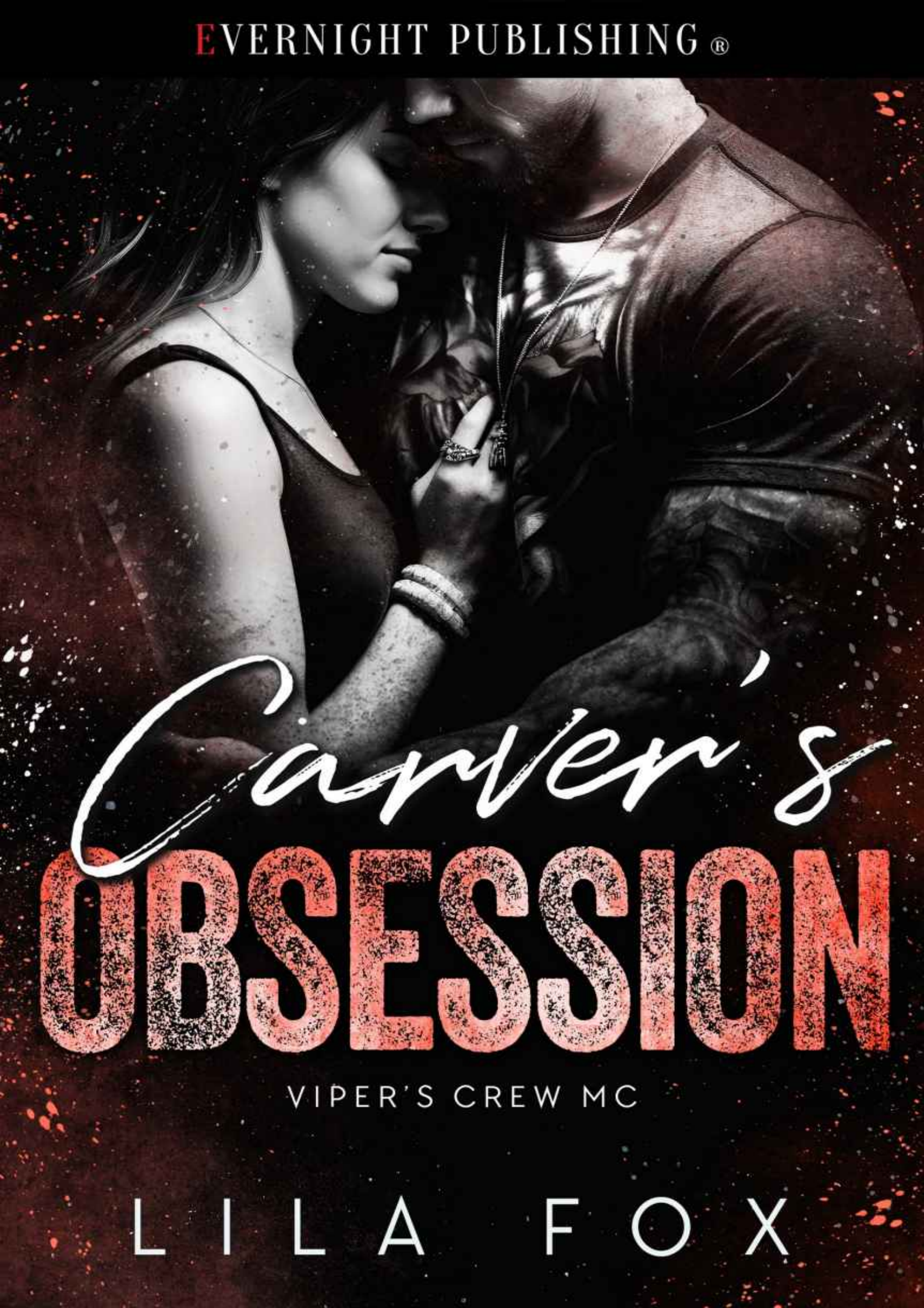


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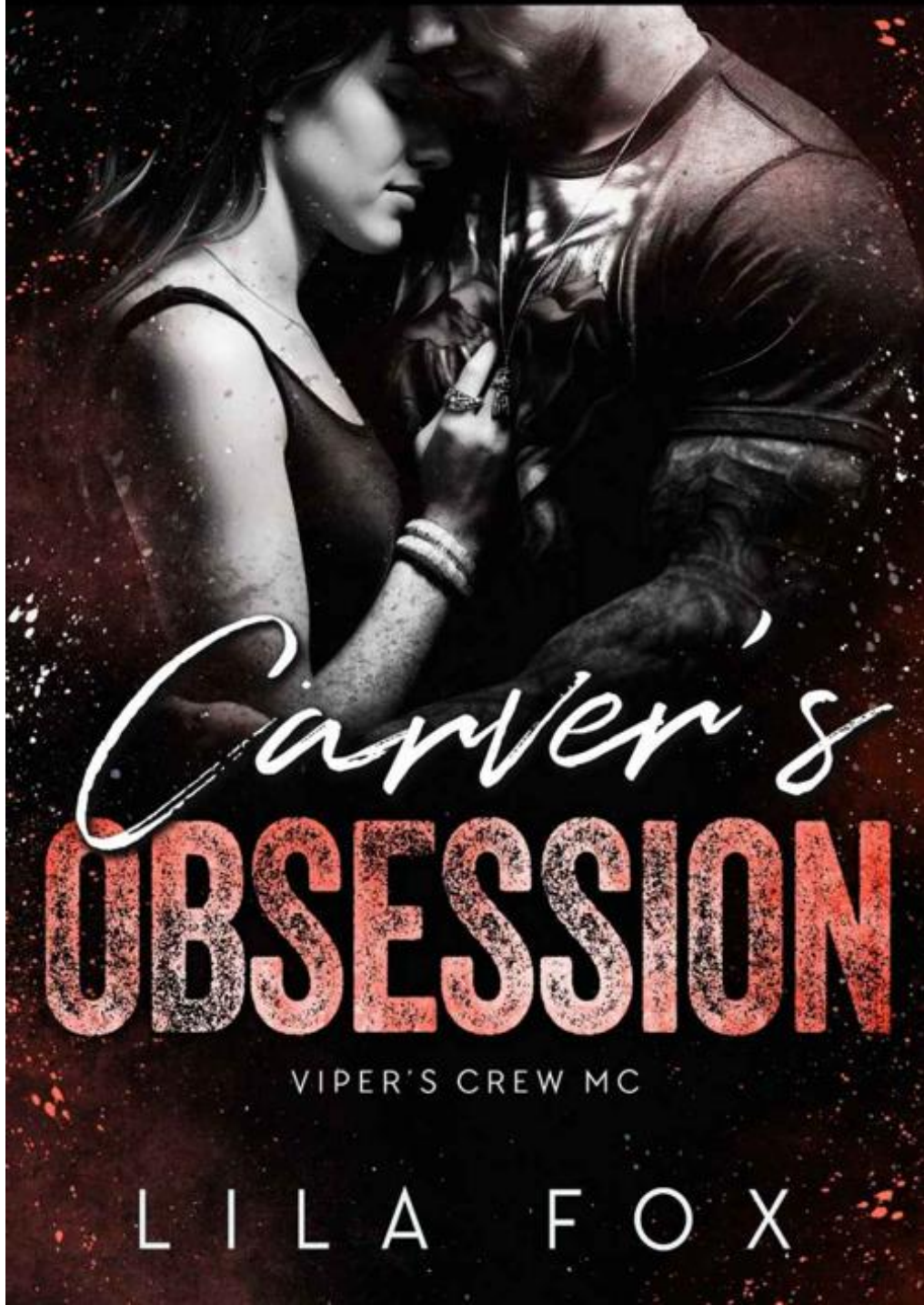


Carver's
OBSESSION

VIPER'S CREW MC

L I L A F O X

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LILA FOX



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DEDICATION

I dedicate this book to Lisa, my editor, and Stacey, my publisher. I couldn't do this without you.

CARVER ' S OBSESSION

Viper's Crew MC, 8

Lila Fox

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Chapter One

“Hey, Boss!”

Striker and Feral come out of the office with scowls on their faces. All day there had been one interruption after another, and Striker was getting pissed.

“Chains,” he yelled with his hands on his hips. “What’s the problem now?”

“He’s back.”

Striker’s brows pinched together. “Who?”

“Carver,” Chains said.

Striker glanced at his vice, Feral. “I didn’t think he’d come back.”

Feral shrugged. “You can never tell with that bastard. We need to warn him up-front if he makes trouble again, he’s out for good.”

Striker nodded. He loved Carver like a brother, but the man had so many demons it was hard for him to deal with day-to-day interactions most of the time. Striker didn’t know how many fights he stopped because someone looked at the man wrong.

The last time, Carver had put Iron in the hospital with a broken arm and concussion. That’s when he and Feral decided to push the guy out and tell him only to come back when he was mentally able to be around other people.

Striker had missed the guy. From the beginning, he’d been with the Vipers and would do whatever the prez said. He’d been fun to party with, and the girls had loved him. There were a few times he’d gotten a bit rough with the sweet butts when he fucked them, but Striker had said something to him, and the guy had stopped.

Striker called him on it and told him if he couldn’t treat them like humans, he’d not be able to fuck the sluts again.

Carver had been surprised, which told Striker he hadn't meant to hurt anyone. He just didn't know how to deal with females.

From what information Striker had gotten from him, mostly when he was drunk, Carver's childhood had been pure torture. The people who raised him had put him to work at five years old. Any sick pedophile in the area had him. His looks didn't help. His nickname was Pretty Boy.

He would never know if the people he lived with were his parents or not. When he was thirteen, he'd run away and never looked back.

Striker wished someone had saved Carver when he was young, but he always said that no one fucking cared about the impoverished people who lived in the hood. Most people thought of him and the others as animals and not to be treated with kindness.

When he came into the main area, Striker was shocked at his first sight of the man. His hair was cut military-style short, and he used to wear it longer. There were also a few more tattoos he didn't remember the guy having. He looked a decade older than he was, and his body was bigger and more muscular. He must have spent a lot of time working out or something.

Striker was pleased when several guys approached Carver, pounding on his back with brutal male affection. Even Iron walked up to him. Striker watched them talk, and then the two hugged, pounding on each other. Striker was glad Iron had broken the ice so quickly. He wanted Carver to settle in and consider himself home.

He hoped that when he saw the girls and how they'd changed the place and calmed most of the men by caring for them, it would help Carver calm down and feel content. Good women made their lives better. He and his brothers learned that.

Carver saw him and Feral and walked over to them.

“Hey, Boss.”

“We’re glad you’re home,” Striker said. He saw a flash of hopeful light in the other man’s eyes.

“I didn’t know if I would be welcome or not,” Carver said.

Feral was the first to hug him, and then Striker.

“I don’t remember you all being so affectionate,” Carver said.

The people around him laughed. Striker heard yelling and rolled his eyes. He looked at Carver to see how he would take the next minute.

Blood walked into the room with Willow over his shoulder. She was yelling at him and pounding on his back. The group watched until the two were gone.

“Who the fuck was that with Blood?” Carver asked.

“There have been some changes around here,” Feral said. “We’ll tell you all of them.”

“Are you hungry?” Striker asked.

Carver nodded. “Yeah. It never seems like I can fill myself up, but the crappy food I’ve been eating doesn’t help.”

“You’ll love the food here.”

“You guys have added on to the place,” Carver said.

“Yeah, we’ve had to,” Feral said. “We have a few more people here, and they demand their own bathrooms.”

Striker laughed at the confusion on the other man’s face. He thought these women would be the best thing for Carver. He’d never had anyone really care about him except the club members. The man deserved some peace more than anyone he knew.

Chapter Two

Carver's eyebrows rose. What the hell was he talking about? He got his next shock when he walked into the kitchen to see two sweet-looking normal women making something and laughing.

He watched his boss walk around the counter and wrap an arm around one of their waists.

"Carver, this is my old lady..."

"I'm not old," the woman said, scowling over her shoulder at the prez.

Striker rolled his eyes. "Fuck, fine, this is my very young lady, Kristina. The other woman is Alicia, Stone's young lady."

Alicia laughed.

The place was cleaner than he'd ever seen it before, and it smelled so fresh. His mouth watered at the scent of chocolate.

"Hey, girls. This is a brother, Carver."

Both women smiled at him.

"Hi. We hope you're staying home," Kristina said.

Fuck. *Home*. He hated calling it that because it sounded like a family.

"Babe, can you girls make him something to eat?"

Kristina smiled brightly. "Of course. We have the roast beef from last night or lasagna from the night before. I'm frankly amazed we still have some."

"Because someone keeps hiding it in the back of the fridge," Gunner growled.

The girls snickered, making the men around him smile. Everyone seemed so comfortable and happy. When he'd left several years before, it had been a bikers' club, but it was the only family he'd ever had that cared about him. Now, it felt

more like a home — one he never thought he'd have in his lifetime.

Carver nodded. "Roast beef, please." He couldn't ever remember having a home-cooked meal before. When he'd lived in the club before, it had always been shit like hamburgers, pizza, and chili that had no taste. The scent of it as it warmed up in the microwave made saliva pool in his mouth.

