



DEVIL'S RIOT MC MISSISSIPPI BOOK ONE

FIGHTING ROSEMARY



USA TODAY BESTSELLING AUTHOR

E.C. LAND

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BOOK 1

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DEVIL'S RIOT

MC



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Cover Design by Clarise Tan, CT Cover Creations

Editing by Jackie Ziegler

Formatting by E.C. Land

Proofreading by Rebecca Vazquez

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*To the ones who mean the most. To those who fight for what they want.
Know that you aren't alone. There's someone out there who knows what
you're going through.*

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So many people to acknowledge, but first and foremost, my family. They always have my back and support me. My husband and kids are my biggest cheering team, and I couldn't ask for better.

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Then there's my team, everyone who works alongside me to ensure that each book I release is ready to go when the time comes. I couldn't ask for better.

TRIGGER WARNING

This content is intended for mature audiences only. It contains material that may be viewed as offensive to some readers, including graphic language, dangerous and sexual situations, murder, rape, and extreme violence. Proceed with caution. This book does entail several scenes that may very well be a trigger to some.

Also, tissues are a must with other scenes.

Not for the faint at heart.

If you don't like violence and cannot handle certain subjects, then this is not a book you'll want to read.

**Check out the music playlist for
Fighting Rosemary!**

The Blame – Sam Grow
I Hope Your World Is Kind – Auri
City of the Dead – Eurielle
All the King’s Horses – Karmina
I’ll Be Waiting – Eurielle
Unlovable – DIAMANTE
Dig the Crazy – Faith Marie
You Said – Eurielle
Heaven or Hell – Digital Daggers
I Scare Myself – Beth Crowley
Burning Heart – SVRCINA

DEVIL'S RIOT MC MEMBERS

O – OL' LADY, C – CHILD

Devil's Riot MC Franklin

Twister – Prez – Izzy – O

Leanna Mercy – C

Horse – VP – Kenny – O

Jason Cole (JC) – C

Kayla – C

Caden – C

Thorn – Sergeant at Arms – Lynsdey – O

William Michael (Bud) – C

Anna-leigh Cleo – C

Rage – Road Captain – Cleo – O

Reagan – C (deceased)

Rosaline – C

Devin – C

Dragon – Medic – Connors – O

Gadget – Tech – Connors – O

Logan – C

Kagan – C

Keegan – C

Hades – Enforcer – Emerson – O

Alec – C

Burner – Treasurer – Ally – O

Lincoln – C

Badger – Member – Jordan – O

Nico – C

K-9 – Member
Red – Member
Striker – Member
Brass – Member – Athena – O
Jesse – C
Mac – Prospect (Deceased)

Devil's Riot MC Originals

O – Ol' Lady, C – Child
Stoney – Prez – Rachel – O
Horse (Scotty) – Stoney's C
Luca – C
Corinne – C
Sebastian – C
Talon – C
Tracker – VP — Victoria – O
Jamie – C
Jason – C (adopted)
Blaze – Sergeant at Arms — Raven – O
Matthew – C
Mark – C
Coyote – Road Captain – Tinsley – O
Cody – C
Chase – C
Bear – Former Road Captain — Momma B – O (deceased)
Rage (Travis) – C
Jane – C (deceased)
Nerd – Tech – Cara – O
Shadow – Enforcer – Luna – O
Daniel – C
Ranger – Medic – Harlow – O
Venom – Secretary – Amaya – O
Whip – Chaplain
Viper – Treasurer
Neo – Member – Harley – O
Cane – Member – Parker – O
Piper – C

Devil's Riot MC Southeast

O – Ol' Lady, C – Child
Hammer – Prez – Avery – O
Tate – C
Taylor – C
Malice – VP – Willow – O
Gates – C
Gavin – C
Gemini – C
Axe – Sergeant at Arms – CJ – O
Savage – Road Captain – Honor – O
Gunner – Enforcer – Zinnia – O
Delilah – C
Cy – Tech
Bruiser – Treasurer
Dagger – Medic
Rogue – Secretary – Rebel – O
Glock – Member
Ruger – Member
Blade – Member
Colt – Member
Carbine – Member

Devil's Riot MC Tennessee

O – Ol' Lady, C – Child
Blow – Prez – Storm – O
Nines – VP – Meadow – O
Keys – Tech
Lucky – Sergeant at Arms – Chelsea – O
Shiner – Enforcer
Milo – C
Griz – Road Captain
Surge – Treasurer
Scorn – Chaplain
Sniper – Member – Rain – O
Nerd (Nick) – C
Storm – C

Flash – Member
Switchblade – Member
Torch – Member

Devil's Riot MC Colorado

Grinder – Prez
Blue – VP
Driver – Sergeant at Arms
Flicker – Road Captain
Wrecker – Enforcer
Tic – Tech
Beast – Treasurer
Rock – Chaplain

Devil's Riot MC Mississippi

Viper – Prez – Jade – O
Cyprus – VP – Noelle – O
Kevlar – SAA – Rosemary – O
Aries – Road Captain
Wolf – Enforcer
Black – Treasurer
Vulture – Hacker
Mace – Medic
Sabor – Secretary
Falcon – member
Dutch – member
Granite – member
Wrecker – prospect
Chrome – prospect

CHAPTER 1

ROSEMARY

How did I get myself into this situation? It's the one question I've constantly asked myself here lately. I sometimes wonder if I made a deal with the devil, but I know that's not the case.

Three months ago, I was taken right after work off the street. You'd have thought I had the training and been able to take on anyone who would dare attack me, but I wasn't prepared for a sneak attack. I'd been closing the gym, having just set the alarm and locked the doors. I was two steps away from my car door, ready to head home when it happened. Someone cold-cocked me on the back of the head. Next thing I know, I'm chained by the neck in a dark room with no way out.

Since that night, I found out why I was taken. It's stupid. Truly, it is, but in order to get free, I have to fight.

I'm a boxer at heart. I love being in the ring, but these people, they've taken the joy out of it for me. See, it's a death ring. Only the strong survive. The fights are to the death, and I don't want to die. So far, I've had four fights in the span of the time I've been here. I don't even really know where here is. All I know is that I wake up, train, and prepare. I never know when the fight will be, but the men who took me ensure that I know my place. I'm a fighter, and the man who claims to own me, he's a cruel bastard. He made sure I knew he knew who I was and everything about me.

In order to protect them, I do as he says, I give him what he wants. There's no other choice for me. I won't risk anyone else, and I'll win my freedom. I don't care if I end up losing my soul in the process. At least I'll finally be free.

Only sixteen more to go, and I'll be done.

I can do it.

I won't have it any other way.

I'm a fighter. It's what I do, and I won't let this stop me. I'll fight to live, to be free, to get back to what I want most.

The doors to what has become my cage open and he steps inside. I don't know his name. He never told me. He says I can call him 'master', but I refuse to do that. I won't do it. I'll die before I drop that low. I won't allow

him or anyone else to break me.

“Are you ready for tonight?” he demands, taking in the state I’m in. The sweat beading my body. I don’t miss the gleam of lust in his eyes.

“I’m ready,” I answer and go back to throwing jabs at the punching bag.

“Good, you can rest for now. Save your strength for tonight. If you succeed, I’ll be sure to have a bath drawn for you as a reward.”

“I’ll win tonight,” I grit out. “And I would appreciate a bath. Thank you.” I know better than to turn down his rewards, as he calls them. Though I will be grateful to wash the blood off the one I’ll go against away.

“Maybe you’ll even think about joining me in my bed,” he suggests, grinning. “I would think that energy could be used in other more pleasurable ways.”

“I think I’ll stick to the ring.” There’s no way I’ll get in his bed.

The last man I was with was Kevlar, well back then, he’d been known as Fist, but for some reason or another, they changed his road name. The sex had been hot. More than hot, if I’m being honest.

“You’ll soon change your mind.” He grins, pulling my thoughts back to him before they can trail too far down that particular rabbit hole.

“I highly doubt it. Now, if you’ll excuse me, I’ll finish preparing for tonight’s fight.” I have to be able to get myself in order . . . to press myself to be able to kill with my bare hands.

“Win for me, and you’ll be one step closer to freedom.” Those words vibrate in my ears as he turns and walks back the way he came.

Moments later, one of his men comes to deliver my gear for the night, along with food. Without a word, he sets everything down and walks away.

This is my life now. There’s no way I’ll be able to go back to the one I once lived, but that doesn’t mean I won’t find one when I get free. Tonight, will make five, and then there’s only fifteen more to go.

Closing my eyes, I give myself a moment to think of the past where it’ll have to stay. If I get free, I won’t be able to go back there. To protect them all, I have to stay away from all of them. Most especially, my best friend, Jade.

Anytime I think about her, I wish I were more like her. Jade went through horrible things, lost her sight, and had to suffer because of it. If not for her man, I don’t want to think of what she’d have endured. This is nothing compared to what she went through. If she can do it, so can I. However, unlike her, in the end, I’ll be without my soul.

I suck in a heavy breath and shut down the thoughts. There's no room for them here. Emotions get you killed, and I won't allow myself to be killed. I'll get myself free. I don't need or want anyone else to save me.

"You were magnificent tonight." The comment makes me want to vomit as he steps closer to me. Close enough to brush his fingers along my bare shoulder. "You deserve a nice, long, relaxing bath after that fight."

"I would appreciate it." I barely keep the sarcasm at bay. All I want is a shower and sleep, but it seems he isn't done with me for the night.

"Come then, I'll show you the way," he remarks, placing a hand on the small of my back.

Tonight's fight was grueling. The other fighter, she was a challenge, nearly as good as me. Nearly only because I still won. If I hadn't, she'd have been better than me in the ring.

On the way there, as he did every other time, he guided me by the leash that connects to the collar around my throat. It's sick and twisted to be treated like an animal, but I know better than to fight him on it. He'll only go after the ones I care for most. The ones I try not to think about. It's bad enough that I find myself thinking of Jade, but the rest, I can't afford.

After the fight, he once again guided me back out the same way, but not before making it known who I fight for.

Outside the building, he blindfolded me before I was placed in the backseat of a vehicle. I wasn't allowed to know where we were going, which sucked. I'm the type of person who needs to know my surroundings.

Only when we'd reached his home, I can only assume, did he take the leash off along with removing the blindfold from over my eyes and was now guiding me to a bathroom where I'll be allowed to relax in a bath.

"Before I get in the bath, will I be allowed to shower the blood off?" I find myself asking.

"You may," he remarks, making circles at the small of my back with his fingertips, and leans in his lips, touching the shell of my ear. "I would like to join you."

"No thanks." There's no way I'll let him near me like that.

He chuckles and steps away from me. “A day will come when I’ll have you under me. Now, shower and bathe, you were incredible tonight. The next fight is in two weeks. It gives you a week to heal and another to train.”

Great.

Two weeks.

“I’ll be ready.”

“I know you will.” He grins and steps away.

