. Let Daddy know how much you love being fucked like a cheap, used whore.”

“Fuck!” She screams, and her body goes lax.

I plunge further, desperate to brand the depths of her with my cock. “No one will ever fill this pussy but me. No one will know this body but me. I’ll kill anyone who tries. You’re mine, Sparrow. Only mine.”

I bite her shoulder, thrusting hard and fast, marking her as my balls tighten and I spill inside her. Licking the small tear my teeth made in her skin, I whisper, “I love you.”

“I dunno if I hate or love you more, Shaw. Never knew I was into exhibitionism.” She beams at me before her face falls into a pout. “Fuck, security got a show.” Her eyes dart from my face to the camera. “Gunner, get that tape.” She slaps my chest as I slide my belt from her neck. “I’m not being called a whore again in the rags. This was stupid.”

I smile. “Kathy is the only one who saw. I paid them to get out of the room, and Kathy is the only one with access to the video. She’ll hand it over to us tomorrow. Next time, I’ll really put on a show.”

Our publicist is a saint. Kathy has put up with many of our escapades. She once told me she wanted to bleach out her eyes. My response was that I paid her enough to buy a bleach factory.

“You’re crazy,” Cash huffs.

“I love fucking you. No need to deprive myself of what I love doing most in the world.” I bite her earlobe. “I love you so much.” The elevator dings, and the doors open. “I plan on fucking you so hard that you won’t be able to walk in the morning.”

Cash smiles. "Can't wait."

Second Epilogue

Cash –*Five Years Later*

“**D**id you call your mother to watch Lori?” I ask Gunner as I lie on the bed, breathing deeply to control the pain of the contractions.

The pain this time around is unbelievable. I don’t remember it hurting like this with Lori. Her birth was easy—so easy that I stupidly agreed to do it all over again.

“Yes, baby. She’s on her way,” Gunner says as he sits by my bedside, grabbing my hand and bringing it to his lips. “I love you.”

“Your love got me here.” I shoot him daggers. He laughs, infuriating me even further. “It’s not funny. These two boys are gonna be trouble.”

“Baby, just think about their sweet smell and cute little faces,” my husband says, stroking my forehead.

“I’m here! Where is my grandbaby?” Loretta hollers as she barges through the front door.

Gunner moans as he greets his mother, leaving me to shuffle off the bed.

When he sees me struggling, he runs back to me and takes my arm, helping me to stand.

“Sorry, baby,” he says sheepishly. “Mom, we’re upstairs!”

“Shhh. Lori is sleeping,” I say, whacking him on the arm. “Don’t wake her.”

“Oh, sweetheart. Get my beautiful daughter-in-law to the hospital so I can meet my grandsons,” Loretta says by Gunner’s shoulder.

“We’re going, Mom,” Gunner replies easily.

We’re in the car a minute later. Gunner drives, and I lie in the back seat like a giant beached whale. Soon, my little hellraisers will be in my arms.

“Gunner...?” I whisper.

“Yeah, baby?”

“I didn’t mean it. This isn’t your fault. Well, it is, but it’s not a bad thing. I can’t wait to meet these two. I love you.”

“I know, Sparrow. I love you back, baby.”

After five hours of labor, we finally have our little boys in our arms. I lie on the bed nursing them, beyond happy for the gifts I’ve received in my life.

Gunner sits beside me, his eyes gleaming and a goofy smile on his face. Calvin and Donovan are our perfect babies. “I love you so much, Cash,” he whispers, his voice rich with emotion.

I gaze at my handsome husband and notice a small tear rolling down his face. My heart expands with so much love and emotion.

“You’ve given me everything, and I have no idea how to thank you,” he

murmurs, watching his sons feed. “I could spend the rest of my life kissing the ground you walk on, and it wouldn’t be enough. You’ve given me the world.”

“I’d give you more than the world if I could. Just no more babies. I’m done.” I laugh as he takes our sleeping boys from me and places them in their bassinets.

“We make beautiful children... I’m not sure I can make that promise.” He kisses my forehead.

“Thank you for my life,” I whisper, closing my eyes.

Lyrics to another hit song form in my mind as I drift off to sleep. I’m so in love and grateful for so many gifts.

When life gave me broken strings, the universe gave me him.

Gunner Shaw. My husband. My hero. My music man.

P re-Order **Rudimentary Distortion** [HERE](#). This book is an MMF and features the drummer and bass guitarist for Gutless Void.

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