Kristina handed the plate to Striker. "What would you like to drink?"

"Beer?"

"I'll bring you one," Feral said.

"Follow me," Striker told him.

He followed the man, and they sat by the firepit. A low fire was already going. He sat back and took his first bite. Fuck. He'd never tasted anything this good before.

"It's good, isn't it?" Striker laughed.

Carver didn't stop eating. Feral came out with several beers and sat down next to him. The other two at the fire talked quietly about some store, allowing Carver to enjoy the meal. He finished the whole plate.

"Fuck, that was good."

Striker laughed. "You'll eat many different things. The girls are always coming up with new recipes. Everyone has liked them so far."

His boss turned toward the building and whistled loudly before yelling for Kris.

Feral chuckled. "You're just trying to piss her off."

Both men grinned, and then the back door of the building opened, and Kristina walked out scowling.

Carver watched the woman walk to Striker. "Why must you continue to whistle for me like a dog?"

Everything that had happened in the last hour felt like the *Twilight Zone*. Carver watched the two bikers. He would have bet everything he had that Striker would have never settled down with one woman and let her disrespect him like that. He could tell Striker was enjoying himself.

Striker kissed the woman's hand before she walked away. She wasn't gone a minute before she walked back over to them, handed him another plate, and took the empty one from him. Striker shook his head when Carver opened his mouth.

"Thank you."

Kristina smiled. "You're welcome."

The woman was very pretty. He could see what Striker saw in her. He was anxious to see the other normal women in the house.

He looked down at the plate and groaned. There was a brownie with a small scoop of ice cream on top.

"You'll like this," Feral said.

He would have said he was too full, but looking at this dessert, there was no way he'd turn it down. The first few bites melted in his mouth, and he finished it with only four huge bites.

"Damn, that was good."

Striker nodded. "The girls always make sure there's something sweet to eat. They all love baking."

"Everyone except Willow," Feral said and laughed.

Striker snorted. "Yes. She's a wild card and perfect for Blood."

"I would have bet no woman would want to or have the guts to get near the guy," Carver said.

The other two chuckled.

"We didn't either."

“Why don’t you finish your beer, and then I’ll show you your room?” Striker said.

He thanked the women again as they walked through the kitchen. He grabbed his bag and followed Striker up the stairs.

The hallways seemed to go on and on. They turned a few times before Striker stopped at the door.

“Who am I bunking with?”

Striker opened the door to show him the one large bed. “This is just your room.”

What the fuck? “I hope I’m not taking it from anyone.”

Striker walked over to the window and looked out. “During construction, we made a room for you. We hoped you’d eventually come back home.”

Carver nodded and looked away. Since he drove onto the compound, so many emotions attacked him, making it hard to think. It just got worse the more time that went on.

Carver looked in the two other small rooms off the bedroom. One was a huge closet, and the other a bathroom. The thing was roomier than any other he’d ever been in. It was clean and smelled fresh.

“Jesus...” Carver turned to Striker to see him smile.

“I know it’s a lot to take in. There’s always food in the fridge if you get hungry.”

Carver snorted. “I don’t think I’ll be hungry for a week.”

Striker laughed. “You’ll get used to it. Us guys have had to work out more than normal, or we’d get fat.”

Carver could never see that happening.

Striker walked to the door. “If you need anything, call down to the kitchen. There’s usually someone around. If it’s bathroom stuff, there’s a closet four doors down that has everything you’ll need. Take what you want.”

Carver nodded.

“I’ll see you later, man,” Striker said.

“Yeah. I’m crashing right now.”

“I don’t blame you. I’m glad you’re back.”

“I am, too.”

Striker closed the door, and then Carver was alone. It was something he’d gotten used to. But the type of loneliness he was feeling at the moment was different. It was a peaceful, calming type.

He heard a guy’s voice from outside and a woman laughing. He exhaled. He’d done a lot of soul-searching while trying to get his head on straight after he left. He hadn’t thought he’d be coming back again or that they’d let him.

He was thankful they still cared. Now, he’d just have to get used to all the changes.

Chapter Three

Erica crouched behind a group of bushes. She'd spent the last few days trying to find her sister, Jana. She'd been told at the hospital that she lived here now.

To say it was a shock was an understatement. Her goody two-shoes sister was living with a biker club.

She ducked down when a group of bikers walked past her. She was well hidden and very careful because she didn't want to anger these men and end up dead. She wondered if her sister would try to save her. Probably not.

Erica wanted to get this over with. Hand her sister the check and say goodbye, probably for good. Her sister never liked being around her. She didn't think time had changed anything.

How the hell was she supposed to get to her sister? Every guy she'd seen scared the shit out of her. They all looked like they would slit her throat and step over her dead body. She couldn't just walk up to the front door and knock. The fact that she had yet to see her sister made it even harder. Did she try to get to her here, where someone told her Jana was living? But what if she moved already? Erica would be stepping into a lion's den.

The day's shadows were growing as night descended. Erica hated staying there because she was terrified the whole time.

Was it even worth it? Damn. She'd promised her mom that Erica would sell the house and give Jana half the proceeds once she was gone. She could have just taken all the money from the sale, but her promise to her mother made her last few days calm and happy. She wouldn't go back on her word.

Erica smoothed out her sleeping bag and crawled in. It got so cold there she thought she'd freeze the night before. She'd put on another layer of clothing, hoping that would help. Once tucked in, she reached for her backpack to try to find something to eat. There was only part of a candy bar, but it

was better than nothing. She hoped it was enough to calm her achy, hollow stomach.

She could handle not eating again until the next day. She promised herself she'd pull her "big girl panties" on and walk up to the door. She couldn't spend another night in the woods.

The sounds of people's voices mellowed, leaving Erica without anything to think about. The loneliness she'd felt for years deepened. The realization that she was truly on her own, that no one else in her world wanted her, was hard to fathom. The tears started, and Erica let them go. The pressure in her chest was so painful she didn't think she'd be able to make it through the night. Is this where she was supposed to die?

Erica tried to laugh when she thought of the look on her sister's face when they found her body. Would she even know who she was or even care?

She wept until there was nothing left in her, and she was feeling numb. It was better than the pressure, but in some ways it was worse.

Would she become like some of the women she'd encountered? There was no light in their eyes, and they never smiled, making it through one day at a time because they knew they had no future.

The tears came again.

"Girl, you have to stop," she said to herself. "You're probably already dehydrated from lack of water." Her tears didn't help that situation.

A scream tore from her mouth when a hand gripped the back of her shirt, yanked her out of her sleeping bag, and then grabbed her shoulders to hold her in place.

"Who the hell are you?"

Jesus, even their voices were vicious.

"I ... I..."

"Name," he barked. "Now."

“It’s Eeeerica,” she stuttered.

“How did you get on the compound?”

“There’s a hole in the fence.”

“I’ll have to check on that. Now, why the hell are you camping here?”

She knew she needed to tell the truth. “I’m looking to see if a woman by the name of Jana lives here.”

“And what do you want with her?”

“Does she live here?”

“Yeah. She’s Gunner’s old lady.”

Erica’s brows snapped together. “I don’t understand.”

“It doesn’t matter. What do you want with her?”

“I don’t really need to see her. Can I give you an envelope to give her?”

“Why can’t you do it?”

“It would make her uncomfortable having me here. I was trying to find a way to have someone else give it to her. I thought about the mailbox, but there’s important stuff in it from our mom.”

The man’s eyebrows rose. “You’re her sister?”

“I ... yes. I guess you could say that, but we’re not a family.”

“What does that mean?”

“Carver, man, Striker wants to see her,” another man behind him said. When Erica looked, she saw that there were several men around them.

Oh, God, she could be gang-raped so easily. It was something she hadn’t thought of. “So, can I give you the envelope?”

“No,” Carver said. “The boss wants to see you.”

Erica swallowed. “I’ll leave right now. I’m sorry I trespassed. I didn’t hurt anything. I promise.”

Carver nodded. “We know that. We’ve been watching you the whole time.”

Erica’s mouth dropped open. God, the thought of being watched without her knowing scared the shit out of her. “Why didn’t you try to talk to me at the beginning?”

“Because we wanted to see what you were up to. The fact that you haven’t had a drink or anything to eat made us decide to bring you in now.”

“Oh, you don’t have to worry about that. I’m just fine.”

“You were crying,” one of the guys said.

“I ... I’m sorry.”

Carver tilted his head to the side. “Why are you sorry, Babe?”

Her eyes widened. “I’ve disrupted your lives, and I didn’t intend to do that. I swear.”

“Why were you crying?” another man asked.

Erica turned toward him. She couldn’t decide who was the scariest. “It’s ... what girls do that sometimes. It’s not a big deal.”

One of the men started picking up her sleeping bag and another her backpack. She tried to reach for it, but the man who held her tightened his grip.

“Can I have my things?” she asked.

“Later. Let’s get to the office. It’s never a good thing to keep the prez waiting,” Carver said and started to half-carry, half-drag her along. She appreciated the support because she didn’t think she’d be able to walk on her own.

Chapter Four

“Can I ask a favor?”

Carver nodded.

“Can you just kill me now? I don’t want to have men ... you know. If you won’t let me leave, I just don’t want any more pain. I know it’s asking a lot.”

“You think we’re going to rape and kill you?” another guy asked.

Erica didn’t know what to think. “I don’t know you, and what I’ve heard about biker clubs was never good.”

“Babe, we have sluts if we want to fuck. We don’t need to rape anyone,” Carver said.

“Sluts? What does that mean?” she asked.

“We’ll answer all your questions later,” Carver said.

She stumbled when he pulled her through the doorway, but thankfully caught her.

“I’m sorry,” she told him.

“Stop saying that,” Carver growled.

“Okay. I’m sor...”

The look on his face stopped her from talking.

They walked through a huge kitchen that looked amazingly clean. When he led her through a doorway into what looked like an office, every thought and drop of blood in her head drained away. Carver grabbed onto her when she swayed.

Carver pointed. “That’s Striker behind the desk. He’s our prez. The one on the corner is Feral, and he’s the vice-prez.”

The men looked even scarier in the light, and the one behind the desk was the worst of all. The way he stared made

her think he could kill her with just the look.

Erica tried to lock her knees to keep them from trembling. She knew she looked pathetic. She hadn't had water or food for a few days. Sleep had been tough because every sound made her jerk awake. She also hadn't bathed for several days or even brushed her hair. Fortunately, she was able to braid her hair to keep it kind of clean and out of her face. She didn't need to make herself look worse by dropping to the floor.

"Boss, she's going to faint here pretty soon," Carver said.

"Who are you, and what do you want?" Striker said.

"I ... I'm Erica, and I only want to drop off an envelope to Jana and then leave." She swallowed as she waited for him to talk.

"How do you know Jana?"

"Oh, well, we used to be sisters."

"Used to be?" Feral asked her.

"Well, yes. She moved away when she was seventeen and never looked back. I don't think she wants to associate with me if she doesn't have to. Can I please just hand it to you and leave?"

"Don't you think Jana would want to see you?" Striker asked.

Erica shook her head. "No, I don't."

Feral spoke. "What if we gave her a choice?"

God, the thought of seeing her sister again was overwhelming. She figured she'd never see her again and was dealing with it. Her eyes filled with tears that she fought to keep from falling.

"Fuck, yell for Kris," Striker said.

One of the guys walked to the door and yelled. Within a few minutes, a woman she would never expect to be here stood in front of her with concern in her eyes.

“Striker. Who is this?”

“She’s Jana’s sister.”

Kris’s eyebrows rose. “Erica?”

Striker nodded. “She wants to drop something off for her and then leave.”

“Without seeing her?” Kristina asked.

Erica sighed. “You guys don’t get it. She doesn’t want me in her life, and I’ve come to grips with it. I don’t want to stir up anything or make her feel uncomfortable. Please, I have to go.”

Everyone in the room shook their heads, and tears filled her eyes again.

“Fix her, Babe,” Striker said. “She keeps doing that shit.”

Erica blinked several times.

Kristina smiled at her. “He doesn’t like tears.”

“Babe,” Striker barked.

Erica jumped and tensed. He was scary in person, but when he was mad, he looked menacing. She looked at the woman to see if she was scared, but she was smiling at the man.

Kristina came to her and set her hand on her arm. “How about we get you some food and then a shower? I’ll give you a room tonight to rest, and then in the morning, we’ll see how you feel.”

Erica nodded. She knew she didn’t have a chance of making it out of the building without being caught, and she would rather be with this sweet woman than all the terrifying men.

Erica turned to get her backpack. “Can I have my bag, please?”

“Nah, I’ve got it,” Carver said.

Erica looked around the room at the different degrees of shock.

“All right. Let’s go to the kitchen first,” Kristina said.

Chapter Five

Carver didn't release her, which she was thankful for. The lack of sleep, food, and constant worry had zapped all her strength and ability to move on her own.

Carver set her bag on the counter before lifting her onto a stool.

Kristina handed her a large glass of water. Erica drank half of it down.