I know he’s not going to leave the room. I’m never left alone outside of the cage that is my room. Doing the best I can, I ignore him, strip out of my clothes, and climb in the shower. The bath has already been drawn for me, and I would like to soak my muscles after the fight. My entire body is throbbing from the intensity of the fight.

Making it quick, I wash the blood and sweat from my body. I don’t bother with a towel as I shut the water off and step out. I make my way right over to the tub and sink into the still-warm bath. I cringe as the cuts on my body sting. He must have had something put in here to make it unpleasant for me, but I refuse to react further or be done with the bath.

Leaning back, I try to relax, but it’s not easy. My body is in too much pain.

I give myself a total of ten minutes (I counted in my head) and get out, grab a towel, and wrap it around my body. “I appreciate the bath.”

“That’s good. Now, one of my men will escort you back to your room,” he says, giving me a once-over. “That is unless you care to join me in my bed.”

“I don’t think so,” I mutter.

“As you will.” He smirks and calls for one of his men, never using their names. None of them use names around me. He commands them to take me to my room and leaves me alone with one last lustful look that churns my stomach. This whole thing, him looking at me the way he does, it bugs me, and I’ll keep denying him until my last breath, which could very well be in two weeks with this next fight.

They’re only going to get harder and harder. To get my freedom back, it’s going to take everything in me to win it.

CHAPTER 2

KEVLAR

Two Weeks Later . . .

“I’m telling you, Jason, I know something’s wrong.”

At the worry I hear in Jade’s voice, I spin around on my barstool and see both my new Prez and his woman coming into the clubhouse. We’d only just moved into the new place two weeks ago and only a couple of days ago finished furnishing the place.

The brick building we’d chosen is just on the outskirts of Pearl River. A populated area where the club is already in the works of opening a strip joint, restaurant, and garage. We’d just finished handling the paperwork yesterday for all the legal shit to get it started now to start with the other BS we’ve got to handle.

“Darlin’, I know you’re worried about her, but there’s nothing we can do until we get something to go on,” Viper states, wrapping his arm around Jade’s smaller body.

I can’t help but clench my teeth, realizing they’re talking about Rosemary. A while ago, I fucked up where she was concerned. I’d just gotten my patch and was all about the pussy. One of the nights Jade brought her friend to the clubhouse, I sweet-talked her into my bed, spent the night fucking her, and showed her the door the next morning. What was worse was when she’d come to the clubhouse after that without Jade, that’s when I fucked up and went off the deep end rather than asking what was obvious. This, of course, earned me a slap in the face that I well deserved.

Now, she’s missing and has been for months now without a trace. How the woman up and vanished is bullshit. No one should be able to disappear the way she did. Not even Rex, her boss and roommate, knew where she went.

“I know, but it’s been months. This isn’t like her, and you know it.” Jade fusses and has this look on her face that isn’t quite right. Like she knows something. “We have to find her.”

“Jade, darlin’, we’re doing what we can. There’s not much more we can do right now. Nerd’s working on it. Vulture’s at it. Hell, we’ve got word out

that we're looking for her," Viper explains, stepping away from her and taking a seat on the stool by me. He motions to Chrome, one of the prospects who came with us, for a beer and gives his attention back to Jade. "Promise, we'll find her."

"But . . . it might be too late," Jade whispers and draws her bottom lip between her teeth.

Viper tenses next to me. "What do you mean by that, Jade?" he demands. The man loves his woman. Would do anything for her. I'm sure he'd give her the world if he could.

"It's just that . . . well," she sighs and brushes a hand through her hair in frustration, "Rosemary's dad and brother have gotten word of her missing, and they're pissed."

"They have a right to be pissed, but what do you mean it might be too late?"

That's what I'd like to know as well.

"Rosemary swore me to secrecy when we first met," Jade states and starts pacing. "You know we're both from Colorado. I mean, Jensen's the VP there, but I promised Rosie that I'd never tell anyone about her family. She left to get away from them. They allowed it because they know her. Know she blames them for the loss of her mom."

"Get to the point, darlin'," Viper grunts, waving his hand in a rolling motion.

"Rosemary's dad is the former President of a club called Reckless Souls MC. Her brother is now the President."

I stare at the other woman like she'd grown two heads.

"I get you promised her, Jade, but this is information I think you should have shared with me," Viper grinds out.

"I know, and I wanted to, but now it doesn't matter." She lets out a heavy breath and shakes her head. "Doesn't matter because Big and Cobra have also started looking for her. Her dad, Big, well, he's on his way here. He was going to go to Stonewall Mills, but he's now on his way here."

Fuck. Fuck. Fuck.

"This isn't good," I remark.

"Jade," Viper growls, "this is something you should have told us when she first went missing."

"I'm sorry," she whimpers, lip wobbling and tears pricking her eyes. "I just didn't know what to do. It's not like she's close with them. She doesn't

even talk to either of them. I didn't think."

I stare at her, seeing the sincerity in her eyes as my Prez sighs heavily. Even I know Jade isn't one for crying. She's sweet and shy, but she also has a damn backbone made of steel. With all the shit she'd been through herself, this move was supposed to be like a fresh start, for her and my VP's woman. Several of us came from the original charter. A few from each of the other charters to make up this one.

I got to admit it was a damn good move, and I was honored to have been voted in as the Sergeant at Arms for this charter.

"We'll find her, darlin'," Viper states, drawing Jade toward him. "Is there anything else we don't know that could help with this shit?"

"No, not that I can think of."

The way her expression drops, I believe her.

"When do you expect Rosemary's dad to be here?" I ask. I'd heard of the Reckless Souls MC. They're not your typical club. From the talk I've heard, they're pretty much contracted killers. I wouldn't want to cross them. To think Rosemary is the daughter of the man who was once President of said club is mind-boggling. Then again, it would explain why she was always fighting.

Rosemary didn't just work at the gym, she trained there. Boxed and taught at it. She also would get in the ring against others. I'd seen her a time or two, and she's damn good.

"He said soon," Jade answers. "I didn't know what he meant by that. Just that he was coming straight here."

"Fuck," I grunt and look at Viper. "You ever heard of the Reckless Souls MC?"

"Yeah," he grinds out. "This isn't a good thing. Get Vulture and tell him I want his ass on this. Last thing we need is a war on our hands. We just got down here, and we're working on establishing our territory here."

"You got it, Prez." I grunt, coming off my bar stool and head in search of Vulture.

We'd picked this building for the very reason of its massive space. There are enough rooms for all of us to have one. Two of the rooms are designated for the clubwhores, granted we don't have any of those around just yet. Viper and Cyprus wanted to get the clubhouse organized before allowing them to come around.

I get it, but damn, if it doesn't make this a headache when I want to get

my dick wet. Well, not that hard, I can go to one of the clubs in town and find easy pussy, but it ain't the same.

My cell rings in my pocket, and I yank it out to find Wrecker, our other prospect, calling. We have him manning the gate right now. Swiping a finger over the screen, I answer. "What is it?"

"We got a couple men out here, demanding entrance. One of 'em says his name's Big."

"Fuck," I snarl, look to where I'd left Viper, and jerk my chin. "Let 'em in." Closing the phone, I stalk back toward Viper and Jade. "We've got company."

"Shit," Viper mutters. "Get Vulture and Cyprus in here now."

"On it." Nodding, I find Cyprus's number and call him while heading toward where Vulture has all his shit set up. I quickly tell Cyprus to get here and grab Vulture from in front of his computers. The rest of the club are out with Cyprus, so they'll be with him when he gets here.

With Vulture in tow, I make my way back to the common room, ignoring Vulture's demands to know what's going on. He'll find out soon enough.

Just as we step into the room, the doors open, and several men of the Reckless Souls MC step into the clubhouse. It doesn't take a genius to know which one's Big or Cobra. They both have the same eyes as Rosemary.

"I'm guessing Jade's told you all that we were coming," Big states, stepping forward.

"We only just found out who you are." Viper nods, putting Jade behind him. "You should've just called. We'd have gladly told you anything you wanted about your daughter."

"My daughter's been missing, and we had to hear about it through rumors." Big sneers and glances around the room.

"What do you know about my sister?" Cobra demands, moving to stand next to his dad.

"I'm sorry," Jade whispers, her voice trembling. "I didn't tell them until now. Rosemary and I made a promise, and I didn't know what to do. It's been months, and she made me swear a long time ago never to mention it. To keep it a secret like it were government top secret."

"Sweetheart," Big grunts, "I know my daughter. She's just like her mother. Strong-willed and stubborn."

"A damn pain in my ass," Cobra mutters. "Always was and always will be. Now, what avenues have you looked to find her?"

Viper takes the next few minutes to inform them that there's nothing to go on. She's a ghost, and we can't place her anywhere. Vulture also explains what he's doing and that he's tracking.

"Whatever happened to her, it's not good," Big announces as the rest of my brothers make their way inside, Cyprus moving to stand on Viper's other side.

"What makes you think that?" I ask.

"Because, we left my sister alone for so long because we were able to track her. Whatever is happening, they've either found the tracker embedded in or they're blocking it somehow," Cobra explains, leveling me with a glare.

"Do you have any idea who would have taken her?" The question passes my lips before I can hold it back.

Cobra eyes me closely, narrowing them accusingly. "What's my sister to you?"

"Nothing," I grunt, cross my arms, and refuse to let him get to me.

Rosemary is just a woman I had a one-night stand with. She's Jade's best friend. The two of them are close as family. Who the fuck am I kidding. Rosemary has haunted me from the moment I showed her the door. I want her back in my bed, and I know it, but I'm not ready to admit it.

"I don't think it's nothing," Big remarks, eyeing me closely as well, his jaw twitching. "You got that look in your eye."

I ignore the comment. "Do you know something or not?"

Cobra steps closer to me, getting nose to nose. "Yeah, we've heard something. It's one of the reasons we're in Mississippi. There are rumors of a death match club, and they have a female champion."

"Oh my God." Jade gasps.

My stomach tightens. With all the human sex trafficking our club's been dealing it, it didn't occur that it could be another reason she'd be taken. But who the hell would take her?

"How did you hear about this and we haven't?" Cyprus demands.

"Guess because we're in the know on shit you're not." Cobra shrugs.

"We'll deal with what we've heard and not later," Viper grunts and narrows his gaze on Cobra. "Do you know when and where the next fight is being held?"

"Yeah, we do." The other man smirks. "We've already got the invite for it and all."

"When is it?" Stepping forward, I ball my fist, ready to beat the shit out

of this guy. I don't care if he's Rosemary's brother or not.

Cobra glances back at me, takes in my stance, and that smirk deepens. "Go ahead and strike. Just know, I'll win, I promise you that."

"Funny, 'cause I've never lost a fight." I sneer. "I grew up needing to fight for everything I have." Not once in my life did I have anything that was easy. Maybe that's why I'm drawn to Rosemary. She's a fight all on her own. "Now, when the fuck is this next fight?"

"Tonight," he answers.

"We're going in, confirming if it's her, if it's her, we're finding out who has her, and then we'll plan," Big states and explains the rest of the plan.

"I'm in on it," I announce.

"You fuck our plan up, and I'll kill you," Cobra grinds out.

"I'm not going to fuck your plan up, but I want to see for myself."

"We're all in on this." Viper growls, interrupting me, getting everyone's attention, his gaze locked on Cobra. "Rosemary might be your sister, but she's our family."

"Then get ready. Doors open in two hours." Cobra nods and returns his attention to me. "If she's yours, you say it now."

"You heard Viper, she's family to this club," I grind out. There's no way I'm admitting something like that to him, not when I can't admit it to myself.

"You admit it now, or when we get her, we take her back home with us," Cobra seethes, getting toe to toe with me. "Rosemary might be a pain in my fuckin' ass, but she's my sister, and I've lost plenty of time with her. You don't admit it, don't claim her, she no longer exists for you."

My anger rises, and I throw a punch, slamming my fist into his face. "Don't fuckin' threaten me with taking Rosemary away from the family she has here."

Cobra grins and takes a step back, rubbing his jaw. "Guess you just admitted it." He chuckles.

Fuck.

"Let's just find out if it's her or not." I growl and stalk toward the doors. I need air to calm down. That bastard gets under my skin. I see where Rosemary gets it from, and that alone pisses me off. If not for any other reason than the fact he's right. I've done everything I can not to think about her.

If these rumors are true and she's being used in a death match club, then her time is limited. She's a fighter, but even I know there's only so much

fight a person has before they can't fight anymore.

CHAPTER 3

ROSEMARY

“It’s time to go. Are you ready?”

I slowly turn to face him and let out a heavy sigh and answer, “I’m ready.”

Or I was as ready as I was going to be. I’m still feeling it from the last fight. The past two weeks went by in what feels like a blur. Granted, time really has no meaning to me. Not while he holds me captive. However, I did learn his name in the time thanks to overhearing two of his men talking. His name’s Dominic, and supposedly, he’s one of the top dogs, only second to someone they called Enyo.

“Good,” Dominic remarks and stares at me with lustful need. “Come.” Reaching out, he ushers me toward him. I do as he wants, and he grips the collar at my neck in order to latch the leash to it. “You have been such a good girl, doing as you’re told.” Dominic touches my cheek, leans in, and inhales deeply. “Tonight, once you win, you’ll be in my bed. I’ll reward you greatly.”

Nausea churns my stomach over at his words. Please no. I don’t want to die tonight, but I also don’t want to end up in Dominic’s bed. That’s nearly worse than dying.

Sucking in a breath to keep myself from puking, I move with him as he takes me to the SUV, pulls out a blindfold, and covers my eyes. As always, I’m not to see where we’re going. I won’t even be able to see anything until he’s ready to take the cloth from over my eyes.

I do my best to push what Dominic said to the back of my mind. I can’t let what he informed me of happen. If he does, it’ll break me. I can fight. I’ll keep fighting, but if he takes me to his bed and rapes me, that will destroy me in ways a fight never could.

Time passes, and I listen to Dominic speak on the phone for a few minutes before he gets off. He shifts and rubs a hand across my bare thigh. Tonight, he’s got me in a pair of workout shorts that fit perfectly and comes just below my ass. My top is cropped and also form-fitting. It keeps my breasts in place, keeping them from popping out of the top that comes far too close to revealing a lot of cleavage.

The vehicle comes to a stop, and Dominic lifts his hand from my thigh only to wrap his fingers around my wrist. “Time to go win yet again for me,” he remarks. Outside, he releases my wrist, removes the blindfold, and tugs on the leash.

I keep quiet and follow as I’ve always done into the building, glad he at least took the blindfold off early enough for me to be able to see where I’m walking. Inwardly, I cringe at the sight of the men and women leering at me. Some with lust, others I can’t quite describe. Regardless, it’s cringeworthy.

Dominic pulls me behind him until we’re near ringside where he’ll be sitting. He takes his seat and instead of leaving me to stand behind him, he pulls me onto his lap. “You can sit here until it’s your time to get in the ring,” he says, brushing his lips against the shell of my ear. I don’t know if he does it on purpose or by accident, maybe even chance, due to the loudness around us.

“I appreciate it.” I nod, not wanting to be sitting on his lap. This whole thing is making me nauseous.

Three matches later, it’s my turn, and I’m not looking forward to it. Dominic stands, and I follow suit, coming off his lap. He tugs on the leash, taking me to the ring, stopping just in front of it. Unclipping the leash, he takes a moment to stare at me before stepping away, a smirk playing on his lips.

I slowly turn toward the ring, ignoring the cheers and shouts in the crowd. Going up the stairs in one of the corners, I grab the top rope and bend to go between it and the middle one. In the ring, I take in my opponent. She looks beaten and determined. I see it in her eyes. This isn’t going to be easy for me. The two of us circle each other, sizing one another, deciding which move to best start with.

The bell sounds, and I’m ready for when she launches herself at me. I dodge her move after move. She’s going to need to do better than that. I know the instant she changes tactics, it’s time actually to fight. I watch the way she moves, she’s good. But not good enough. I see it and know she’s not going to win. I won’t let her. I can’t.

She throws an uppercut, landing a solid one on my jaw. I give as good as I take, going for a knee to her stomach, causing her to double over and slamming my fist to the side of her head. She crumples to the ground. It’s supposed to be easy and done, like I’ll beat her, but it’s not. I have to end her life.

Straddling the woman, I start wailing on her, punch after punch, slamming my fists into her face. I don't let up until her face is unrecognizable. Only then do I get to my feet, my chest rising. I stare at my latest victim, feeling another part of my soul leaving me.

Dominic joins me in the ring, raises my hand as the victor, and shouts, "Our champion remains holding the title."

For the first time since the fights started, I glance toward the crowd, and I swear I must be seeing things. I have to be. There's no other way to explain it. I have to be hallucinating. There's no way they could be here. That he would be here. All of them.

I've spent so much time trying not to think of any of them, and now, I'm seeing them. But it's not really them—just wishful thinking.

Dominic drops my hand and turns me toward him, grinning at me just before he slams his mouth on mine. I want to shove him away. Push him off me and get as far away from him as I can. Unfortunately, I can't do it. He'd punish me for it in ways I don't want to think of. I've seen him do it firsthand. I watched him beat a girl in front of me to teach me not to cross him, to do as he says, to be his good girl.

I swallow the bile, burning the back of my throat with its acid as he pulls away and attaches my leash to the collar around my neck.

"Time to go home where I'll reward you for this win," he announces and pulls me from within the ring as two men come to clean up the mess I made of the woman I beat to death.

My heart lurches, and I shove back the thought of crying. I want nothing more than to cry for the women I've had to kill. Why do people enjoy this sport?

Once I get free, I'm going to find somewhere to live away from all this and not think of anything to do with violence. I make it out of this, I won't ever fight again. Not unless I absolutely have to.

Following Dominic, we walk through the crowd, and I glance in the direction I'd looked earlier and meet eyes that I've dreamed about, and I know it's not a hallucination. He's here, and from the glint I saw, he's pissed. I haven't spoken to him since Jade was taken. I knew to keep my distance. He made it clear what we had was a one-night thing. I thought I was okay with it, but he rocked my world. I don't know how to explain it, but he marked me that night. Back then, he was called Fist, but since he'd done something for the club to earn the name Kevlar. It suits him.

Dropping my gaze, I shake my head, denying the truth of him being in the crowd or that any of them were there. It's not like they can save me. No one can.

CHAPTER 4

KEVLAR

I'm going to fucking kill the motherfucker. Not only did he kiss her, but he put a fucking leash on her like she's a damn dog. We'd gotten to the warehouse Cobra told us about hours ago—all of us. Viper left only the prospects and Vulture at the clubhouse with his and Cyprus's ol' ladies. We're still new to the area, and they need to be covered. Cobra and Big stayed near Viper, Cyprus, and me while the rest spanned out looking around, keeping an eye out for Rosemary.

I noticed her before the others did. Saw her come in behind a man and then pulled into that fucker's lap. She stayed there the whole time, eyes on the ring. I didn't look away, I watched her.

Cobra and Big did the same.

When it was her turn, the crowd went wild, and the man stood, took her to the ring, and unlatched the leash from around her neck. None of us spoke as the match went on, and we watched her beat the woman to death.

It was then I saw what this shit was doing to her. With each win she has, a part of her dies away. It's in her eyes.

It's all I can do to keep from going to her, taking her out of there, but even I know we've got to play this smart.

For a split second, she scanned the crowd, her gaze stopping in our direction. I'd seen the slight headshake. Like she couldn't allow herself to believe we were here. I told the others I was going to get closer, Cobra and Aries moved with me.

The three of us had moved in close, and I focused on her the whole time she moved with the fucker holding the leash. I saw her eyes, and when she'd looked back in this direction, I met her gaze. I held it and saw the defeat in those blue eyes of hers. She's losing herself, and it pisses me off.

"We've got to get her," I snarl, turning toward Cobra.

"We will," he growls, eyes flashing. "Let's get out of here."

"Y'all get the others, I'm following behind." There's no way that now that she's been found, I'm letting her out of my sight. I'm getting her away from that man. She's not going to suffer another minute than she has to.

"They'll catch up," Cobra says, sticking with me.

“We go back for the others, we lose the chance to follow whatever car they get in,” Aries mutters, stating the obvious.

Nodding, the three of us move as one toward the exit with just enough time to see Rosemary put in the back of an SUV. Taking in the model and license plate number, I head for my bike and pull out my phone. I find the text group chat and send the numbers for Vulture to run them. Straddling my bike, I shove the phone back in my pocket, ready to follow after her. The rest of my brothers and Cobra’s men join us.

I look at Viper, seeing the reason he’s got his name and was voted at Prez for our charter.

“Let’s catch that SUV, surround it, and kill ’em all,” he commands.

A sinister feeling rushes through me as I grin, completely down with his plan. I’m definitely down with the plan.

“We need the one who took her,” Cyprus remarks gruffly.

I nod, and together, we head out, following behind the bastard who has Rosemary in the car with him. Visions of maiming the bastard fills my mind, and I look forward to it. I want to know why he took Rosemary and if there’s anyone else involved.

Ten minutes down the road, Viper gives the sign. It’s time to surround and take ’em out.

I hit the throttle and speed past the SUV along with Cyprus, Cobra, and Big. Getting in front of it, several of my brothers taking either side, the rest at the back, we overtake the damn vehicle and slow to a stop. I kick the stand down and climb off the back of my bike, eyes moving to the windshield, eyeing the driver. I pull my gun and take aim.

“Get the fuck out,” Viper snarls, yanking the back door open on one side, Big moving toward the other side.

Slowly, the people within the SUV step out, and I set eyes once again on Rosemary. My anger grows when I see that she’s blindfolded.

“I’ve got you, Princess,” Big murmurs, taking the covering from her eyes.

“Daddy?” Rosemary whispers.

Hearing her voice for the first time in months is like music to my ears. Fuck, I love the sound of it.