"There she goes again with the tears," Carver said.

"I'm sorry. All I've caused is problems, and you're all so nice to me."

Kristina wrapped her arms around her shoulders and held her tightly against her. "You've got me..."

"And me," Carver said.

Kristina smiled. "Yes, and Carver. We'll get you taken care of."

"Thank you."

Kristina tightened her arms. That was all it took before the tears started again.

"I'm sorry, I'm just really tired. But I'll be okay in the morning, so you don't have to worry about me going. I'll be out of here as soon as I can."

Kristina cupped Erica's face. "I doubt you get out the front door."

"Why?"

"Honey, your sister talks about you all the time. She has tried to find you. She wants to hire a private detector to help her. I really think she'll want to see you."

"What about what I want?"

"What do you want?" Carver asked.

"I want to leave."

“Without seeing Jana?” Kristina asked.

Erica nodded. “She threw me away years ago. I don’t have anything except the envelope to give her.”

“What envelope?” Kristina asked.

“It’s in my bag. It’s from our mother.”

Kristina nodded. “Is lasagna okay?”

Erica felt her stomach cramp at the thought. She couldn’t remember the last full meal she’d had. It had been years. When she had put her mom in a retirement home, she’d been there every day helping take care of her. When she wasn’t there, she was working or sleeping at a motel close to where she was. They also had a cot in her mom’s room which she used when her mom was agitated and in pain.

She hadn’t gone home except to box everything up after her mom passed on. She used a realtor from the bank they used, and the house, although small and run-down, was sold within a week.

Kristina set a plate in front of her. The smell made her mouth fill with saliva, and her stomach grumble. She tore into the pasta, eating half of it within two minutes. The only time she stopped was to answer one of their questions.

Erica ate most of the plate and even a slice of bread. “I can’t eat anymore. Thank you. It was delicious.”

“You’re welcome. Can I get you a brownie?”

Oh, Lord, she couldn’t remember when she last had brownies, but if she ate one more bite, she would explode. “Can I save it for later?”

“Of course. Let me show you the room you’re going to use.”

Erica followed her up some stairs and down a few long hallways. “This place is huge.”

“It has to be. We have around forty brothers,” Carver said.

Holy shit.

Kristina opened a door. “This is yours for however long you want it.”

Erica looked around the room. The room was the cleanest and most comfortable place she’d ever seen.

“This is wonderful. Thank you so much for letting me use it.”

Carver set her bag down on the mattress.

“Everything you need is in the bathroom,” Kristina said.

“I’ve got my stuff with me.”

“Whatever you feel comfortable with.”

She looked at Carver. “Can you check on her and help her out?”

“Yeah. I’m just right down the hall,” he said.

Erica nodded.

Kristina hugged her again. “Sleep, and we’ll talk tomorrow.”

“Thank you. It was very nice to meet you,” Erica said.

“Oh, I think you’ll be here for a while.”

Erica shook her head. “No. I’m heading out in the morning.” She watched the other two look at each other.

Carver stopped at the door. “I’ll check on you in a bit.”

“Oh, I don’t want to bother you.”

Carver snorted. “You’re not.”

Erica watched the door close and wondered at all the emotions racing through her. Exhaustion, anxiety, and lastly, hopefulness, which was silly. Her life was one fight after another. Had she ever had a day where she just rested, maybe even had fun? Hell, she couldn’t remember the last time she smiled or laughed.

She shed her dirty clothes, untied her braid, and washed out her panties and bra, hanging them on the towel

rack before entering the shower. The heat from the water felt amazing. She scrubbed herself a few times and then made herself get out. Her energy level was at zero, and the heat was making it worse.

She dried her hair until her arms got tired, put on an old nightgown, brushed her teeth, and slipped into bed. The mattress was amazing, and everything smelled so nice. She could understand why her sister lived here. It was a palace compared to the places she'd been.

She couldn't stay awake. Her eyes closed, and then she was out.

Chapter Six

Carver softly knocked, and when he heard nothing, he opened the door and went in. There was some light coming in through the window but also from the bathroom light she kept on, with the door mostly closed.

He stood over her. He couldn't take his eyes off of her. She was the prettiest little thing he'd ever seen and so damn sweet. But it was the vulnerable and lost sadness in her eyes that got to him the most.

It reminded him of himself in the past. Just by looking at her, he could tell she'd had it rough. She had dark circles under her eyes that looked like bruises, telling him she didn't get enough sleep. She was thin. Too thin.

He'd never forget the first time he'd seen her. One of the fence alarms had gone off, and his prez sent him and a few others to check it out. He saw her hiding behind bushes and looking around for a long time. When it started getting dark, he thought she'd leave but instead got her sleeping bag out.

She made him smile a few times, which didn't come easy for him. One time was when she leaned against a tree to take a piss. He could tell she hadn't had a lot of practice because she kept losing her balance. He'd hear her curse, but she always got it done.

He stayed out in the woods with her because he didn't want to leave her alone. He knew any of the guys would look out for her, but he wanted her to be his responsibility.

He only went in to shower and grab food, but then he went back out. Someone had brought him a blanket and pillow the first night, and he made his bed behind a group of trees. He'd be able to have eyes on her the whole time, but she wouldn't be able to see him.

The three days she was there, she had been watched over. They all knew she wasn't a threat, but they were curious to see what she would do. When she started crying, he'd had enough. He hadn't seen her eat too much or drink anything.

Her sleep was restless, and when she would wake from a nightmare, he wanted to take her into his arms and tell her everything would be okay.

What the fuck. He never thought like this. He didn't have a sensitive bone in his body, but with her, it was different. At first, he had dismissed the thought of keeping her. He wasn't the type of man that stayed with one woman. But the thought of someone else's hands on her made him crazy.

He thought about asking the men in his club who have their own women how they felt when they saw their girlfriends for the first time.

Since he'd been home, he liked to watch the couples together. Before coming home this last time, he'd never seen couples act the way they did. Carver could tell they loved each other deeply. He also enjoyed it when the women got drunk or stoned because it drove their men crazy.

At those times, he'd say to himself, *Now, aren't you glad you don't have to deal with that shit?* But as time passed, he became more curious about their relationships and how happy they made the men.

He stared down at her for a long time. He had an urge to slide into bed next to her and hold her. Since he'd been home a few months, the sensitive reflections and ideas coming to him regularly confused and slightly alarmed him. Now, looking down at this woman, he didn't know how to deal with his emotions. Growing up, showing emotion was bad because they always used it against you. It had been hard for him to open himself up to anyone as an adult.

He smoothed the hair away from her face, turned, and left. Carver was planning on sleeping in one of the chairs in the main room to keep his eyes on Erica because he had a sneaking suspicion she would try to make a run for it the next morning.

Carver had no idea how long he'd been asleep when he heard one of the stairs creak. He glanced outside to see the sun just rising, and he looked back at the woman who wanted to leave.

He waited until she got to the main door and came up behind her. He pressed against the wood when she tried to open the door. She gasped and spun to see him. Looking down at her made him realize how tiny she really was.

“Let’s go back up to your room,” he said.

“Why can’t you just let me leave?”

“Because I know what it’s like to feel alone. Like you have no one else in the world who cares if you live or die. I don’t want that for you.”

Erica shook her head. “It’s better this way than waiting to see her and being pushed away. I don’t want to feel that again.”

Carver studied her for a moment. “You’re going to try.”

“Why is this so important to you? You don’t know me.”

“You’re right. I don’t. That doesn’t mean I don’t care,” he said. “Look, how about I make you a deal? You stay and talk to your sister. If it doesn’t go well, I’ll take you anywhere you want to go.”

He watched her debate about it for a moment and then nod.

“Fine.

Carver nodded. “Good. Do you want to get more sleep or get something to eat?”

“I think I’ll lay back down,” Erica said.

“Okay. I’ll come up to check on you.”

He watched her head for the stairs. “And Erica.” He waited until she turned toward him. “Don’t think you can sneak away because I will find you.”

He watched her inhale and then nod before she walked off. He hoped he was doing the right thing. He’d never been one to get into anyone’s business, but his protective instincts came out with her. It made him want to see her look happy for once. He’d like to see her smile.

She hadn't put her hair into a braid, so it cascaded down her back until it reached the top of her ass. When the lights hit it, he could see all shades of brown with some cinnamon color mixed in. It was beautiful, and he wanted his hands in it. He'd never had that urge before and didn't know how he felt about it. He'd give it time and see how everything played out.

Chapter Seven

Erica lay back down when she got to the room. She was so tired and thought she'd go back to sleep, but she stared up at the ceiling for the next hour.

When she started hearing people talking outside and downstairs, she decided she needed to get it over with.

She splashed water on her face and brushed her hair. She tried not to focus on her reflection, but the pale look of her skin, except for under her eyes, made her look like a corpse. She'd also never been as thin as she was now, and she didn't like the concave look of her face. It just added to the look of death.

Erica pulled the envelope from her bag and walked downstairs. She dropped the bag to the side and stood undecided outside the kitchen. She jumped when a hand landed on her shoulder. She looked at Carver and relaxed. He made her feel less alone, and she'd take whatever she could get.

"There you are," Kristina said and walked up to her. "I was coming up to check on you."

"I'm sorry," she murmured.

Kristina grabbed onto her hands and smiled. "There's no need to be sorry."

"So, um, where is she? I want to hand her this and get moving."

Kristina smiled. "She's in the kitchen. I haven't told her anything. I didn't know how you wanted to handle this."

Erica tried to smile. "You guys won't let me handle it the way I want, so I have no idea."

Carver grabbed onto her upper arm. "Let's get this first meeting over with. I can feel your shaking get worse as the minutes go by."

Kristina took her hand. "Remember, you're not alone."

Erica glanced at her and nodded. She let them pull her into the kitchen. All the talking stopped as everyone turned to her. She clenched her teeth together when they wouldn't stop staring.

“Erica?”

Erica felt her stomach tense at the sound of her sister's voice. Something she hadn't heard in years. She turned to face Jana.

“Hey. So, um, I'm sorry to interrupt. I need to give you something, and then I need to leave.”

Jana looked shocked and took a step toward her. She stopped suddenly when Erica flinched.

“I want Kristina, Carver, Jana, Gunner, and Erica in my office,” Striker said.

Erica sighed when Carver took her arm and led her after Striker. She tensed further when the office door closed behind them.

Striker went behind the desk and sat. Kristina stood beside him, and Feral was on the edge of the desk.

“Why don't you tell us why you're here?” Striker asked her.

Erica held up an envelope. “I just stopped to drop this off.”

“What is it?” Striker asked.

“It's a letter from our mother and a check for half the sale of the house.” Erica kept her gaze from her sister but saw the man beside Jana tighten his grip on her.

“Where's your mother?” Feral asked.

“She's dead,” Erica said.

She ignored the gasp that came from Jana.

“When did she die?” Jana asked.

Erica inhaled and blanked out her expression before she faced Jana. “About three months ago.”

“How?” Jana asked.

“Does it really matter?” Erica said.

Jana looked shocked. “I think so.”

“Really? If you had cared at all about us, I would have thought you’d try to call or stop by sometime in the last five years.”

“I have called. I’ve talked to Mom several times. When I asked about you, she always told me you were busy with your life.”

Erica snorted. “Oh, I was busy. Besides school, I had a full-time job to support Mom and me, and when she got sick, I became her full-time caregiver. I had help for when I had school or work, but otherwise, I was with her.”

“I don’t understand. Why would she make it sound like you were doing great?” Jana asked.

“Because she needed someone to take care of her. After you and Dad left, I was the only one there.” Erica tried to make it sound like she didn’t care.

Jana took a step toward her, making Erica take one back. She wouldn’t be able to handle it if her sister touched her.

Erica handed the envelope to Jana. “All I needed was to give you this.”

“And then what?” Striker asked.

“I have places to be.”

“You would leave without talking to me?” Jana asked.

Erica could sense the disappointment and sadness in her sister, but at the moment, she could only handle her own emotions. She shrugged. “Yeah. You left me a long time ago. If you cared, you would have tried to reach me. You know how our mom was.”

“Selfish?” Jana said.

“That’s a nice way to describe her. She just got worse the older and sicker she got.” Erica waved the envelope. “Here.”

“What’s in it?” Jana asked.

Erica sighed. God, why didn’t they just let her go? “I’ve already said that Mom wrote you a letter, and there’s a check for half the house after I paid off the rehab place she was at.”

“Why didn’t you just keep it?” Feral asked.

Erica seemed surprised. “Because I promised our mom that Jana would get her half.”

“It’s also a good excuse to see her,” Striker said.

Erica snorted. “No. I tried to drop it off at the hospital, but they refused to take it. The only reason I’m here was one of the nurses told me where you lived. I thought I’d just be able to give it to someone here and go.”

Erica looked over her shoulder at Carver. “But some people seemed to think I should talk to you, that you’d want to see me. I tried to tell them that was not the case, but they wouldn’t listen.”

“I’m glad they didn’t,” Jana said. “I would like to talk.”

Erica gritted her teeth. “Why would you take the time now?”