“You’re making a bad decision,” the guy says far too calmly.

“Don’t think so,” Viper remarks, spitting. “Seems to me we’re taking back what’s ours.”

“Are you sure about that?” The guy chuckles.

“Definitely,” I state, moving closer toward Rosemary. Only when I’m directly in front of her do I put my gun away, and that’s so I’m able to reach around her neck and pull the collar off. Finding it’s solid, I drop a hand to my waist and grip the handle of my knife. Pulling it out, I grab the edge of the collar. “Hold still, Tigress, I don’t want to accidentally cut you,” I murmur, meeting Rosemary’s eyes briefly. Seeing the dead in them guts me.

This shit’s on us. If we looked harder for her, fuck, if I’d looked, we would have found her sooner. She wouldn’t have that look in her eyes.

Focusing on her neck, I slice through the damn collar and watch it fall to the ground. I don’t take my gaze off Rosemary’s neck as I watch her swallow freely for the first time.

“Come on, Princess, let’s get to my bike,” Big says, curling an arm around her shoulders.

She doesn’t speak a word as she nods, letting her dad guide her away.

I want it to be me that consoles her, but I can’t. I need to be able to rip the motherfucker apart. Find out everything we need to know. Wolf, our enforcer, zip-ties all of the men’s hands. I meet my Prez’s gaze, then Cobra’s.

“What’s the plan here?”

“This was too fuckin’ easy,” Cobra remarks.

I couldn’t agree more.

“Let’s get them to the holding cells, and we’ll get them talking there.” Viper grunts. “Actually, let’s get them there, leave ’em til morning. Let ’em think on their actions and what we’re gonna do to them.”

“Works for me,” I mutter. I want to talk to Rosemary. Find out what happened to her. What she has to say first.

“You know you’re gonna have a fight on your hands with her?”

Cocking a brow, I give Cobra a chin lift, knowing what he’s talking about. “Saw it in her eyes.”

“So, you admit it then?”

Do I?

Yeah, I fucking do. Seeing her again, I know without a doubt I want her again. But this time around, I’m going to be smart about it. She’s not a one-and-done. Rosemary is a hell of a lot more than that. And she’s mine.

Meeting her brother’s gaze, I nod once and grit out two words he wanted me to admit at the clubhouse. “She’s mine.”

CHAPTER 5

ROSEMARY

“Why don’t you go take a shower, Princess?” Dad suggests upon us stepping into the clubhouse. The Devil’s Riot MC clubhouse.

I remember Jade telling me about the move and asking me to come with her. Of course, I agreed. She’s my best friend, and I could’ve found another gym to work at, even if it wasn’t a management position. Either way, I intended to move with her and Viper when they moved here. Now they’re here, and I’m not sure what to do or make of it all.

I wrap my arms around myself and nod, not speaking a word.

“Rosemary,” Jade cries out and rushes forward, only to come up short by my dad. Her eyes wide as she takes a good look at me and the blood coating my hands, my body, and my hair. It’s everywhere, and I don’t have to see it to know I’m covered in tonight’s victim’s blood.

“Easy, sweetheart. She needs room to shower and get cleaned up.”

I flinch at the gentle tone of my dad’s voice. It’s a rarity to be heard. I think the last time he spoke so softly to me was when he told me my mother was gone. I cried in his arms. Later, I’d gotten mad and blamed him, him and his club. Because of them, I didn’t have a mother.

“Come on, I’ll show you where you can do that.” Jade nods, holding her hand out.

“I’ll show her.”

The voice comes from directly behind me, causing me to tense. I hadn’t heard him come in. I didn’t know he was there.

“I can do it, Kevlar,” Jade remarks, narrowing her eyes.

“Yeah, but Viper needs you to do something for him,” Kevlar states, coming up next to me, his hand taking mine. “I’ll show her where to go.”

I refuse to speak, to say a word. It all feels like a dream. That at any moment, I’ll be back with Dominic, and he’ll succeed in doing as he wanted to do with me. What he’d been telling me he intended to do while we’d been in the back of the SUV.

“Let me know when you’re done, Princess, and I’ll bring you something to eat,” my dad says, releasing me to Kevlar.

Again, I nod and allow Kevlar to pull me from the room.

I have so many questions.

Questions that I want answers to, but I don't know where to begin. I mean, for one, what were my dad and brother doing here? I didn't think they knew any of the members of the Devil's Riot MC. I knew Jade's brother, Jensen, knew who they were. He was even friends with my brother somewhat, but they both swore to keep my relationship to themselves. I didn't want anyone to know I had anything to do with them.

It's not that I don't love them. I do, but at the time, things were so bad, I'd been so angry, I needed to be away from them all. I cut ties with them, and they allowed me this on the condition I don't close the door on them. That they give me the chance to stay a part of my life, even if at a distance. Now they're here. They came for me. I can only assume they heard something.

That's something else I want to know, how they found me. How they got me away so easily. Nothing is ever that easy. There's always something. Dominic went with them without a fight, and that can't be good. He must have had something up his sleeve. He had to. It's the only explanation that makes sense.

Kevlar guides me into a room and closes the door. "Jade refused to leave your stuff behind when we moved. She said you need it here when we finally found you. They're still packed up in another room, but for now, you can use one of my shirts."

I blink, uncertain I heard him correctly.

Letting my hand go, I stare after him as he steps over to a dresser, opens the top drawer, and pulls out a gray shirt. Next, he opens the middle drawer only to grab a pair of sweatpants. Turning toward me, Kevlar holds the clothes out. "Here you go, Rosie, the pants are gonna be big, but they'll do for right now. Later, you can go through your boxes and find something else if you want."

I take the clothes, nodding. I don't think I've ever seen Kevlar be this nice. Not to anyone. Unless you're one of the kids who were always around the clubhouse.

Kevlar points to the bathroom and shows me where the towels are. "Take your time, Tigress," he whispers and closes the door, leaving me alone in the bathroom.

Briefly, I stare at the closed door before sighing heavily. This is real. It has to be.

Shaking my head, despair overwhelming me. I set the clothes on the counter, start the shower, and strip out of the clothes I'd worn to the fight tonight. Stepping under the spray, a shiver rushes down my spine as the warm water hits my body. I glance down and stare at the drain as the water washes away the blood.

I suck in a breath only to allow a sob to escape my lips. Tears stream down my cheeks, and I crumple to the bottom of the shower. Everything I've done, that I've had to do, sinks in.

Wrapping my arms around my legs, I cry, replaying the months of training, the fights I had to fight, what I had to do to win, to live. Oh God, I hate myself for what I had to do. Unable to handle it, I bring my hands up, brush my fingers through my wet hair, tangling them in the strands, and scream as the pain consumes me. I don't know how to deal with this. To know I took lives doing a sport I used to love.

Why is this even happening to me? Dominic told me that first night I won a fight I was chosen because I was good. I was a winner and would do what it takes to win every match. He knew it because he studied me that they all knew what I could do.

Crying out, sobbing, I try to shake the thoughts away, but they won't leave. I can't stop thinking about it.

Hands wrap around my fingers, stopping me from yanking only to bring them around my body. Those hands were attached to arms that surround me. "I've got you, Rosemary. Let it out, baby. You can get through this, Tigress." Kevlar's soothing voice cuts through the anguish, and I curl deeper into him. "Swear, I'm going to make things right for you," he murmurs and keeps talking, sweet words soothing. His arms hold me, keeping me grounded instead of free falling.

I don't know how long we sat there, me crying in his arms, but eventually, he moved, standing, bringing me with him. Without a word, he grabs a washcloth, puts some of the soap on it, and starts washing me, cleaning every inch.

I should probably be embarrassed by this, but I'm not. Instead, I know he's still wearing jeans and a tee. Something inside me tightened further. He heard me and came to me, not worrying that he was still dressed.

"You're soaked," I croak, speaking for the first time.

"Doesn't matter." He shrugs, drops the washcloth, and picks up the bottle of shampoo. I stare at him as he washes my hair, massaging the shampoo on

my scalp. It feels amazing.

Far too soon, he's shutting the water off and reaching out of the shower to grab a towel. He wraps it around me. "Do me a favor, baby, grab another towel for me."

Nodding, I get out, reach under the sink, and grab one of the towels for him. Turning back to give it to him, I find him stripping out of the sopping wet clothes. He'd already removed the shirt and was working on dropping his jeans.

Seeing him naked isn't a hardship. Kevlar's body is as impressive, if not more so, than it was the night I got to know it very well.

I hand him the towel as he steps out, takes it, and wraps it around his waist.

"Thank you," I find myself whispering.

"No need to thank me, Rosemary." He grunts and moves in close, takes my hands, and brushes his fingers over my busted knuckles. "Get dressed, Tigress, so we can bandage your hands."

"You don't have to do that." I was used to them being like this. It's not like anyone was around to fix me up. The most I got was a few bandages to use to take care of myself and that was so I wouldn't get an infection.

"Know I don't have to, doesn't mean I'm not doing it. So, get dressed, we'll bandage your hands, and then I'll take you to the kitchen and get you something to eat. I'm sure your dad and brother want to see you along with everyone else," he says.

"I'm . . ." I clear my throat and drop my gaze. "I don't want to be around a lot of people right now," I admit.

I haven't been around people much in months. The only time I was, it was at fights, and I don't think I can handle a lot of folks surrounding me right now.

"I get that, baby," Kevlar mutters, nodding. "How about just four for now?"

"Four?"

"Yeah, me, your dad, your brother, and Jade."

"With Jade comes Viper," I inform him. When it comes to my best friend, her man is always close by. I've always found it cute, if not slightly annoying, but I get what he's doing it for.

"True," he grunts, "so a total of five people, can you handle that?"

"I guess I don't have a choice," I mumble and grab the shirt off the

counter. Without a bra to put on, I drop the towel and pull the shirt on, aware he's watching my every move. I didn't get privacy for months, and though he tried, he's still here. And I don't know what it is about him, but he makes me feel safe.

Kevlar steps into my space, his hands cupping either side of my face, holding me still at the same time, ensuring he has my attention. "You'll always have a choice, Rosemary. Always. If you want to stay in my room, then you can do that. I'll go get you something to eat and bring it to you. You want me out of the room, you got that too, but you were gone, baby. Jade was freaking out. We were looking for you. You vanished without a trace. There were no hits of you anywhere. We didn't get anything until earlier today when your dad and brother showed up. They all want to see you. If you don't want to talk, I'm sure they'll give you that too, baby."

"Why do you keep calling me baby? And you called me Tigress earlier, why?" The question passes my lips before I can stop myself. He never called me either. Well, except for that night. He'd called me a Tigress and said to go wild for him, and I had. What we'd done was hot, wild, and amazing. But the next morning, he sent me packing. It was good, and though it stung, I'd just broken up with a guy I was seeing after finding him cheating on me. I wasn't ready for anything serious. Kevlar gave me what I needed.

What really hurt was when he'd gone off on me for showing up at the clubhouse.