“I’ve always thought of you,” Jana said.

Erica laughed sarcastically. “Oh, well, then that makes everything better. Listen, this is ridiculous. Just take the fucking envelope so I can leave.”

“Where will you go?” Kristina asked.

Erica glanced at the other woman. “There are several places I can go.”

“You’re a lousy liar,” Striker said.

Erica gasped. “I am not.”

Jana took another step closer. It already felt like she was going to shake apart inside. The last thing she needed was for Jana to touch her.

“It doesn’t matter. You can’t keep me here against my will,” Erica said.

“You won’t even give me a chance?” Jana asked.

Erica didn’t know what to think about her sister’s expression. “A chance for what? You have your life here, and you seem happy. I don’t want to get in the way.”

“But you won’t,” Kristina said and tapped Striker’s shoulder. “Will she?”

Striker studied her for a moment before he nodded. “You’ll stay here with us.”

Erica’s mouth dropped open. “Wait, you can’t just keep me here.”

Striker smirked. “Really? Why not?”

“Because it’s against the law.”

Everyone in the room laughed.

“We’re a biker club. Do you really think we’re upstanding citizens?” Feral said.

Erica lifted her chin and narrowed her eyes. “You can try, but you’ll have to lock me up somewhere because I’ll keep trying to leave.”

And she would, every chance she got. The less time she spent with her sister, the less she’d miss her when she left.

Chapter Eight

Jana sighed. "I'd like to talk to my sister alone for a moment."

"You can have the office," Striker said as he stood. He grabbed Kristina's hand and walked out.

Jana patted Gunner's arm. "It's okay. We'll be right out."

Erica crossed her arms over her chest and waited for everyone to leave. Carver stopped at the door and looked at her.

"I'll be right outside. Call if you need me."

Erica nodded but stayed silent. She waited for her sister to speak after the door was closed. Jana stood a few feet away and looked like she was barely holding it together.

"Listen, I get that you're mad at me, and I don't blame you. I would be resentful if our places were switched. Please believe me when I say how sorry I am. I didn't know the money I sent home wasn't enough."

Erica froze. "Wait, what money?"

Jana looked confused. "You didn't know about the money I sent home every month?"

Erica shook her head. "No. Mom never told me that."

"I don't understand why you had to work full-time?" Jana said.

Erica thought of all the times she found drugs and alcohol in their house. When Erica asked about it, her mom always said a friend brought them to her. Erica never questioned it. Now, other things that didn't make sense at the time were falling into place.

"Where did all the money go?" Jana asked.

Erica looked down. "I imagine she used it for drugs, cigarettes, and alcohol."

“When did she start doing drugs?” Jana asked. “I knew she smoked, but she told me she had quit. I didn’t think she’d been much of a drinker either.”

“I think she was trying to self-medicate. She was sick a long time before I found out. She hadn’t wanted to go to the doctor because she knew it was bad. She said she didn’t tell me because she didn’t want me to worry, but now I’m questioning everything she said to me.”

“I am, too. I think she lied to both of us for a long time. She didn’t want me to come home because she thought I’d be able to tell she was sick, so she kept me away.”

“You tried to come home?” Erica asked.

“Yeah, a few times, but she always said the two of you were so busy, you wouldn’t be around. I believed her,” Jana growled.

Erica didn’t know what to make of this new information. She wanted time alone to digest it and figure out her next course of action.

“Well, I’m sorry about my hostility,” Erica said. “I’ve got to get going.”

“You don’t have anywhere to be,” Jana said.

“That doesn’t matter. This is your life. I’m not going to barge in.”

“What if I’d like you to stay?”

“I’m guessing you might just feel guilty, and I’m sorry I made you feel like that.”

“I blame our mom,” Jana said.

“I do, too. But it doesn’t change the past.”

Jana shook her head. “No, but we could change the future.”

“How?”

“I very much want you to stay.”

Erica sighed and looked away.

“Please. Give me a month. Spend time here, and if you’re not happy at the end, I’ll let you go.”

“Jana...”

Jana walked to her and took her hands. Erica’s first reaction was to pull away, but Jana tightened her grip. “Did you know I hired a private detective when I couldn’t find you and Mom?”

“How long ago?”

“Close to a year.”

“She was diagnosed with cancer, and by the time we found out, it was already stage four and had spread to her liver and brain. She went downhill quickly after that. She lasted about nine months and then died. I didn’t know where to find you so I couldn’t tell you about the funeral. It wasn’t much. She didn’t have any friends. I, a neighbor, and a few people from Hospice came.”

“I would have liked to be there for you,” Jana said.

“It’s fine. I’m used to being on my own.”

Erica could tell her sister didn’t like hearing that, but it was true.

“So, what do you think?” Jana asked. “I’d like you to meet all the girls.”

Erica looked away and thought for a moment. The only thing she had to lose if or when she left was her sister, possibly for the last time. She turned back to Jana.

“I’ll stay for a month.”

Erica saw the smile on Jana’s face and wished she could be as happy as her sister someday.

“Let’s go into the kitchen.” Jana pulled her along.

When they got to the kitchen, there were several women and men. She could smell the pancakes the women made and felt her stomach twitching in hunger.

“Hey, guys, I want you all to meet my sister, Erica,” Jana said. “She’s agreed to stay here.”

Erica couldn’t dismiss the happiness in her sister’s face.

Her sister took her around the room, introducing her to the women. “Charlie isn’t here right now, she’s at the garage with her man, Taz.”

Jana grinned. “I’d introduce the guys, but there’s too many of them.”

“Can I help with anything?” Erica asked.

“Sure, can you keep your eye on the pancakes?” Willow asked.

“Sure.” Erica took the spatula and concentrated on cooking instead of the people in the room. She continued to make the pancakes until the batter was gone. “Do we need more?”

Alicia looked around the room. “I think the majority of the guys ate. There’s plenty for us and the few people left that haven’t eaten.”

The women filled plates with pancakes and bacon and took them outside to the picnic table.

Erica watched the interaction between the women and was envious. She’d never had time for friends. The fact was these women lived together, and they also enjoyed each other.

She was happy for her sister but still didn’t know if she’d fit into her world or if Jana would want her there longer than a month. Time would tell.

Chapter Nine

“Should we spend time in the garden after we clean up the kitchen?” Meg asked.

The other women agreed.

Erica went to the sink and filled one side with soapy water. She listened but didn't comment on the things the women said, and concentrated on the dishes.

She was surprised when everything was done within thirty minutes. With a group like this, Erica imagined they could do anything together and get it done quickly.

“Hey, girls, I have to go to work,” Jana said.

The man who had been beside her sister in the office came over.

“Are you ready, Babe?” Gunner said.

“Yes.” Jana walked to her and hugged her.

Erica made herself let go when all she wanted to do was keep in physical contact with Jana. She must have looked confused because Jana's man studied her expression and nodded before seizing Jana's hand and leaving. Erica saw a few others follow them out the door.

“Every time one of us women leaves, we have to have at least three guys with us,” Kristina said.

“Why?” Erica asked.

“Because the club has some enemies, and the men here won't take chances with us,” Willow said.

Erica hadn't thought of that. Now, the thought of her sister in danger made her stomach ache. She almost called her back when her sister left.

“Don't worry,” Alicia said. “The guys take very good care of us. They'd never let anything happen.”

Erica nodded.

“Have you ever had a garden?” Meg asked.

Erica shook her head. “No, but I’d like to learn.”

“It’s a good day to work outside. It’s nice out,” Kristina said.

Erica walked out the back door and lifted her face up to the sun. The heat felt good on her skin. She recognized the fact that she hadn’t felt that good in years. At that moment, she had a full belly, some decent sleep, connected with her sister after five years, and made a few friends.

She couldn’t ask for more.

They had been in the garden for a few hours. The thing was huge, but it didn’t feel like working with six women around, seven including her.

“We should get back,” Kristina said. “Lunchtime is about here.”

Meg stood and wiped her hands on her jeans. “Let’s get that done. It will be too hot later, so who wants to play poker?”

Erica watched the different expressions on their faces. Some were excited, and one was apprehensive. She didn’t know what to think of it, but she’d find out very soon.

“I’d like to learn,” Erica said.

Willow squealed and slapped her hands together. “I’ll teach you.”

Meg snorted. “No, you won’t. You’ll teach her how to cheat.”

“What’s your point?” Willow said and sneered.

“Oh, hell. Let’s get going. They’ll be at this for a while.” Alicia said and interlocked their elbows.

Erica was having a lot of fun just watching the two women. “Did I hear that they’re BFF?”

Kristina laughed. “Yup. They’re both a bit crazy. Willow’s the worst.”

“*I heard that,*” Willow yelled behind them.

Erica looked at Kristina and Alicia and saw them both grinning. They didn't seem bothered about pissing Willow off. Erica would be a little more apprehensive.

In the kitchen, the women got out fixings for sandwiches and a few bags of chips.

"We don't do a lot for lunch," Kristina said. "We do try to make breakfast and dinner, though. If we want a day off, Striker has someone get donuts, and we order pizza for dinner.

Erica's eyes widened when three scantily clad women walked into the kitchen. She could tell they didn't like the girlfriends and vice versa.

"Erica, I'd like you to meet Paisley, Claire, and April. Three of the five sluts that live here."

Kristina turned to the sluts. "This is Erica. She's Jana's sister, so you'll be as respectful to her as you are to us. She's under Gunner's protection."

"And mine."

Erica turned to the door to see Carver, and her heartbeat thundered in her chest. Did he really just say she was under his protection? What exactly did that mean? And why would she need it?

"Yes," Kristina said and wrapped an arm around her waist. "Carver or Gunner won't put up with shit you give to Erica."

"I can take care of myself," Erica said. She didn't want them to think she was weak.

"Do you have a minute, Erica?" Carver asked.

She looked at Kristina and got her nod.

Carver reached out, took her hand, and led her outside.

"Where are we going?"

"Just over here."

He sat and pulled her down onto his lap.

"Easy," he said when she tried to get up. "You're fine."

Erica tried to relax against his chest, but his scent and the feel of his hot skin made it nearly impossible to sit still.

“I want to hear it from you.”

“What?” Erica asked.

“You’re staying?”

“Well, yes. At least for a month. After that, I don’t know.”

“What will happen to make you stay?” he asked.

“If I fit in, I guess.”

“From what I hear, you already do.”

Erica wished that was true, but she wouldn’t hold her breath.

“I am trying to get to know the women. I really like them.”

“They’re good people. Before I came back a few months ago, I hadn’t really been around decent women. The only ones I’ve had to deal with are the whores that were in every bar I stopped at.”

“You lived here before?” she asked.

“Yes. I had to leave for a while to get my head on straight.”

“Now you’re okay?” she asked.

“Yeah. I’m not ready to kill anyone this time. I’ve mellowed.”

She studied his strong facial features. His green eyes looked like the color of a forest. His skin was tan, and his hair dark. He kept it very short, so it was hard to tell exactly what color it was.

She could see his five o’clock shadow. He hadn’t shaved it so far, but he did keep it close to his face. The tendons in his neck and hands stood out, showing his strength. His hands made tingles race down her spine. To have those on her skin would drive her mad.

Erica tried to concentrate on his words, but it was becoming harder with each passing minute.

“Are you planning on napping this afternoon?” he asked.

“I hadn’t thought about that. The girls were going to teach me poker.”

“Fuck.”

She looked surprised. “What?”

“Usually when they play, they get stoned or drunk.”

Erica’s eyes widened. “I would have never guessed those women did that.”

“Oh, yeah. They keep the men on their toes.”

“Do they like that?” Erica asked.

“They act all pissy at first, but I can tell they enjoy when the women push them, and they have to punish them.”

“Punish?”

“Yeah. From what I understand, the girls like it as much as the men. The guys would never hurt them.”

Erica yawned.

“Lay your head down for a bit.”

“I don’t want to go to sleep on you,” she said.

“I want that very much.” He tucked her face against his neck and had her curl into him. “Are you comfortable?”

She hummed and nodded. “I’ll just rest for a minute.” The heat from his body wrapped around her, making her even more tired.

“You’re fine. It’s a great day out.”

She had no more energy to answer, so she fell asleep.

Chapter Ten

Carver held her against his body and couldn't understand why he felt so content. She was so light that he barely felt her. Her scent was so feminine and sweet that he found his mouth watering, wanting a taste of her.

He noticed the looks they were getting, but none of them seemed pissed. They were either surprised and/or happy to see them together. He was also pleased they left him alone.

He'd never thought he'd ever have his own woman. He wasn't the type of guy women like to be around except for sex. But once he was done, he pushed them away.

After watching his brothers with their women, he felt a kernel of desire to have his own but quickly doused it because no woman out there would want him. Now, he had someone who looked like an angel come to him freely and trust him enough to sleep on his lap.

He had no idea how long they sat there when Erica's eyelids fluttered open. She stared at him, momentarily confused, and then a blush covered her face.

"I can't believe I went to sleep. Was I out long?"

Carver shrugged and couldn't help the grin when her blush deepened. "It doesn't matter, Babe. I enjoyed it. I've never held a woman, and now I can see why my brothers like having their own."

"It can't be comfortable," she said.

"It's better than comfortable. I'm going to kiss you. If that's something you don't want, tell me now."

He almost groaned when her little tongue peeked out to wet her lips.

"I'm not going to say no."

He used the side of his hand to tilt her head back while lowering his head. The first touch of their lips was soft, but the taste of her quickly went to his head.

His hand cupped the back of her head to hold it steady as the kiss deepened. Carver ripped his mouth from hers when the back door slammed. Her eyes fluttered open. The depth of desire in them made his stomach tighten in brutal need.

“Woman, do you know how close I am to stripping you and fucking you until you pass out?”

Her eyes widened, and she looked around quickly.

He smiled. “I know. The first time we do fuck, it will be private.”

Erica relaxed and nodded.

“How about we get up? I’m afraid if we stay like this, we’ll get out of hand.”

She nodded and then tried to sit up. In one move, he lifted her to her feet.

“Are you steady?” he asked.

She nodded.

He stood to his feet and looked down at her. She was such a tiny thing he was afraid he’d break her if he got too rough.

“Are you going to say anything?” he asked her.

“Thank you.”

Another blush covered her face, making him laugh out loud. He saw the surprised looks thrown their way but ignored them. He knew he didn’t show emotion much, and happiness was rare.

He wrapped an arm around her. “I’ve got some things to do. I’ll leave you with the girls, but I’ll see you later.”

“Okay.”

He opened the back door and nudged her in. “Look in the family room you guys use. There is usually at least one woman in there.”

“Okay. I’ll see you later.”

“Yeah, Babe.” He pressed a hard kiss to her mouth, turned, and went back out the door.

He was startled to hear himself whistle. He couldn't remember the last time he had, and it hadn't been around other people.

Carver started to take apart his motor and fix the rattle he heard. All the while he worked, his thoughts went from being happy because of Erica, but he also had doubts starting to build.

What would happen if she found out about his childhood? Fuck, why did it always come back to his childhood? He knew it fucked him up, but he thought he was able to move on.

He'd see what the next few weeks were like. He didn't want to miss this chance with Erica and live to regret it. He'd also talk to Striker and Feral. They hadn't had the best childhoods but overcame them and moved on.

“Hey, Carver. Striker needs us to go to the warehouse for some things,” Chains said.

Carver nodded, stood, and grabbed a rag to clean his hands.

“We're taking the truck,” Chains said as he stepped up next to him.

“Who else is going?” Carver asked.

“Snake and Iron, I think.”

Carver got into the passenger seat, and Chains was behind the wheel. The other two rode behind them on their bikes.

The ride there was quiet, giving him more time to think, which wasn't usually good. He found it only caused him problems in the past.

He wasn't going to overthink it, but he definitely had questions for his brothers.

Chapter Eleven

Erica went to her room and showered. One glance at the bed made her yearn for more rest, but she had all the time in the world for that. She didn't want to miss anything downstairs.

The first thing she saw when walking down the stairs was two men going at one slut. One in her mouth and the other in her ass. Erica couldn't tell if the woman was enjoying it or was really good at pretending. She wasn't sure she'd be able to get to the point of ignoring it. At that moment, she turned away and walked into the kitchen.

No one was there, so she turned and walked to the room the old ladies called their own. She was several feet away when she heard Willow and Meg arguing. She couldn't help the smile that bloomed on her face. She saw Alicia first and had to bite her tongue when the woman rolled her eyes.

"Hey," she said.

Willow and Meg stopped long enough to say hi, and then they were right back at it.

Kristina snorted and then patted the seat next to her on the sofa.

"What are you guys up to?"

"We were watching a movie, but then these two started bickering," Alicia said.

"Bite me, Alicia," Willow yelled.

Alicia grinned. "I'd love to."

Erica sputtered and laughed.

"Let's try to finish the movie." Kristina turned to Erica. "You need to meet Emily and Charlie. They're two more young ladies in the family. We'll start dinner, and if you can, we plan on playing poker later."

Erica smiled. She looked forward to seeing her sister, meeting the other two women, and learning poker. “That’s great. I’m excited.”

For the next hour, the women watched a movie. It was just about over when the others strolled in.

Jana went to Erica and hugged her.

“I missed you,” Jana said.

Erica smiled, pleased that her sister was trying to make amends and was showing she cared about her. “How was work?”

“Hectic, like usual. But I love what I do.”

Kristina waved her over. “Erica, come meet Charlie and Emily.”

After the introductions, they all moved into the kitchen and started making dinner. With that many women, it got crowded, but she still enjoyed it. The kitchen smelled wonderful, and Erica could feel her stomach start to rumble with hunger.

For the next hour, they fed almost all the people. They planned on making their own plates and leave the rest out for the stragglers and anyone who wanted seconds.

Erica would answer a question asked directly to her but otherwise sat back and enjoyed the women. She could never see herself getting sick of this. She loved the idea of never being alone. A mere week ago, she planned to move on. She didn’t know where or how, but she would have been alone.

“Let’s get one of the guys to make us some margaritas,” Meg said.

A few women groaned.

“Is that bad?” Erica asked.

They laughed.

Jana smiled. “No, we all seem to get drunk easily, and then our men have to deal with us.”

Erica looked around the table. “Do they get mad?”

Willow snorted. “They like to pretend they are, but we know they love it when we misbehave because then they’ll have to punish us.”

“Ohhh, punish me, Baby,” Meg said and laughed.

“As you can tell. None of us are afraid of our men,” Emily said.

“But we love driving them crazy,” Charlie said.

“It keeps them on their toes,” Meg said.

“Let’s clean up. I suddenly have a hankering for some tequila,” Kristina said, grabbing her plate and walking toward the back door.

Everyone followed and got to work. The work got done quicker than normal because of all the help and the fact that they were all excited about poker and liquor.

They set up a round table. Alicia grabbed the cards and chips.

Willow came bouncing into the room. “I got Snoopy to make us margaritas.”

“Oh, I like his,” Meg said. “They have a little kick to them.”

The girls sat down, and not a minute later, a few guys came in with their drinks.

“Thanks, guys,” Alicia said.

“Girl, if you suck that down too fast, you won’t be able to play cards,” Kristina said.

Emily snorted. “Oh, I’ll be able to play. I just won’t be very good at it.”

Erica laughed.

The girls taught her to play poker for the next hour, and Willow taught her to cheat.

Erica couldn’t stop smiling, and it got worse as she worked through the second glass. She studied the cards in her

hand and had a hard time focusing. “What happens if you can’t see the cards?”

The others laughed.

“Have you had margaritas before?” Emily asked.

Erica snorted. “This is the first time I’ve had any alcohol.”

Willow whooped, some of the girls grinned, and a few looked concerned.

“Maybe you should slow down,” Jana said. “It will hit you pretty hard.”

“Is my nose supposed to be numb?” Erica asked.

The longer the game went on, the more confused Erica got. She had to lay her head down at one point because the room was spinning.

“Goddammit!” a male voice yelled.

“Uh-oh, I think we’ve been found out,” Meg said, laughing hysterically.

The man sighed and then called out to someone. One by one, the men came in and took their women out.

Willow started complaining. “You never let us have any fun.”

“If you puke, Blood will have to wipe it up. Do you still want to drink?”

Erica hadn’t lifted her head but giggled.

“Fuck,” Striker said. “Are the guys back from the warehouse?”

“Yeah, they got back a few minutes ago.”

“Go get Carver.”

The other man laughed.

“Hey,” Willow said and shook her.

“Oh, God.”

Willow chuckled. "So, are you hot for Carver?"

Erica lifted her head and looked at the women. Willow, Kristina, Emily, and Striker were the only ones in the room.

"I think he's beautiful," Erica said.

Striker groaned.

Willow screeched and then laughed. "I called Blood that once. I wasn't able to sit the next day. The Bastard."

"I got in trouble for calling my guy sweet," Kristina said.

Emily looked around. "Hawk doesn't need a reason. He just likes his hand on my ass."

The others laughed.

"What's up?" a man said from behind her.

"Are you able to take care of Erica? She's a little drunk," Striker said. "If not, I can get someone else. I have my own woman to deal with."

"Oh, she's really drunk," Kristina said. "This is the first time she's ever drunk."

"Oh, hell. Yeah, I've got her." Carver walked to her and lifted her in his arms.

Her arms tightened around his neck. "Stop spinning." How could the man move so fast?

Chapter Twelve

“Good luck,” Striker said.

“Anything else I should know?” Carver asked worriedly.

“Watch to make sure she doesn’t go into a coma,” Willow said.

His heart dropped. “Jesus, is that possible?” he asked Striker.

Striker grunted and glared at Willow. “There is a very slim chance. I’d be more worried about her puking.”

Carver grimaced. Hell. He’d never had to take care of another person before, and he couldn’t remember ever puking himself.

“Come knock on my door if you need anything,” Striker said.

That made him feel better. “Okay. Night, guys.”

Carver carried her up to his room and laid her on the bed. He stood back and stared down at her and couldn’t get over the fact about how pretty she was. He debated how many of her clothes he should take off. If she puked, it would be less to clean up if she was mostly naked. Besides, he had wanted to see her nude since he first saw her.

He carefully removed her shoes, socks, and jeans, leaving her in a shirt and tiny pink panties. Jesus, he’d never seen anything as hot as her right then. He carefully pulled the shirt over her head and then the bra. The fact that her underwear matched made it even sexier. The bra came off last before he tucked her under the blanket.

He wiped a drop of sweat that ran down the side of his face, and his cock was throbbing because it was so hard.

Carver turned and walked into the bathroom, keeping the door open. He wanted to shower but needed to be able to hear her.

After a quick shower and taking care of his teeth, he pulled on a pair of shorts, turned off the light, and settled into bed next to Erica. She was sleeping peacefully, and he wondered if she'd feel it in the morning. He wouldn't feel the least bit sad if she woke up with a headache.

He was awoken once when Erica turned to her side and moaned. He gripped her hip.

“Are you awake?” he asked.

“I'm not sure. I know I really have to go to the bathroom, but the thought of moving makes me nauseous.”

“We'll take it slow.”

Carver helped her out of bed and kept a hold of her into the bathroom. She struggled to get her panties down at the toilet, so he helped. He never thought he'd be in the position he was. What freaked him out the most was that it didn't piss him off.

She sat right away, and he could hear her peeing. It seemed to go on forever, telling him she had a full bladder, and he was thankful she woke up instead of peeing in his bed. He had to bite his lip when she got discouraged trying to unroll some toilet paper. He pulled some off and leaned her forward to wipe her ass. He flushed the toilet and helped her stand before helping her with her panties.

He also never thought he'd have to help a female get dressed. But he would never be able to deny Erica, and she was so fucking sweet. He started to lead her back into the bedroom.

“No, wait. I have to wash my hands,” she said.

He rolled his eyes but held her up while she did it. He got her back to the bed and helped her settle before crawling in beside her.

“How are you feeling?” he asked.

“Not good. The room keeps spinning.”

He chuckled. “That's what happens.”

“Does it happen to you?”

Hell, he couldn't remember the first time he had alcohol. He guessed it was around the age of ten or eleven — at the place he had to grow up at with the people who were supposed to keep him safe instead of the horrible things they let other people do to him.

He shook his head. He wasn't going to think about that time. It was over, and he had come to grips with it while on the road. He'd decided he was still giving them power over him if he kept fucking up. In the beginning, he thought he'd only be gone from the club for a year, but several went by, and when the time came, he thought he was ready to face everyone. He didn't think they'd let him back in. Not only did they let him in, but it was also with open arms from everyone, even Iron, whom he'd beat the hell out of.

He had missed the guys more than he thought he would. Coming back was a new experience. The additions to the club made him feel cared for. He never thought normal women would ever spend time with the men, but it seems that as time passed, more of them came to live with them.

The last one was Erica, and he'd felt something for her from the start. Never in a million years would he have thought he'd go for a normal-looking chick. He'd always picked the hardened sluts that knew it was one time and didn't bug him about it.

The thought of a long-term relationship with one woman seemed impossible for him. He thought he'd die without ever knowing a woman's love — until Erica.

Chapter Thirteen

Erica moved her head and thought it was going to split apart. A long moan slipped out, and the sound of it made her head spin.

“How are you feeling?” Carver asked softly.

Oh, God. There’s no way Carver was in bed next to her. And why the hell was he shouting? He’s seeing how pitiful she looked, and she couldn’t change a thing because then she’d have to move her body.

“What ... what are you doing here?” she whispered.

The bed moved, making her clutch the sheet under her to keep from moving.

“Stop,” she hissed.

Fortunately, the moving stopped. Now, she worked to keep herself from vomiting all over him.

The smell of dead flesh hit her in the face. She couldn’t figure out where the awful smell was coming from for a moment. “Oh my God. It’s my breath.” The taste was making her stomach turn. “I need to brush my teeth.”

“Okay. I’ll help you up.”

He effortlessly lifted her to her feet and hung onto her until she was steady.

At the bathroom door, she stopped and turned to him. “I can do it from here.”