"We'll get to that later," he states, stepping past me and heading for the bedroom. "Now, can you handle going out of this room and eating in the kitchen?"

Seeing his point, I nod. I don't have to speak in order to eat. I also want to get this over with. I'm exhausted. "Honestly, I just want to sleep."

"We'll make it quick. A sandwich. How's that sound?"

The thought of a sandwich causes my stomach to tighten. "Anything but that," I whisper, finally pulling on the sweatpants. They engulf me, but that's okay. The fact they're nice and loose works for me.

"Soup then?" he offers.

Nodding, I step toward him. "Tomato?"

"If that's what you want," he agrees and finishes getting dressed in another pair of jeans, a solid gray tee, his boots, and lastly, he pulls on his cut.

"Can I borrow a hoodie and socks?" I ask, rubbing my arms, feeling cold.

I'm used to it, but I hate it. I always get cold easily and suffer from cold feet all the time.

"Yeah, Tigress, you can have whatever you need," he says, pulls out a pair of socks for me, and hands them over. "You put those on while I get you a hoodie."

"Thank you." Sitting on the edge of the bed, I do just that.

"No problem. Now put this on." Kevlar holds his hoodie for me to put on. Once I have it on, my still-damp hair falls down my back. He threads his fingers with mine and lifts them to brush his lips across my fingertips. "Let's get these bandaged up and see if we can't find you some tomato soup."

CHAPTER 6

KEVLAR

She's killing me.

Guiding her into the kitchen, I'm not surprised to find those I mentioned earlier standing and sitting, waiting for her. All heads turn in our direction when we step through the door. Rosemary tenses, and before anyone can say anything, I speak up.

"We got tomato soup?"

Big's lip twitches, and he pushes a bowl across the counter in front of an empty stool.

"It's my girl's favorite."

At least they hadn't made a sandwich. I saw the dread and revulsion in her expression when I suggested it. I'm willing to bet that's what she'd been fed, so I don't blame her, and I'm not asking her to confirm my suspicion.

Ushering her to the counter, I pull the seat out for her and let her hand go, feeling the bandages now in place over her busted knuckles. She hadn't even flinched when I poured the alcohol over them. I hated seeing the way her eyes went dead.

Earlier, when she'd been in the shower, I heard those screams of anguish, and it just about killed me. She'd been hurting, in so much pain, I couldn't handle it. I'd gone in there, hopped right in, and held her. I did the only thing I could do to comfort her when she was suffering. It took a while for her cries to stop, and when they did, she slumped into me, exhausted emotionally and physically.

If it weren't for the fact she needed to eat something, I wouldn't have bothered to bring her out of the room. Fuck if I could, I'd have kept her in the room. It felt good holding her, and I knew she found comfort in my touch. I felt it in the way she let me hold her.

No one speaks as Rosemary picks up the spoon and starts eating the soup.

"You want some crackers, Rosie?" Cobra asks, speaking up first.

I move to stand directly next to her, keeping close, giving her the comfort she needs.

Rosemary shakes her head in answer to Cobra's question and continues to spoon up more soup.

Glancing at Viper, I meet his gaze. “The guests situated for the night?”

“They tucked in for the rest of the night. I’ve already told the others, first thing in the morning we’ll be meeting with our guests and finding out what they know,” Viper states coolly, his eyes going back to Rosemary, who looks upset. Why, I’m uncertain, but I’m sure it’s due to the guests we’ll be dealing with tomorrow.

“Rosie, I have your stuff all set up in a room for you to use,” Jade announces. I’m sure it’s in hopes that she can get her best friend to talk.

I’m not sure why she’s not talking to anyone else, but alone she at least spoke to me.

Rosemary nods and finishes the soup, looking at the empty bowl.

“You done or want more?” I ask, taking the bowl from her. The way I worded the question gives her no choice but to speak up.

“More,” she whispers quietly.

That one word cuts through the tension that filled it, giving everyone a sense of relief, even if it’s a small amount.

“Got a whole pot of it ready for you, Princess,” Big remarks, reaching for the bowl. “Do you want some cheese in it this time around?”

“Please,” Rose answers and clears her throat as she lifts her gaze to me. “Milk?”

“That what you want to drink?” I cock a brow making sure I understand her correctly, earning a nod. “You got it.”

“I’ll get it,” Jade declares, considering she’s the closest to the refrigerator. Viper grabs one of the glasses and puts it on the counter for Jade to fill. A moment later, it slid across the counter and set in front of Rosemary.

Big also sets her bowl back in front of her with the cheese melting on top.

In order to make Rosemary feel more comfortable, I start up a conversation with the others. It’s mundane, but still, it’s a conversation to fill the silence.

Fifteen minutes later, Rosemary pushes her bowl away. “I’m done. Thank you.”

“No need to thank anyone, Princess,” Big says, taking in his daughter’s appearance. “Now, why don’t you go get some rest.”

Without a word, Rosemary scoots off the stool and looks toward Jade. “Which room is mine?”

“I’ll show you,” Jade answers, giving Rosemary a small smile.

It’s all I can do to keep myself from following after them. From taking

Rosemary back to my room.

Fuck me.

I didn't know that finding her would affect me this way. For that matter, I didn't think I'd want her as I do, but fuck me, I do. She's mine. Has been since the night we fucked, but I was an ass and sent her away. Then I'd gone and fucked up even more.

I'm gonna have to make things right with her.

"Did she tell you anything, Kevlar?" Viper asks, getting my attention.

"No," I grind out. I don't want to talk about what happened. It's for Rosemary to share if she wants to, but I have a feeling she won't.

The way she'd broken down in that shower was terrible. She'd been vulnerable and one thing I learned about in the time I've known her is she's not one for allowing anyone to see her as weak.

Clearing my throat, I glance around, meeting each of the men's gaze. "I'm not going to say what happened. Just know that the bastard who did this to her is going to pay."

"She broke down, didn't she?" Big grimaces. "My girl, she's tough, always has been. I saw what I saw in her eyes, and I know she didn't let that bastard break her, but what she did affected her."

I nod. "Yeah, she broke down." I can at least give him that and look at Viper. "I don't want to wait til morning. Rosemary's gone to bed. You know Jade's going to stay with her. I want at this fucker and get to the bottom of it all."

"Same here." Cobra growls, eyes flashing with hatred.

"Then let's get out there and see what's what," Viper grunts and pulls out his cell. "Cyprus wants to be there as well. None of this sits well with either of us. The way we got her back was too easy, none of them fought us as we expected."

"Agreed," I mutter, brushing my fingers through my hair. "It was far too fuckin' easy. Do we know the name of the guy who had her?"

"Vulture's been working on getting the information we need. Got to work on it the moment we got back. Ordered one of the prospects to get a case of Monsters for him. Said he ain't sleeping until he knows as much as he can find," Viper remarks, heading toward the door. "What he found was the guy's name is Donovan Rowe."

I repeat the name over and over in my head, rolling it over, memorizing it.

Stepping out of the clubhouse, I keep my steps matching Viper's and head toward the smaller warehouse we converted to a storage area, but also put in cells to house those we need to deal with. It's something we've learned with all the bullshit we've had to deal with over the years. It's always best to be prepared for the potential threat rather than be caught off guard.

With the shit that happened to Rosemary, her being taken off grid the way she was, it's enough for us to go on the alert. I know we fucked up in not looking for her harder. We've had a lot of shit going on with the move, getting businesses up and running, along with working with Mateo Quirino, Noelle's cousin, who also happens to be one scary-ass motherfucker who is the head of the Quirino family.

We need to find out what the hell is going on and why she was taken in the first place. Was it because she's a fighter? Or is there something else at play?

I step through the entrance into the building, already hearing a man shouting. He was talking about us being sorry for what we've done.

"Don't know what the hell we're gonna be sorry for," I state snidely, getting the other man's attention. "I'm not the one in a cage right now. That would be you." I come to a stop just outside the cell doors and rest my arms on the bars. "I suggest you start talking." I'm quick to inform him and grin knowingly. He doesn't know what he has coming for him. Between Wolf and me, we'd gotten creative in setting this place up for causing as much pain as possible.

"Fuck you," Donovan sneers. "You've crossed the wrong people for what you've done."

"Yeah?" Cobra chuckles, coming to stand next to me. "Why don't you enlighten us?"

"No, you can find out on your own." Donovan's eyes lighten with glee, and he looks like the little weasel he is.

It takes me a full minute to take him in. To see him clearly and fuck me if it doesn't make me want to kill him. At first glance, in the heat of the moment, the eyes played tricks, but getting a good look at him now, this wasn't the guy that had guided Rosemary. "Who are you?" I demand through clenched teeth.

"I see you're figuring it out," he clucks, grinning. "I thought it would take you longer. That we'd get further along. What gives it away?"

"What're y'all talking about?" Big growls.

“This isn’t the guy from the fight club. He’s not the one who came in or took Rosemary out,” I state tersely and spit out, “They’re twins.”

“The fuck! How do you know?” Cobra snarls.

“Look very closely at him. They switched up, and we didn’t see it.” I jerk away from the cell and move toward the pillar off to the side of the cell.

“I’d step back, Cobra, Big,” Viper suggests.

“Why?” The one word comes out as a sneer, and that pisses me off.

“Because of this,” I snap and don’t wait as I jerk the lever up slightly. The crackle of electricity is like music to my ears, along with the sharp cry Donovan lets out. Lowering the lever, I look toward the bastard within the cell as Cobra curses. “You want to do that again, or do you want to talk?”

“Fuck you,” Donovan pants.

“Wrong answer.” I yank the lever back up and watch as his body seizes and his head falls back, a scream on his lips. I shut it off and grin. “Wanna talk? I can do this all day if you like.”

I could too. I knew what was needed and how much a body could take. That’s what happens when you have a dad like mine who works with electricity as he does. That was before he moved off grind, taking my mom with him. He didn’t want to live in the suburbs anymore. My dad tried to get me to come, but I’m good. I found where I belonged and love being a part of this club.

“I won’t talk,” Donovan grits out.

“Bullshit.” Flicking the lever once more, I leave it for a moment longer, watching the fucker with satisfaction before lowering it back down. “Ready yet?”

“You won’t get me to talk. I’m loyal to Enyo. To Dominic. I refuse to give you what you want,” Donovan says, breathing heavily as he falls to his knees.

“Don’t need you to say anymore, you gave me just enough,” I mutter and jerk the lever once more. I don’t need to know more from him. We got the names.

Though, the question remains, who are Enyo and Dominic?

I hate to have to do it, but it’s a question we’ll have to ask Rosemary. See if she knows either of them.

Regardless, we’ll find out who they are, and when we do, they’ll pay for what they’ve done to Rosemary.

CHAPTER 7

ROSEMARY

Shooting upright, my breathing heavy, I stare around the room, my fist clutching at the sheet over my chest.

It takes me a moment to gather my bearings. To remember I'm not with Dominic anymore. The club, they came for me.