He looked skeptical but took a step back. “I’ll be right here if you need me.”

She began to nod and then thought better of it. Her head felt like it was going to fall off her shoulders. She wasn’t going to do anything that might just do that. She carefully closed the door.

“I left some aspirin and a glass of water on the counter by the sink. That would be the first thing you do.”

“There are five here?”

“I know. But you need it, don’t you think?”

She agreed. She didn’t know how long she could handle the headache.

“Thank you.”

“You’re welcome, Babe. There’s an extra toothbrush in the drawer.”

Oh, thank God. She swallowed the aspirin as quickly as she could while holding herself up by leaning on the counter and not making her pass out from the pain.

After brushing her teeth, she sat on the toilet. It was only then she realized she was naked except for her panties. Dammit. The first time he sees her naked, she looks like this. She wiped and stood. As hard as it was going to be, she needed to shower.

She turned on the water and stripped her panties off. She used one of the towels to twist her hair up so it didn’t get wet.

“Do you need help?” he yelled through the door.

“No. Can I have something to wear, though?”

“Sure. I’ll be right back.”

She stepped into the shower and closed her eyes as hot water slid down her body. It felt good, and she wanted to stay there for an hour but knew she had no energy.

She bathed herself with his soap, and she couldn’t believe that desire built in her when she felt this bad. When her legs started to shake, she turned off the water and grabbed a towel. After she dried herself, she opened the curtain to find a shirt folded on the counter.

Erica pulled the shirt on and smiled. The thing went to her knees and could pass for a nightgown. She pulled her panties back on. It grossed her out, but she didn’t have a lot of choices.

Her hair was tangled, so she tried her best to run her fingers through it. That was all she could do. Her energy was about gone, and she still needed to make it to bed. Or maybe he wanted her to go back to her room? She had already embarrassed herself, so she didn't assume anything.

Her eyes went to the bed where Carver lay on his side with his head cradled in his hand, staring at her. She slid to the side and glanced at the door. When she looked at him, she saw his eyes narrow in warning.

“Don't even think about it, Babe,” he said, lifting the blanket. “Come here.”

“Now,” he barked when she didn't move immediately.

She scowled at him at the same time she walked to the bed. She let him tuck the blanket around her and pulled her back against his chest. Erica exhaled as her muscles relaxed, and she felt the heat from his body. A shudder swept through her when the heat of him soaked through the t-shirt she was wearing.

“Are you doing okay?” he asked.

“Yes. Thank you for your help. I'm sure this is the last thing you want to do.”

“Hold a beautiful woman?” he murmured against the back of her head.

“No. Taking care of a drunk person.”

He chuckled. “You aren't so bad.”

She wanted to roll her eyes but knew it would hurt too much, so she closed them.

“Get some more rest and let the aspirin work. When you wake up, you should feel a lot better.”

God, she really hoped so.

“Maybe you'll think twice before getting drunk again,” he said.

She almost laughed. “Maybe, but Willow told me it would get easier the more I did it.”

She felt him stiffen behind her, but he didn't say anything. Her eyes slid closed, and she was out.

Chapter Fourteen

Carver gritted his teeth. Fuck, that woman Willow was a menace, and he just knew she was going to get Erica in trouble someday.

He listened to her breathing slow and deepen before he let himself relax. He had anticipated and waited for her to puke, but she was doing okay so far.

The next time he opened his eyes, the sun had brightened the room enough to tell him it was midmorning at least. He listened to her for a moment and decided to get up, shower, and let her sleep some more. The more rest she got, the better she would feel. She didn't move at all as he rolled off the bed. He stared down at her and realized he'd never get sick of looking at the woman.

With a sigh, he turned away and walked into the bathroom but he left the door open so he could hear her. Erica was still asleep when he walked through the room with a towel around his waist into his closet to get clothing. When he was dressed, he checked on her one more time before carefully going out the door and shutting it behind him.

The first thing he needed was coffee. Only then could he deal with the day.

He stood in the kitchen doorway to watch the entertainment of Willow and Blood. He almost laughed when one of the other girls gripped her head when they started shouting.

“Guys, stop the yelling,” Striker said as he entered the back door. “If you two kids can't control yourself, take it outside.”

Blood gripped a chunk of hair at the back of her head, pulled her head back, and savagely took her mouth. It was fucking hot and made her think about holding Erica's head to kiss her or guide her on how to suck his cock.

The slamming of the back door snapped him out of his dream. He walked around, got a cup of coffee, leaned against the wall, and watched the women. He could tell they'd been doing it a while, and they really enjoyed feeding them.

He'd never interacted with women like this and didn't know what to think. He thought of Erica and how much he wanted her, but he was worried she wouldn't be able to handle the things he'd need from her in bed.

"Hey, Carver, where's Erica?" Jana, her sister asked.

"She was still sleeping when I left her," he said.

"How is she doing?" Kristina asked.

"She had a massive headache this morning." Carver turned to Willow and narrowed his eyes. "She's been told it gets better every time. Willow, you wouldn't happen to know who told her that bullshit?"

He gritted his teeth when the woman rolled her eyes and snorted. That woman needed to get beat more often.

"I did. What's the big deal?"

"It made her really sick. I don't want her to do it again," Carver said. He was shocked when almost everyone laughed.

"I hate to tell you this, but the girls will keep doing whatever they want," Feral said.

"You can't control them?" Carver said.

Striker laughed behind him. "Fuck, no. But think of it this way. It gives us a reason to punish them."

Carver would have to think about that. "I'm going to check on her."

"I can do it," Jana said.

"No. I got it."

Carver walked out of the room and up the stairs. He listened at his door before opening it.

The bed and bathroom were empty. He couldn't understand the sense of panic he felt. He knew she was in the building and probably just down the hallway. But he knew he wouldn't relax until he saw her. He went to her room and knocked.

"Come in," she said.

His eyes scanned over her, and he was disappointed that she was dressed. "Are you sure you're up for getting out of bed?"

"Yes, I think moving around will help. The headache is about gone, thanks to you."

He was still skeptical but let it slide. He wasn't used to caring for anyone but himself. He decided he'd watch her for the next few hours, and if it looked like she was getting worse, he'd take her up to his room.

"I want you to move into my room." The words were out of his mouth before he considered the fact that he'd never lived with a woman before, but he wasn't going to change his mind.

Chapter Fifteen

She was shocked. She hadn't thought he'd want that. At least for a while. "Oh, wow." As much as she wanted to say yes, she wasn't sure if her sister wanted her to stay on. It felt like she was pushing herself on Jana. And that's the last thing she wanted to do.

He crossed his arms over his chest and scowled. "What's the problem?"

Erica looked away. "It's just that I'm not sure I'll be staying here. I can always get a job and apartment in town, and we could still see each other."

"What makes you think I'd let you go?" he asked.

"I don't know. I know I won't stay where I make people uncomfortable."

"What the fuck are you talking about?" he asked.

Erica sighed. Her headache was starting to reappear. "Can we talk about this later?"

He scowled but let it go. "Let's get some food in you. It will help with your headache."

The thought of food made her stomach growl and at the same time made her nauseous. She'd eat something but she would stay away from the greasy things.

He took her hand and led her down the stairs and into the kitchen.

She stood back for a moment and watched the women. They looked like they were having fun, like a family, and she felt like she was on the outside looking in again for some reason. Maybe she was oversensitive, but she would also listen to her gut.

"Are you going to help them, Babe?" Carver asked.

Erica shook her head. "No. They look like they have everything under control. I don't want to get in the way."

“What are you talking about?”

She could feel her face heat with a blush. “It’s nothing. I’m not really hungry. I think I’ll go back upstairs and lie down.”

He cupped her chin in his hand. “You will tell me what’s going on eventually.”

She nodded, pulled away from him, turned, and left without saying anything to her sister. Hell, she probably forgot she was even there. Jana had a full life and a man that loved her. The last thing she needed was for her to butt in.

As much as she’d like to call this place home, it was her sister’s, not hers.

She laid down on her mattress, pulled a blanket over herself, and turned toward the wall. Her mind wouldn’t shut down long enough to sleep. As much as she tried and couldn’t let go, she became more tense.

She heard the door crack open a while later and pretended to sleep. Whoever was there whispered and then shut the door. Erica waited until she knew for sure they had left before she turned to face that way.

Eventually, she fell asleep. When she woke, she saw the sun coming directly in the window and knew it was early afternoon. The other thing she noticed was that she was lying on top of Carver’s chest. She gasped and tipped her head up to look at him. He cracked his eyes open, smiled, and continued to travel his fingers up and down her spine.

“I’m so sorry,” she said and tried to scramble off of him. He tightened his arms.

“You’re not going anywhere.”

“This has got to feel uncomfortable,” she said.

He grinned. “I’m enjoying it. You’re better than any blanket I’ve ever used before.”

That almost got her to smile. “What are you doing in here?”

“I needed a nap.”

She snorted. “Really?”

“I wanted to lay with you.”

The breath caught in her throat. She could see the shades of emotion in his eyes.

“Your sister was looking for you.”

Her heart felt heavy. “Do ... do you know what for?”

“She was worried. You haven’t eaten all day. She saw you in the kitchen, but when she turned around, you were gone.”

“She doesn’t have to worry about me. I can take care of myself.”

A gasp tore from her mouth when she found herself flat on her back and an angry biker scowling down at her.

He had his leg thrown over hers to keep her in place. “You’re going to listen to me, Babe. I’m not sure what’s going on in your head, but I’m guessing it’s bullshit.”

“You have no idea what I’m thinking. You haven’t lived in my shoes.”

“No, you’re right about that. But I also think I’m seeing things you’re oblivious to.”

Her brows snapped together. “Like what?” She tried to ignore the desire building inside her with his body pressed against hers.

“Like the fact your sister enjoys having you here.”

“But for how long? I don’t want to be here for a few weeks, and then she gets sick of me, and I have to leave. It will be harder for me then.”

“I can’t see that happening,” he said.

“How long have you known Jana?”

“A few weeks. Why?”

“You can’t tell me how she feels. You don’t know her, so you can’t read her.” She didn’t want to talk about her anymore. She just wanted to forget how pathetic her life was. “Can we maybe talk about something else?”

He stared down at her with an expression that ramped up her need for him. She tried to move out from under him, when he stayed silent.

“Are you trying to get away from me, Little Worm?” he asked.

Erica froze. “Did you just call me a worm?”

He grinned. “Yeah, you’re wiggling around like one. It was either that or snake.”

She gasped. “I cannot believe you just said that to me.”

That made him chuckle and press down on top of her.

“You’re going to squish me if you keep doing that,” she told him.

“Naw, if I see you start to turn blue, I’ll move.”

Her mouth dropped open. When he laughed at her expression, she hit his shoulder. The smile slid from his face and was replaced with a scowl.

“Ah, so you’re ready to rumble, Little Worm?”

“Rumble? And stop calling me Little Worm.”

“You’re ready for me to make you feel good.”

“How?”

“How about I show you?”

“Oh, I...” her words were cut off when his mouth came down on hers, scrambling her thoughts. She tried to fight to keep some semblance of reasoning, but he kissed like a God, making her whole body tingle.

She decided just to let herself go. Didn’t she deserve to feel good if even for a moment?

Chapter Sixteen

Fuck, her taste was going to his head. He'd never had a woman make him feel like this, but then he'd only fucked whores before.

His kisses turned hungry, and one of his hands started roaming over her body, cupping one breast as he devoured her mouth. She arched and cried out when he started to pinch her nipple, a sound he had craved to hear for a long time.

He lifted his head and looked down at her. Jesus, she was beautiful, but when she had the flush of desire, she was gorgeous.

“Babe, if you don't want me to fuck you until you pass out, tell me now.”

She looked up at him, and he could tell she was having a problem understanding what he was saying.

“Babe, answer me.”

“I ... yes. I want that, but...”

“But what?” he asked.

“I can't orgasm, so I don't want you to get frustrated or angry.”

He snorted. “Who the fuck told you that?”

“I ... it doesn't matter.”

“How about we make a bet? If I make you come twice, you have to give your sister a chance and sit down with her and talk about how you're feeling.”

“And if you don't, I can leave whenever I want.”

He had to bite back a grin because she was so serious and really thought she couldn't reach orgasm. He was about to teach her what her body was capable of.

“Deal.”

She exhaled and nodded. “Okay.”

He lowered his head and took her lips again. This time, he touched and tasted as much of her as he could before he moved down her body. When he sucked on her neck, she gasped and turned to give him better access.

He smiled. She really thought she was frigid. So far, she was the most passionate woman he'd ever known. A strangled scream burst from her when he latched onto one of her nipples. Fuck, yeah. She was going to be easy to throw over and make her come. He paid attention to both breasts, making sure her nipples were hard as rocks and beet-red before moving on.

Only when he was between her widespread legs and was ready to eat her cunt did she realize what he was about to do and then squeaked and tried to push him away.

“Oh, hell no. This is my cunt, Little Worm. I'm going to eat you out a lot because you smell like strawberries, and I bet you taste like them, too.” He bent forward and swiped his tongue through her slit, scraping across her clit. “Oh, fuck, you taste like them, too.”