I should be thankful to them, a part of me is, but something about it all doesn't sit well with me. It was too easy. Dominic didn't want to give me up. I know it. I was winning, and he wanted me in his bed. There's no way he'd not fought back. I can feel it in my gut, and my dad always taught me to listen to my gut.

Remembering he's here, Cobra's here, it causes my chest to ache. I hadn't seen them in years. I talked to them on the phone, yes, but only so often. Seeing them again, it makes me ache even more because though I don't want to, I've missed them.

Very much so.

Then I think about what happened with Kevlar. How gentle he'd been. How cool he was about everything. Letting me cry in his arms. I'm not a crier. I hate crying. Yet, in my weakest moment, I'd done just that in a man's arms. That man being Kevlar. A part of me wishes he were here now so I could curl into him and have him hold me as he did in the shower. Alas, I won't do it.

I can't.

Being in his arms felt good, and I refuse to go down that road. I broke down once already, I won't do it again. Kevlar's touch was soothing, and I didn't want to get used to it only to have him take it away. We shared one night together, that's it. It's not like I'm his or anything like that. I don't want to think I can lean on him only for him to turn me away. I mean, he was cool last night with everything, but I can't trust it.

For that matter, I don't know if I can trust any of them. As bad as it is to think it, they did find me, but why was I really taken in the first place?

Because of them? Because of my family? Or could it be because I'm good at being a boxer, a fighter?

I wish I knew the truth.

Sighing, I throw back the covers and get out of the ultra-soft bed. When Jade showed me to the room, she stayed with me for a while, but only when she left me alone did I finally fall asleep. I wasn't used to people being near me constantly, and her being by me was somewhat nerve-racking. I needed to be alone, not surrounded by people.

It's why, after eating, I'd asked Jade to show me to the room she told me about. The thought of eating has my stomach rumbling.

I spot the boxes in the corner and see that Jade's marked them with what's in each one. Moving to them, I open the top one that has clothes in it. I pull out a pair of panties, a bra, and leggings. I quickly put them on my naked body. I hate sleeping in clothes I always have, and last night was the first time in months I was able to do it. It was freeing.

I grab Kevlar's hoodie, pull it over my bra, wrap my arms around myself for a moment, and inhale deeply smelling smoke and wood. The smell reminds me of a campfire. I love it. It reminds me of the owner of the hoodie. I know I shouldn't want to wear it, but it's comforting. I snag up the socks he gave me to wear and pull them on my feet before heading toward the door.

I glance down the hall, remembering which way Jade and I came. I'm only one room away from Kevlar's. In the hall, it's all I can do to not stop at his door and knock. Instead, I keep going, needing something to eat.

Thankfully, when I make it to the kitchen, I find myself alone and move toward the coffee pot and the sweet brewing aroma. It's another of the luxuries I haven't had in so long. I'm looking forward to finally having a cup again.

With my fingers wrapped around a mug, holding it close to my face, ready to take the first sip, I sit at the very same stool I sat on yesterday and sigh. I put the mug to my lips and drink some of the heavenly brew. Ambrosia is what this is. So good.

"She gone."

I stiffen at the sound of panic in my best friend's voice. She's never been one to have a shrilly voice. Not even when . . . I shake my head, not wanting to go down that road.

"What are you talking about?" Kevlar demands harshly.

"Rosemary, she's not in her room," Jade answers, sounding nearly hysteric.

"Darlin', did you only check her room? Anywhere else?" This is Viper speaking gentle-like to my best friend. He's definitely a good guy, even

though before everything, we got on each other's nerves. But I know when it comes to my best friend, he'd kill for her. Hell, he'd die for her.

"No." I don't miss the hesitation in Jade's voice, she jumped to conclusions, and that's not her. "I didn't think she'd be up so early. God, pregnancy is really getting to me. I'm sorry," she says, shocking me.

"Jade, darlin', nothing be sorry about, let's just go find her. If I know her, she's probably either in the kitchen or has found the gym," Viper remarks.

At his mention of the gym, there's no way to hide my flinch, though I'm glad no one is in the kitchen to see me do so. If I can help it, I'd like to avoid anything to do with a gym.

"I'll check the kitchen," Kevlar grumbles. "Since I'm up, I need some damn coffee myself."

I guess he didn't like being woken up by Jade's panic. Then again, who would?

Hold on. Did she say she was pregnant? Holy shit. That would explain the change in her. The way she freaked out. It's not like her. I remember one time when Jenson and Jonah joked about how their mom was a basket case while pregnant with Jade. Not like she was crazy, but she would cry at the drop of a hat over every little thing.

I should go out there and let her know I'm okay, but I heard Kevlar say he was coming in here. Maybe I should go out before he comes in. I still don't have my bearings yet, and it seems it's like he's my kryptonite, if that makes sense. I don't know why, it's just the way he makes me feel. He always has. It's why what he did hurt.

The door opens, and in steps the man himself, wearing nothing more than a pair of sweatpants riding low on his hips.

"There more of that," he grunts, eyes locked with mine, finger motioning to the mug in my hands.

I nod and take another sip.

Kevlar shakes his head, steps toward me, grips the seat of my stool, and turns me until I'm facing him. He moves even closer, hands cupping either side of my face. "You sleep okay?" he asks, watching me closely.

Again, I nod.

"Use words, Tigress," he murmurs, his thumb brushing my bottom lip.

"Yes." I breathe, clear my throat, and try to pull away, though he doesn't allow me to do so.

Instead, he leans in and kisses my forehead. Only then does he step away

and move over toward the coffee maker. “You definitely worried the hell out of Jade. We all figured you’d sleep more than just a couple hours.”

“I haven’t slept more than one to two hours, and that was always more like me closing my eyes and listening for anything that might be coming for me.” I shrug, not really wanting to talk about this or anything else.

Kevlar pauses briefly from pouring coffee into a mug. I drop my gaze, not wanting to see the heated look in his eyes. It makes me wish for things I have no business wanting.

“What do you want to do today?”

I’m surprised by Kevlar’s question and find myself jerking my gaze back to his and asking, “Why?”

“Figured we could do something together,” he mutters and moves back to me.

He figures we could do something together. Is he mad?

“What are you doing?” I ask, shaking my head. He’s confusing me.

“I’m up after managing an hour of sleep, and since I’m up, I’m spending time with you. Now, what do you want to do?” Planting a hip against the counter, legs crossed, he watches me intently.

And that pisses me off.

“I’m not doing anything with you,” I snap and put my mug down, no longer interested in drinking more of it. Standing, I narrow my gaze on him. “You can go do whatever the hell you want, but leave me alone. You want to know what I’m going to do? I’m getting away from you and anyone else who wants to know what I want to do.”

“Calm down, baby, and tell me what’s going through that head of yours,” Kevlar says, straightening.

“No.” I can feel my anger growing. How dare he tell me to calm down or ask what’s in my head. “I’m not talking to you about anything. It’s not your business what’s in my head, and for that matter, stop calling me names. I’m not your anything, so just stop it.” I spin on my heel and stomp out of the kitchen before he can catch me. But he does grab my hand halfway through the main room.

“What’s with the attitude this morning?” he asks, twirling me to face him, locking his arms around me.

“Let me go.” I shove against him, unable to break his hold.

“Not until you calm down.”

Something about the sternness in his voice causes something to snap

inside me, and I scream, claw, and struggle in his arms. Still, the bastard doesn't let go of me. He keeps me locked to him and holds on tight.

He wants me to calm down. To talk to him. Tell him what's in my head. How can I do that? Why would he want to know? They didn't care enough to find me for months. *Months!* I endured so *much*, and he wants to know what I'm thinking? I don't even know. I only just found myself pulled out of the situation. That freedom is far too easily gotten. I can't help but wonder. To question if they were a part of it.

I'm not sure I should trust them, no matter the fact they're family to me. Until I know for sure, I refuse to let anyone close to me, including this man. I should say, most especially Kevlar. I knew then, as I do now, he's my undoing, and I can't handle what he makes me feel.

CHAPTER 8

KEVLAR

Rosemary fights me, and I hold on tight. Like she did in the shower, she's breaking down. But this time, it's different. No longer her sadness, her grief. It's her anger.

Through her screams, you can hear the fury. By asking her what was in her head triggered it. I know it. I can feel it in my gut. And I get it with what she says, even if it's incoherent. I was able to make out the words coming from her lips. She doesn't trust us. She doesn't know the reason for her being taken.

Scooping Rosemary in my arms, I carry her toward my room and look at our club's medic, Mace. "Get a sedative and bring it to my room."

"On it." He jerks his chin and heads in the opposite direction to where he'd set up a sort of clinic. The building's big enough for it, so it's not some closet-sized room. With his experience in the military, he worked on one of the medivacs, he knows what he's doing.

I ignore the looks from the rest of the people gathering, including Rosemary's dad and brother. If I want to make things right with Rosemary, then I need to do this. I've got to take care of her. Get her to talk to me. I need to show her that I'm not the bad guy. That we didn't stop looking for her.

Fuck me.

I've got to fix things between the two of us before we can go any further.

Inside my room, I keep a struggling Rosemary contained until Mace comes through the room, needle in hand.

"I need you to lift her sleeve," Mace mutters.

"Here. Let me help," Cobra growls, coming from behind, his dark eyes on his sister. He's pissed, for sure. I get it, I mean, if I had a sister, I'd feel the same way.

Together, the three of us work and get straight. I hold her still while Cobra lifts the sleeve of my hoodie, and Mace pricks her arm and presses the plunger of the needle, dosing her with the sedative. It'll soon take effect, and she'll be able to rest. When she wakes, I'll be here, and then the two of us will talk. I'll make sure of it. See to it, that she understands we didn't have

anything to do with her being kidnapped, taken, and used in the way she was.

I lay Rosemary on the bed and pull the blanket up over her as she stares, her eyes getting that faraway look in them as the medicine takes effect.

“I’m going to kill the bastards when we find them,” Cobra snarls.

“Get in line,” I remark, sitting on the side of the bed to stroke Rosemary’s hair out of her face. “I’ll be making sure that those responsible for putting her through all this pay a heavy price.”

“Right there with you on that one.” Viper growls, getting my attention. I didn’t even know he followed us. Straightening from where he leaned against the door frame, he clears his throat. “Jade wants to come sit with Rosemary for a while. We’ve got shit to discuss for ten minutes, and then we have church.”

“Vulture got something?” I ask.

“From what he said, he’s got a shit load that we’re not gonna like.”

“Great. Just what I want to hear.” Shaking my head, I let out a sigh and look back to Rosemary.

“She’ll be out of it for at least a couple of hours, Kevlar,” Mace remarks. “You should be back in here in plenty of time.”

“Right.” I grunt and look toward Viper. “Give me five minutes, and Jade can come hang with her.”

Viper nods and turns, leaving the room along with Mace and Cobra. Nothing else needs to be said right now.

The door closes behind them, and I glance back down to take in Rosemary. Her eyelids droop, and she’s out. I lean in, press another kiss to her forehead, and whisper, “I’ll make things right, baby, swear it. Those fuckers will pay for what they did to you. All of them. I’ll burn them all.”