She tried to scream, but it caught in her throat, and it pleased him when a sound close to being strangled slipped from her. He started to push one of his fingers into her cunt. Fuck, she was tighter than anything he had ever felt before.

“Oh, God,” she cried out.

“Shhh, it's just my finger. Let me get it all the way in. Relax.”

He could tell she was trying to, but guessed her body was going out of control for the first time in her life, and she didn't know how to handle it. He used force to push through her silky wet tissue until he was all the way in her. That was all it took to throw her over the first time. He guessed the little pinch of pain made it possible, and that excited the fuck out of him.

He drove his finger in and out of her tight cunt. “There you go, Babe. That's right, keep going.” He stopped when she

collapsed and closed her eyes. He gave her a moment before starting again.

He shoved two fingers into her, making her scream. When he bent forward and latched onto her clit and sucked, it drove her over again. He loved the startled look on her face.

“Now, let me get in you.” While she fought to catch her breath, he stripped off his boxers, grabbed a condom from his jean pocket, rolled it on, and then was back on her.

He cradled her head in his hand and lined his cock up to her cunt. “Open your eyes and look at me.”

He could tell she struggled but did what he asked. Her eyes were dazed and hot, making him feel like a giant.

He slowly started to push into her, watching her expression the whole time. Fuck, it felt like his cock would be ripped off at any moment because she was so tight, but he wouldn't have changed a thing. She screamed when he shoved the last few inches into her.

“There you go. You took my whole cock, Babe. Now let me make you come again.” He smiled when she shook her head, and her nails dug into his shoulders.

“Nooo,” she murmured.

Carver chuckled. “Yes. Just one more time.” He started slowly and steadily but quickly moved into her with a purpose. He hadn't gone three minutes before she started tightening on his cock, making it nearly impossible to fuck her. It was painful, but he wouldn't have had it any other way.

He pistoned into her, ramming his cock in. He could hear a scream building in her throat before she let it out.

“Jesus, yes. That's it. Come for me.”

Carver kept at her until she released him and relaxed against the mattress. “Good girl. Now it's my turn.” It took him a few more thrusts before he felt his cum burst from his cock, filling the condom.

When he came down, he rested his forehead against her shoulder and concentrated on gaining back his control and

calming his heart. He was extra cautious to keep most of his weight off her because he knew he could smother her easily.

It took a few minutes before he could lift his head and look down at her. The expression of wonder on her face made him smile and feel proud of himself.

“So, now you know you can come.”

He chuckled when she just nodded, still dazed.

“I want you to talk to your sister today,” Carver said.

She inhaled. “I will.”

“Oh, I know you will because I’ll be right there.”

“You don’t have to babysit me, Carver.”

“Oh, I wouldn’t call it babysitting as much as supporting you. Stay where you are. I’m going to get a washcloth.”

He caught her flinch when he pulled out. “I’m sorry, Babe. I’ll be right back.”

After taking care of the condom and washing, he grabbed and wet a cloth.

“Spread your legs,” he said. He saw her hesitate, but then she did what he said. “You’re a good girl. I was going to spank your ass if you didn’t mind me.”

He carefully separated her pussy lips and thoroughly cleaned her.

“Spank me. Really?” she asked in a testy voice.

He glanced up at her and smiled. “Yeah. You got a problem with that, Little Worm?”

She scowled. “Stop calling me that.”

“No.”

She growled and tried to kick him, which made him laugh. That got her even madder. He lay back on her before she could throw a fit and pressed his lips against hers. He kissed her until she relaxed under him.

Jesus, he could never get sick of her. He liked everything about her. *Liked* was an inadequate word for the way he felt, but the word *love* scared him. He thought he'd feel weak and mushy besides. He'd never said those words to anyone, so the first couple of times would be hard for him.

“Let's get dressed,” he said before giving her a hard kiss and pushing himself off her. He was a bit unsettled about what would happen with the sisters. The thought of it not going well and Erica leaving made him beyond furious.

There was no way he was going to let her leave. She was his now.

Chapter Seventeen

Erica took her time dressing and brushing her hair with her fingers.

“Stop delaying it, Babe,” he said from the door.

She exhaled and walked to him, taking his hand. She knew it was silly to be afraid to talk to her own sister, but they were mostly strangers in her eyes.

They walked down the stairs. Most of the people ignored them, but a few looked curious, and she didn't know why.

“Let's check the kitchen first,” Carver said.

Erica nodded. She relaxed when only a few of the women were baking, and her sister wasn't one of them.

“Do you girls know where Jana is?” Carver asked.

“Out by the picnic table,” Kristina said, glancing between the two.

Erica knew they were curious, but thankfully, no one asked any questions.

“Thank you,” Carver said and led her outside.

Erica spotted her right away talking to Meg.

When Jana saw her, she came to her and hugged her.

“Are you feeling okay?” she asked.

Erica nodded her head.

“You haven't eaten today. I checked on you a few times, and you were sleeping so soundly I didn't want to wake you.”

“I don't want you to worry about me. I'm just catching up on my sleep.”

Erica watched her sister frown.

“I'll always worry about you,” Jana said.

“Why now?”

Erica wanted to kick herself because she could see the hurt in her sister’s eyes.

“You’re right to be angry. I thought you and Mom were doing okay. Every time I called, Mom said you were doing fine and were just busy.”

Erica’s eyes widened. “You called?”

Jana nodded. “Yes, I told you that yesterday. I’m shocked she never told you?”

Erica shook her head.

“The only thing I can think of is she didn’t want you to leave her because she’d be alone.”

Erica thought about it and agreed. “I think so, too. Especially when she got sick.”

Carver nudged her shoulder.

Erica looked up at him and sighed.

“What’s going on?” Jana asked.

When she didn’t talk fast enough, Carver told her himself.

“She’s thinking of leaving,” he said.

Erica watched her sister get pale, and the tears filled her eyes.

“Why would you leave? We just got back together?” Jana said.

“We could still see each other. I wasn’t planning on leaving town. I want to get a job and a place to live.”

Jana looked stunned. “Why?”

Erica didn’t know what to say.

Carver cleared his throat. “She thinks she’s barging in and doesn’t want to make you uncomfortable.”

Jana wiped away a tear and slowly shook her head. “Why would you think that?”

“I just kind of dropped onto your lap. I didn’t expect to barge into your life. I don’t want to get in the way,” Erica said.

She hated how defeated her sister looked.

“Did I make you feel that way? Because I never thought of it that way. I’m so happy to have you here,” Jana said.

“No, you didn’t make me feel that way.”

“God, I hope not. I want you to stay,” Jana said.

Erica looked up at Carver and then back at Jana. “I’m worried you’ll get sick of me and eventually want me to leave, and it will be harder to do later.”

“Jesus, Erica, I’m never going to want you to leave. I’m beyond thrilled that you’re here. Please don’t think it will ever change.”

“But what if you get sick of me?” she asked.

Jana stayed silent for a moment and looked at Carver. “Hey, could you help me out?”

Erica saw the wicked look in her sister’s eyes.

“Sure,” Carver said.

“Would you punish her for me when she starts thinking this shit?”

Carver grinned. “I’d be happy to.”

Erica’s mouth dropped open, and her gaze went back and forth. “You can’t do that,” she said to him.

“Are you claiming her?” Jana asked.

“Now, wait a minute,” Erica said.

Carver chuckled. “Yes, I’ve claimed her.”

“Aren’t you supposed to ask me?” Erica asked.

Both her sister and Carver smiled.

“That’s not how it works here,” Jana told her.

“Why?”

“Because all the guys are arrogant bastards and used to getting their way.”

“I can always say no,” she said. She narrowed her eyes at Carver as she crossed her arms over her chest.

“Now, why would you say no to the guy that just gave you three orgasms?” Carver said loudly, getting people’s attention.

Erica gasped, dropped her arms to her sides, and felt the heat of a blush cover her face. “I can’t believe you just said that.”

She ignored her sister’s laughter.

Carver shrugged. “I’m not lying, right?”

Erica looked around and saw several people staring their way, most grinning like idiots. She caught the smug look on Meg’s face and felt her blush deepen.

“FYI, chicky,” Meg said. “You’re just going to have to give in because the look on your sister’s face tells me she’s digging in her heels because she wants you here, and the stupid, overconfident grin on Carver’s face tells me if you try to leave, you won’t get far. Take it from someone who knows. I tried to get away once. I didn’t get out of the driveway before Feral caught me.”

Erica didn’t know what to say or do.

“Just give in, Little Worm,” Carver said.

Erica growled. “Stop calling me that.”

He laughed, and the others grinned.

His hand slid over her ass. “You’ll have to get used to that, too, Babe, because I won’t stop until I’m ready, and I can’t see that happening anytime soon.”

Jana giggled. “I think you have this, Carver. I won’t worry about her leaving because you won’t let her get far.”

“You’re right about that,” Carver said. “She’ll damn well stay where I put her.”

“See,” Meg snorted. “They’re all arrogant bastards.”

Erica gave up. The fact that she never wanted to leave made it easy. “Fine.”

Jana chuckled and hugged her tightly for a long while. “If you threaten to leave again, I’m going to ask Carver to fuck the energy out of you, and then you won’t have any to run.”

“My God, Jana.”

Jana grinned. “Welcome to the Vipers Club.”

Meg stood and came to them. “It’s about time to start dinner,” she said, grabbing Erica’s hand and dragging her toward the house.

“You know I can find my own way, right?” Erica said sarcastically.

“Yeah, but I’m helpful this way,” Meg said, making her sister, who strolled behind them, laugh.

Erica looked over her shoulder to see Carver with a grin on his face.

“I’ll be in to check on you in a bit, Babe.”

Erica rolled her eyes and followed Meg. She tried to look pissed but was too happy to make it believable. It didn’t matter. She was home.

Chapter Eighteen

Kristina giggled as she handed the joint over to Willow. The nine women tried to hide in a small back room in the club that no one used except for storage. They had gone through a few joints and a pan of brownies and were raring for more.

“Oh, Jesus Christ,” Stone said as he stood in the doorway. “I found them,” he yelled. She watched him turn and walk away, and she thought they were good until one man after another filed in and scowled down at them.

The looks on their faces made the women laugh hysterically and continue to smoke weed.

Erica grinned when Blood tried to take the joint from Willow and ended up on his ass.

“Goddammit!” Blood yelled. “That’s it.” Before Willow could evade him, he snatched her up and threw her over his shoulder. “Someone grab the joint from her.”

There was a scuffle, but Willow laughed too hard to put up a good fight.

Erica looked at the scowl on Striker’s face and felt a moment of unease.

“Kristina,” he said.

Kristina smiled. “Yeah, Babe?”

Erica relaxed when he just rolled his eyes. She would never admit to anyone that certain men in the club still scared her, even after being there for three months. She thought they always looked ready to tear someone apart. Cut their throats and walk off whistling. She knew she was being dramatic, but getting used to them would take more than a few months.

Erica reached for the joint Jana had, but she was yanked away and thrown over a broad muscular shoulder. She would have started fighting if she hadn’t caught Carver’s scent.

A gasp tore from her mouth when his hand came down on her ass several times, and it burned even through the skirt and panties she had on.

“I think our women need to wake up a bit, don’t you guys?” Feral said.

Carver turned to walk outside.

“Wait. Aren’t we going up to the room?” she asked.

Carver’s hand came down on her tender bottom. “No. We’re going to teach you a lesson you won’t soon forget.”

Erica tried to turn enough to see what was happening in front of them. When she heard the splashes, her grip on him tightened.

“Don’t you dare think about throwing me in, Carver.”

He chuckled. “What would you do to me if I did?”

“No sex for a week,” she said.

He snorted. “Babe, I think I could probably last longer than you. I can guess you’d be begging for me within a day.”

Erica tried to think about that, but her mind was foggy from being high on the pot.

Erica heard a few more screams and splashes. “I mean it,” she growled.

He pulled her back over and into his arms. Her first thought was that she wanted to wipe the grin off his face, but she knew she was already in trouble.

“Babe,” he said.

“What?”

“Hold your breath.”

It took her a moment to understand, but she was already flying through the air and then hit the water. Even though the water was warm, the shock of it helped wake her from the fog a bit.

When she surfaced, she saw several of the couples already making out. She turned to look at Carver, and her eyes

widened as she watched his clothes come off. Fortunately, he kept his boxers on and then dived in after her.

She screamed and tried to get to the side, but her skirt was wrapped around her legs, making it impossible to move. She growled in frustration.

“Oh, no, you don’t, Little Worm.”

A hard arm wrapped around her waist, and her back pressed against his chest. She could feel the heat seep through her shirt, making her shiver. He pressed her up against the side of the pool.

“Hang on,” he said.

Erica wrapped her hands around the edge. She looked around to see a few couples going at it, and if she wasn’t mistaken, a few were getting fucked right there in front of everyone. She should have felt some shock at that, but after living with this group for a while, nothing surprised her.

“Hey, Babe. If I were you, I’d concentrate on yourself.”