Taking my seat at the table, it’s not the first time, but it is the first for something like this. We’ve sat at this very table and voted on the shit we’re going to do with this charter. This time it’s different. It’s about Rosemary.

Viper takes his seat at the head of the table. Instead of using a regular gavel, he’s got one that Jade had carved for him with the shape of a viper snake. It’s pretty wicked and suits him as Prez. He bangs the gavel down on

the table, something two of my brothers worked hard on to create and design themselves with the Devil's Riot MC insignia carved into the top with a clear coat sealing it.

"Vulture, tell us what you've found for us," Viper orders, turning everyone's attention toward the other man, including the two men who are only invited in here because they're family to my woman. The rest of Cobra's club are sitting out in the main room, waiting to be filled in with what their President has to share. This meet is for us only.

"Donovan Rowe is the twin brother to Dominic Rowe. He mentioned the name while being questioned."

"And the name Enyo?" Cobra spits out like the name's a bad taste in his mouth.

"I'll get to that one as soon as I finish with Dominic." Vulture's tone is cool and mocking. One of the reasons he's got the name. He doesn't give a shit and will go after the dead even when there's nothing left. At least, that's what a couple others say about him. He doesn't rest until he's done picking at what he's got in his sights. "As I was saying, Dominic Rowe. He's one sick fucker, according to the records I've found on him. Not only does he have his hands in death matches as a participant, but he also manages them, sets up the fights, anything and everything to do with the Death Match club, he takes care of it," he says, going on to explain in deeper detail about the whole thing. "Dominic has no problems leaving a trail behind him if you know where to look. Which now that we do, I was able to follow his trail and figure out how Rosemary was targeted."

"How?" I demand, narrowing my eyes and clenching my jaw.

"Remember the guy she moved in with?" Vulture sneers, meeting my gaze as I nod. "Well, it seems he got a hefty donation to the gym's account about a month after she was taken. We'd already ruled him out, considering we couldn't find anything." I hadn't ruled him out of shit, I just couldn't find anything to link him to. "Anyway, he sold Rosemary out to save his precious gym that was getting ready to go bankrupt."

"I want that bastard picked up, tied up, and dragged down here," Viper snarls, slamming his fist on the table.

"Already put a call into Stoney. He's got men picking up and doing as you want." Vulture smirks. "Now, for more that needs to be said, Rosemary had already caught the attention of these people. She's damn good in the ring, and I mean damn good. That's where Enyo comes in. See, Enyo is the actual

person to which Dominic answers. She is the one who pulls all the strings.” Opening a folder, Vulture pulls out a picture and tosses it to the middle of the table. “Does anyone recognize this woman here?”

I take a look at the image, not recognizing the woman. “I didn’t recognize her. Who is she?”

“I don’t recognize her,” Viper remarks, cocking a brow.

“It’s my ex-wife,” Big announces. “Rosemary’s mother.”

“I thought you said your wife was dead,” Viper growls, leaning forward in his seat, looking ready to come out of it.

“She is.” Big grunts and looks at his son. “Should have known this would come back to haunt her.”

“Want to enlighten us?” I sure as fuck want to know what’s going on.

“Violet, her real name is Violet, and she’s a bitch. She tried to kill my daughter. Hated her from the moment she was born because she was no longer the center of attention. Left when she was only a few months old after Cobra caught her trying to drown Rosemary. The woman Rosemary knew as her mother was killed years ago, and we hid the truth from her. She didn’t need to know that the reason her mother was killed was because Violet didn’t want Rosemary to have her. Violet made it known before she disappeared, dropping off the radar.”

We all listen to Big finish telling us about the shit that Rosemary knows nothing about. I have to respect what these men did to protect her from the truth, but it hurt her in the process. She lost them along the way.

“So, let me get this right, this Violet woman is Enyo, and she’s got a vendetta against Rosemary because she was born and took away her spotlight?” My voice heavy with sarcasm.

“Violet was always a bitch, only reason we married was ‘cause I knocked her ass up the first time. I was going to leave her, and she tricked me into having another kid, saying she wanted to give me another son. Instead, we had Rosemary. She hated how I was with my princess. It pissed her off because she wasn’t getting the attention she thought she deserved.”

“The woman was a psycho bitch,” Cobra says bitterly.

“And she killed the woman Rosemary knew as her mother?” Cyprus grunts.

“Stephanie.” Big grunts. “I hired her as a nanny and ended up marrying her.” He shrugs with mocking resignation. “Never should have done that. Loved her, but not enough to protect her as I should have. That was on me. I

let her go out when I knew there were threats. Told her about them, and she brushed them off. Violet got her hands on Steph and tormented her. She then made sure I knew that Rosemary would suffer next. It's why we let her go the way we did. To protect her. Fuck." He lets out a breath. "Should have known it was her behind this. She's selfish and also big into fights. It's the one thing the two of them ever shared in common. Only difference is my girl is damn good at it. She grew up training and learning to fight. She excelled at it and loved boxing. It was her passion, but she didn't want to do competitions that much. She'd do them, but she wanted to teach it. Used to say she was going to own her own gym one day and teach kids what she learned."

Well, fuck.

"How do we take this bitch out?" Wolf asks, leaning back in his chair, arms stretched out, as he taps his fingers on the table.

"First, we have to find her." I rock my head on my shoulders, stretching my muscles, trying to relieve the tension there. "We got Rosemary back way too easily after we found her. Why?"

"Because they're playing games here," Vulture declares, eyes gleaming. "According to Dominic's phone records, he got a call just moments before the match started. It was all set up from there. They tricked us and got away."

"This is just getting started," Viper finishes, turning in his chair. From the side profile, you can visibly see his jaw clenching.

And he's right. This is just getting started, and we need to figure out a game plan. They were one step ahead of us this time. We need to be prepared for them and what they might try to do next.

CHAPTER 9

ROSEMARY

“Come on, Tigress, wake up for me, baby.” The words spoken were soft and sweet-like. Fingers brush through my hair, massaging my scalp. It feels good, and I don’t want to wake up, but I know who the voice belongs to.

I know he’s right next to me, the one stroking his fingers soothingly.

“What are you doing?” Blinking, I roll to my back and stare at him, bewildered by the fact he’s here.

“You had a moment, and we had to sedate you, baby. You’re in my bed.” Kevlar’s eyes hold that softness, though it’s mixed with concern.

It takes a few seconds for his words to register, and I narrow my gaze, irritation sliding into place, replacing the confusion and uncertainty. “You sedated me? Put me in your bed.” Flashing him my teeth, I jerk away from him and scramble out of the bed. My anger builds, and I whirl around to face off with Kevlar as he climbs out of bed. “What gives you the right to do either? I’m not anything to you or anyone else here.”

“That would be where you’re wrong,” he states with a deceptive calm in his voice. One that doesn’t match the flash of anger that replaces the softness in his eyes. “When it comes to you, I have every fuckin’ right, Rosemary. I’ll be damned if you think otherwise.” Kevlar grips my wrists, yanks me the short distance toward him, and engulfs me in his arms, surrounding me with his heat. “The way I see it, I may have fucked up that night when I kicked you out the next morning, fucked up even further with what I did later on, but you’re mine. Have been since that night, and don’t deny it.”

He did not just say that.

“You didn’t just say that,” I whisper.

“Damn right, I did,” he growls. “You’ve been through hell, Rosemary, I get that. I understand it. It’s fucked up what you went through, but you need to get that we didn’t stop looking for you. I wanted to find you. We all did. And we did. It just took us time. Now you’re back where you belong, and I’m not about to let you fuckin’ get away from me. Nor am I going to let you think this club, these people would do anything to betray you.”

“You’re not going to let me get away from you?” My temper rises all the more at his response. I refuse to acknowledge the confusion and uneasy

feeling tumbling inside me.

“Yeah, I’m not letting you get away from me, Rosemary.” Those dark eyes of his, darken, harden would better describe it. His arm around me tightens. “We’ve got a lot of shit to hash out, but we’re going to get one thing straight right here and now, you, baby, my Tigress, are mine.”

I open my mouth to protest, to tell him to go to hell, but I don’t get a word out before his mouth is on mine. Kevlar seals his lips to mine, tongue thrusts in, and the kiss shatters my will to fight him. To get away from him. My resolve completely melts with this one kiss.

Just as quickly as he kisses me, Kevlar rips his lips away, presses his forehead to mine, and lets out a heavy breath. “I’m not letting you go again. Not like I did before while being a total jackass.”

“Let go.” My voice is even shaky to my own ears.

Kevlar is making me feel so much. More than I ever should for him. For anyone. Why all of a sudden is he acting like this?

“Why are you acting like this? All of a sudden, claiming I’m yours, kissing me, being nice the way you are? Is this some sort of joke?” I ask in a broken whisper.

Kevlar lets me go, sighing. “I was a dick to you, letting you leave the way I did. I shouldn’t have kicked you. I also shouldn’t have talked to you the way I did. Fuck, if I could go back and change it, I would. I wouldn’t have let you out of my bed.”

Those words ring in my ears, searing themselves in my head. The sincerity in his face has my knees buckling. They would have if I didn’t lock them in place, keeping myself from falling to the side. As it is, I weakly move to the bed and sit on the edge of it.

“You’re confusing me,” I confess, unable to keep the confession to myself.

“I don’t mean to, baby.” I don’t bother looking in his direction. I don’t need to see him to hear him moving toward me. He goes to his knees in front of me, his body fitting between my thighs. His arms wrap around my waist. “I fucked up with you, and I intend to fix what I broke. I’m not going to do anything to hurt you again, Rosemary. We’ve got shit to talk about. You need to know some things about me. About what we now know. About everything. I’m not hiding shit from you.”

Baffled by this, I blink and stare at him. “What do you mean?”

“We know who Dominic is. He wasn’t the one in the car with you when

we got you back. Dominic got away,” he answers, cautiously watching me.

“He got away.” My breath feels heavy, and my chest tightens. How is it possible?

“I’ll tell you everything you need to know, Tigress. I’ll give you what you need.” Leaning in, he presses his lips to mine, kisses me sweet-like, and pulls away. “But we’ll talk while you eat something.”

“I’m not hungry.” I was, but I don’t think I could eat.

“That’s what you say, but you still need to eat something.” Kevlar’s lip quirks, and he gets to his feet, pulling me with him. “We’ll talk while you eat, baby.”

“Fine.” I huff and try to step away from him, but he doesn’t allow me to do so. Instead, he scooped me in his arms and carried me like I was a weakling and couldn’t walk by myself.

Carrying me from the room, he doesn’t even waver when he opens and closes the door behind us. Moments later, he plants me on one of the stools and sits beside me. He does this because we’re not the only ones in the room. My dad and brother were also there, along with Jade, Viper, Cyprus, and Noelle. The smell of something frying has my stomach growling at how delicious the aroma is.

My dad looks at me as Noelle glances from the stove.