It was then she realized he had her skirt up around her waist, and her panties were gone.

“Wait,” she said.

He chuckled. “No. I think this might be what it takes to get you under control.”

She snorted. “Good luck with that.” It would take more than this to get her to mind him.

She felt his finger slide into her and closed her eyes. She would never get sick of feeling him inside of her. Anywhere. Be it her mouth, cunt, or ass. She was surprised she had come to crave the edgy tight feeling of him sinking his cock into her ass.

She stiffened when his finger went from her cunt and speared into her ass.

“Ahhh.”

He chuckled.

He finger fucked her a few times to stretch her out, and then she felt pressure as he worked his cock into her ass.

“Wait!” she cried out.

“No.”

“Carver, you know how out of control I get when you do this.”

“Yes, Babe, I know, and I don’t care. Maybe this will teach you.”

“Oh, God, Carver. It stings.”

“I bet it does. You only have a bit of your cream inside to ease the way, so you’re going to feel it more.”

“Oh, God, stop...”

He fortunately waited patiently for her to relax before starting again. It seemed to take forever for him to get in her, and by the time he had bottomed out, the air was billowing in and out of her lungs, and she was already strung tight, which told her she’d be orgasming soon.

As he slowly fucked her, she tried to concentrate enough to keep herself from screaming like she always did, but he wasn’t letting her. He just kept pushing her higher, and she didn’t know if she would be able to take much more.

Chapter Nineteen

Carver gritted his teeth behind her. The grip her ass had on his cock was almost painful but also the most pleasure he'd ever had.

“That’s it, Babe.”

He wrapped an arm around her waist to hold her steady and started pumping into her faster and faster until he was ramming into her. He knew she wouldn't last, but he wasn't either, so he worked her until she was panting.

“That’s it,” he murmured against her ear. “Come for me. Squeeze my cock hard.”

“Oh, God.”

He smiled against the back of her head. The people around them would get a dose of her reactions to coming. They'd probably heard her screams as they echoed through the hallway, but this was more up close and personal. It didn't bother him at all as long as they didn't get a look at her body. This body was all his, and he was never going to share.

Her breath caught in her throat before a scream erupted from her. He rammed into her, prolonging her orgasm before coming himself. He threw his head back as his cum filled her ass. He pumped into her until his balls were empty and then rested against her back.

Carver could tell she had no energy and was barely hanging onto the side of the pool.

“Let’s get you up to our room, and I’ll bathe you before we go to bed. How does that sound?”

Her head rolled back until it rested on his shoulder. “Yes. I’d like that.”

He kissed the top of her head and pulled her out, making them both groan. He shoved his cock back into his boxers before straightening out her clothing to cover her.

He lifted her into his arms. “Just relax.”

She rested her head against his shoulder and wrapped her arms around his neck.

There were only a few couples left when he climbed the stairs out of the pool. He tightened his arms around her when she shivered.

He nuzzled her as he made his way to their room. He closed and locked the door before entering the bathroom and setting her on her feet.

“Can you stand for a second while I start the shower?”

She nodded, but she looked exhausted, so he hurried.

After he turned on the water to heat, he pulled off his boxers before stripping her. He lifted her in the shower and held her against his chest as he washed and conditioned her hair and then body.

He wrapped her in a towel and another around her hair before letting her lean against the wall in the shower. “Give me a second, and I’ll help you.”

She nodded and then yawned. How the hell could he find everything about her adorable, even when she yawned or sneezed?

He was done with his body within a minute, turned off the water, and reached for another towel to wrap around his waist.

He lifted her onto the counter and dried her body before squeezing the water out of her hair. From then, he sprayed the conditioner in her hair the way she liked and combed through it. He blow-dried her hair until it was damp because he could tell her energy was at its end, and she was starting to droop.

“Let’s get our teeth brushed and then into bed.”

He held her steady while she brushed her teeth and lifted her again. He set her on the mattress and covered her with the blanket.

“I’ll be right back.”

He brushed his teeth, turned off the light, and stripped out of the towel before lying beside her. He tucked her back against his chest and wrapped an arm around her waist. He couldn't believe how much fun she was and there was never a dull moment. He thought the normal women would be more timid and steady, but instead, they were wild, and the guys had to keep their eyes on them constantly. Instead of resenting it, he looked forward to seeing what they would do next.

He wouldn't have believed it if someone had asked him a year ago if he'd have an old lady and would be back home with the only family he'd ever known. He never thought he'd feel so content and happy, and he knew much of it had to do with the woman in his arms. He couldn't see his life without her.

Carver pressed a kiss to the back of her head. "I love you, Little Worm."

"I love you, too," she whispered.

He had thought she had fallen asleep.

"I hope you learned your lesson tonight," he said.

He heard her snort.

"I hope you learned yours, too."

His brows rose in surprise. "Oh, what's my lesson?"

"That I'm not going to stop trying to make you crazy. It's too much fun."

"Even when I punish you?" he asked.

She giggled. "If tonight was punishment, expect me to get in trouble every day."

He rolled his eyes. Jesus. He wouldn't be able to handle that shit.

"I'll just have to change how I deal with you."

She rubbed her ass against his cock, which never seemed to deflate since he had been with her.

"You can try."

He grunted. He should feel some apprehension, but all he felt was anticipation. Fuck, he knew he was in for it, but he wouldn't have changed a thing.

“Go to sleep, Little Worm.”

She growled but then settled down.

She was his forever, and he was never letting her go.

The End

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BONUS SAMPLE CHAPTER

HER MAFIA DESTINY

Maclean Mafia Men, 1

Lila Fox

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Sample Chapter

“Yo, brother, I think you need to go back home and mellow out.”

Alastair turned abruptly to face his brother, Calum, getting in his face and gritting his teeth. “Would you like to say that to me one more time?”

“Jesus Christ.” Calum raised his hands and took a hasty step back. “Man, it’s just that you’re really pissed off....”

“Aren’t you usually like this after talking to your mother?” Alastair asked.

“She’s your stepmother. That counts, nut fuck. But yes, I do. The woman’s a viper. It’s just when you’re pissed like

this, someone usually ends up dead.”

Alastair rolled his eyes, turned, and walked down the long hallway. The woman, Calum’s mother, was his fourth stepmother. Alastair’s mother died a few days after giving birth to him, which ruined his father. From what his family had told him over the years, they had been passionately in love, surprising because of their lifestyle.

Being a part of the mafia was not easy. You had to be cold and vicious to survive. It was especially hard for the women. The wives and mistresses had to deal with a lot.

His father had married four more times, trying to find the love he’d had with Isabella, Alastair’s mother, and it had never happened. This last one, Una, Calum’s mother, was the worst.

The first three stepmothers had died of surprisingly natural causes and not murder like one would expect living with the mafia—one in a car accident, one in an accidental drug overdose, and an accidental fall down the steps.

Alastair had liked that one the most. Nessa had been Logan, Ewen, and Rory’s mother and had been sweet as can be. It had hit his father hard when she passed away. Not as hard as Alastair’s mother, Isabella, but it took a while for him to want to have another woman in the house and in his life.

This last wife was a viper, and Alastair hated her, but he had to get along with her because his father was alive. After the stroke, his father had been unable to lead the Maclean clan, so Alastair had taken over the whole operation then, which was fine because he ran most of it anyway.

He shivered inside. Two minutes with his stepmother was torture. The woman was as mean as they came, and he couldn’t understand what his father saw in her. She might have been attractive if not for the permanent sneer she had on her face.

His brother was probably right, but he couldn’t stand the thought of going home to the same house his stepmother lived in, knowing she’d probably try to hunt him down to talk

some more because he'd walked out on her tirade. The temptation to just kill her was too strong, and he didn't know if his father would ever forgive him.

"What exactly are we looking at?" Calum asked.

"Our strip joint in Newport needs new women, and I sent out some of our guys to find ones who were attractive and loved being a stripper. Most of the ones we have now are getting old and tired, so we'll get them other jobs in the business."

"Cool. Maybe think about taking one of them home," Duncan, another brother, said. "It might help your disposition."

"Fuck off," Alastair said without turning around.

Alastair opened the door to what could pass as a conference room. It had a long table and chairs and a small bar off to the side. Some meetings went late, and the guys were more pleasant if they had some alcohol in them. But not too much, or they started killing each other.

The women were already there waiting. The ones that noticed him stood as seductively as they could, begging for his or his brothers' attention. Being one of their mistresses was sought after not only for their good looks but mainly for the money.

"Hey," Stuart, one of his best men who had been with him for years, said and walked over to shake his hand. "I think we did well."

"You checked for diseases and made sure they had no children?"

"Sure, boss. I know what you like."

Alastair nodded. "Where's Ross? He was supposed to be helping you."

"He's coming in with the last one or two."

Alastair turned to Calum. "Can you get me a bourbon on the rocks?" He wouldn't admit it to his brothers, but he did need to mellow out, and a nice drink helped every time.

“Sure.”

The first drink went down smoothly and helped calm his anger a bit as he talked to Stuart and ignored the women trying to vie for his notice and interest. He shook his head and snorted when his brothers did give the women their attention and had girls all over them.

“Craig is going to take these women to the club if you’re okay with them,” Stuart said.

Alastair turned and whistled for Duncan. “I’m going to put you in charge of this. Take them to Speedy’s, get the women who will live in our apartments next to the club moved in, and take the rest back to their place but tell them they have to be at work tomorrow. If they are late, they’re fired. There are no second chances.”

“I got it,” Duncan said.

His brother and a couple of the men rounded up the women and took them out a back door to the vans waiting.

“Are you going to wait for the last of them?” Stuart asked.

Alastair looked at his watch and sat down. “I’ll give them a few minutes.”

He hadn’t finished with his second drink when a side door opened and Ross, one of his guys, walked in, dragging a woman. She was crying and fighting to get away from him.

“Shut up, bitch,” Ross said and shook her.

“What the fuck are you doing?” Stuart yelled.

Alastair held up a hand, set down his drink, and stood to face Ross. He walked to stand in front of the man and crossed his arms over his chest to keep from strangling the man, trying to ignore the woman’s pleas and cries. “Tell me.”

Ross stuttered. “Oh, well, her uncle owed us some money, and I was supposed to get it, but he didn’t have it, and so I thought we could use her as collateral until he pays up.”

Calum, Stuart, and the rest of his guys cursed, and the tension rose in the room.

Alastair just stared at the woman. She was tiny but had curved hips and larger breasts. She was dressed in a long white nightgown with lace. Her dark hair was tousled like she'd been pulled from bed.

“Who gave you permission to do that?” Alastair asked when he turned back at Ross.

“Well, no one. I just thought...”

“Is it your job to think?” Alastair asked.

“Well, no.”

“Jesus Christ, you dumbshit,” Stuart said.

Alastair walked up, cupped the woman's chin, and raised her face. His breath stalled in his lungs because her eyes were the most beautiful he'd ever seen, even when they were red and swollen from crying. They were light blue in the middle and green on the other part, and they seemed to look right through him.

“Who is your family?” Alastair asked her.

She sniffed. “I don't have one besides an uncle I haven't seen in years.”

“No husband?”

“No. Please, let me go home. I won't tell anyone. I don't even know you,” she said.

For once in his life, he made a decision with his heart instead of his head. He pulled out a gun and shot Ross in the forehead in one smooth move.

Everyone in the room stood frozen and in shock until the woman screamed.

Alastair put his gun away and reached for her when it looked like she was going to faint, only to have her flinch in horror away from him. He knew why, but it still pissed him off, which was ridiculous. Of course, she would be terrified of him. He just murdered someone in front of her.

He didn't like the blood that had been sprayed over her from Ross's head, and he wanted her clean as soon as possible.

He kept a few feet away from the woman and waited for her to be calm enough to hear him. "My name is Alastair Maclean. We're the mafia in this part of the city."

Alastair heard his brother curse behind him and ignored him.

The woman was hunched against the wall. Tears mixed with blood and brain matter ran down her face. "Why are you telling me this? Are you going to kill me next?"

Alastair shook his head. "I'm making sure that you won't be able to go anywhere, ever."

"I don't understand. I've never done anything to you or anyone."

"I know. Sometimes your life takes a path you didn't expect." *No kidding.* He never predicted he'd kidnap a woman and plan to keep her forever. "My advice is to make the best of this. I'll treat you like a princess as long as you're loyal to me. Do you understand?"

"No, I don't. I don't understand any of this."

He sighed. "That's okay. We have plenty of time." He held out his hand and waited.

She shook her head.

"You can either take my hand and walk out of here with some dignity, or I can have a few of my men carry you out. Choose."

She studied him for a moment and before she reached for his hand. He could see how much she was trembling, but he would take care of her as soon as they got home. When her shaking, tiny cold hand slid into his hand, something inside of him settled, and a warmth filled him.

"That's good, baby." He pulled her along and looked at one of his men. "Take care of Ross."

"You got it, boss."

As he led her out to his car, he felt something shift in his universe, and he knew he'd forever be changed. He just didn't know if it would be for the good or bad. Only time would tell.

End of sample chapter

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