“I’m making chicken tenders and fries,” Noelle announces. “It’s quick and easy.”

“While we wait,” Viper says, getting my attention, “we’ve got shit to talk about.”

“Let me start,” my dad says, looking at my brother. “Cobra’s got to head back later today, and we need to be the ones to tell her this part of it.”

“You’re leaving?” I find myself blurting, eyes going to Cobra, pain at losing him filling me.

“Got a club to run, Rosie, can’t stay here.” He shrugs, eyes intense. “But don’t think I’m not gonna be around. I’m done with you being distant, little girl.”

I open my mouth to snap at him, but my dad beats me to it.

“There’s a lot of things we both regret, princess,” Dad says, grimacing, eyes filled with sorrow which confuses me even more. Taking a breath, he dives into telling me about things he thought I knew nothing about. I knew the woman who was my mom wasn’t my birth mother. She and I had this conversation a long time ago, but that doesn’t mean she wasn’t my mom. She

raised me and loved me. More than that, she loved my dad and brother. She explained to me all the things I knew nothing about, and now my dad's telling me, thinking I didn't know. I guess she never told him, and I know I never told him I knew because I didn't realize it was a big secret.

Knowing this, I never thought about my birth mother. My dad goes on to tell me why my mother left. He also told me that it was her that killed the woman who I saw as my mom. Then he finishes by dropping the bomb on me and telling me that my mom is now known by the name of Enyo. It's because of her I was held by Dominic, though I think he has his own sick, twisted plans for me.

"They knew we were there at the fights," Cobra finishes for my dad.

"Now we know who we're dealing with, we can get this shit handled," Viper snarls, banging a fist on the counter.

"Rex will be here soon for us to handle," Cyprus announces.

It makes sense that it was Rex, though it hurts he sold me out. He'd been stressing about things. He's snappier than he's ever been with me. No longer was he the fun-going friend to work for, but an ass that was my boss and roommate.

Jade told me it might be a bad idea for me to move in with him, and I didn't listen. I thought I could trust him. I mean, he was a friend. Someone I could count on, but he wasn't any of that.

"I want to talk to him," I whisper, meeting each of the men's eyes that fill the room. Well, all but Kevlar's. I don't think I could look at him right now. He has me confused.

So confused.

Between that kiss and his words, he's got my insides twisted up. I need to find a way to untwist them before it's too late and I let him break my heart.

CHAPTER 10

KEVLAR

“Rosemary’s not going in there,” I inform the others while staring across the room, watching my woman talk with Jade and Noelle. She looks content but still nervous.

While her dad spoke earlier in the kitchen about the past, I saw the knowledge in her eyes. She knew the truth about the woman who raised her—at least a portion of it. There’s one thing for certain when it comes to her, she’s unable to conceal her emotions. Not from me or those who know her.

Rex got here thirty minutes ago. Aries and Wolf dragged his ass to the cells kicking and screaming. This was after Big and Cobra got a good few punches in. They had to head out. Big wanted to stay, and I saw the reluctance in his gaze, but Cobra and his club had to get back. Big being who he is to his club had to go with them, and Rosemary told him to go.

She was adamant about it and promised both of them that she wouldn’t block them out . . . that she would visit them. Not without me, she won’t be. Rosemary’s got a lot she’s going through, and I’m going to be the one to be there every step of the way. No one else. Not even Jade. Sure, she can come along for the ride, but this is my fight. I’ll beat back the demons for Rosemary, prove to her that the hells she’s endured can be overcome, and I’m it for her as she’s it for me.

It can’t be any other way. I won’t let it.

“You sure it’s a good idea to keep her out of this?” Viper asks, crossing his arms while watching me like a hawk. It’s eerie sometimes when he gets that look in his eyes.

“She’s seen enough violence. No way does she need to see anymore.” There’s no way I want her to lose more of herself, and when we go to question them, that’s exactly what will happen.

Rosemary had seen Rex as a friend. We all knew this. It’s marked her whether or not she wants to believe one way or the other.

“It’s your call, brother, but I think you need to talk to her.” Viper jerks his chin toward the group of women. “She’s not the typical woman, we all know this. Don’t take that choice from her.”

I get where he’s coming from, and he’s right. Rosemary isn’t a typical

woman. She shouldn't have her choice taken from her, not again, but that doesn't mean she's going in there. I just have to get her to understand where I'm coming from. This is a way for me to protect her from getting hurt more than she already has.

"I'll talk to her." I nod.

"Good. Smart. Now, go do it. I want to deal with him sooner rather than later. We've got enough on our plates, we don't need more."

Again, I know where he's coming from.

Nodding, I make my way over to Rosemary. Without speaking, I snag her hand and lead her away from her friends. She doesn't speak up or protest. Usually, my woman wouldn't stand for being dragged away, and it pisses me off that she's not fighting. She's lost her fight, the fire inside her. I want it back.

I take her back to my room, close the door behind us, and let go of her. "We gotta talk."

"About what?" she asks, twisting around to face me, arms crossed over her middle.

"I don't want you in there when we deal with Rex." I don't bother with being gentle. I say it as it is. "You don't need to be there while we question him."

"But I want to be in there. I need to see him," she whispers.

"You don't need to see that bastard," I grit out, anger lacing through each word.

"Why don't I?" Rosemary narrows her eyes, nostrils flare, and pink creeps up her cheeks. "Wasn't it me he sold out? Wasn't it me that spent months in hell because of him? I would think I'd have every right to be in there . . . to speak to him."

"You don't need to be in there when we're questioning him. You don't need to see what we're going to do to him."

"It's nothing I haven't seen before. Done myself."

"That's my fuckin' point," I snarl, getting pissed at the bitter expression she has. "You've been forced to do shit you shouldn't for too damn long. You don't need to witness any more of the dark shit that's going to go down." Letting out a breath, I whirl away from her, rake my fingers through my hair, and shake my head before looking back to her once more. "I'm trying to fuckin' protect you, baby."

"You don't have to protect me."

Those very words piss me off all the more.

“And why’s that? Huh?” I move into her space, curl my fingers on either side of her face, and lean in, dipping my mouth down to brush against hers. “Because you think you don’t need protecting? That none of us did it before. We fucked up, Rosemary, I know this, and so does every other brother here who knew you before. I told you that you’re mine, and I’ll be damned if you’re hurt in any way ever a-fuckin’-gain.”

I don’t give her a chance to respond. I claim her mouth with mine, sinking my fingers in her hair and holding her in place. My cock throbs in my jeans, hell it’s been hard since the last time I had my mouth on hers. Never in my life have I stayed hard for a woman the way I do for her. She makes me crazy with my need for her. All I want to do is sink inside her.

Rosemary wraps her arms around my neck and gives herself over to the moment. I know it when it happens. It’s in the way she relaxes, cocks her head, and gives me further access to that sweet mouth of hers.

Taking one hand away from her head, I wrap it around her waist and guide her backward toward the bed. Twisting, I fall on my back, bringing her with me. I release the other hand from her hair, roll us, and settle over Rosemary, my thighs between hers. The moans that pass her lips spur me on, and I grind myself against her, imagining what it would feel like to be sinking inside that warm, sweet pussy. Fuck, I can feel the heat of her through the leggings she’s wearing. I didn’t think anything could feel so good, and I want more.

Ripping my lips from hers, I pepper kisses down her jaw and her neck. I slip my hands under her hoodie and stroke her smooth skin. “I’ve missed touching you, baby. I’ve thought about it so many fuckin’ times. I lost track of the times I jacked off thinking about sliding inside you, Tigress. I want you again. Wild and hot for me.”

“Kevlar.”

The way she moans my name is nearly my undoing. She’s everything to me, and I want more of her. So fucking much more. Unfortunately, now isn’t the time. I’ve got shit to handle, and she’s not in a good place for me to take her.

Kissing her once more, I pull away and fall to my side, bringing her with me.

“You gonna let me deal with this without fighting me, baby?” I ask, laying my cheek on the top of her head.

“I want to be there, Kevlar,” she whispers and lifts herself enough to meet my gaze, cocking her head slightly. “What’s your actual name?”

She surprises me with her question. It’s not something I thought she’d ask me. I haven’t been called by my actual name in years. My own parents don’t even use it anymore. Instead, they use my road name, knowing what it means to me to have earned it.

“Calvin Bell,” I finally answer.

“Your whole name? Do you have a middle name?”

Sighing, I give her the answer she’s looking for. “Calvin Roth Bell.”

“I like it,” she says and repeats my name. “It’s beautiful.”

“It’s a name.” I shrug. “My parents named me after my two granddads to honor them.”

“That was nice of them.” Rosemary bites her bottom lip and gets that look in her eyes. “I need to be in there, Calvin. I have to know the truth. Please let me find out why he did this. Why he played his part in all of this.”

I hold her gaze and let out a frustrated breath. I can’t be sure if it’s out of sexual desire or plain old irritation. Hearing her say my name while talking to me, using it to plead with me, it does something to me, and I know I’m going to cave.

“Fine, but I’m warning you, baby, I’m going to be working him over. Me and Wolf. You get that look in your eyes I saw at the fight club, I’m taking you out of there and paddling your ass for not listening to me.”

I don’t want to take her in there, but I will because she needs this. As much as I want to fight her on it, I won’t take away her chance to get answers. When it’s over, I’ll revisit where her mind is. Then, later, I intend to revisit other things. Things I can’t wait to do. All of which involve me enjoying that sweet body of hers.

CHAPTER 11

ROSEMARY

Walking hand in hand with Kevlar, my heart racing, I feel the urge to run away, but I don't. I can't. I need to know Rex's reasons for doing what he did to me. That doesn't mean I'm not nervous. The asshole had sold me out. Made it so I was taken so easily, and I'm sure he's the reason nothing seemed out of place. No security camera feed. Nothing. Nada. Zip.

Kevlar didn't want me to do this. I get why, but it's a must. I want to see if Rex feels any remorse for what he's done. I'm just grateful Kevlar didn't fight me on this. More or less, he gave in to my need for this. Still, he made his stipulations, and again, I get it. I don't want to watch him or anyone else torturing answers out of Rex. He's right, I've seen enough of it.

The past months were enough to destroy me. I was willing to keep going in order to survive, but I knew what it was doing to me. I was losing myself, my sanity. That's what they wanted, I feel it in my gut. The only reason I was taken, forced to fight . . . to kill, it was to break me. I'm sure of it. If I didn't fight, I'd die. Fighting I survived, and I lost part of my soul. My spirit.

With the way Kevlar was with me in his room when they first rescued me, and now, it's been nothing but tenderness, even mixed with a dominant force. I saw the way he looked at me. The way he kissed me, God, my body, it feels like I'm going to go up in flames. I want him. His mouth. His hands. Everything. I want to feel him moving inside me, thrusting deeply. Hard and rough. Just like he did before.

This time though, I know it wouldn't be just the biker taking me, fucking me, it would be the man. Calvin. He might be Kevlar to the club, but to me, I see him only as the man. He's gentle yet rough. Sweet, but hard.

Kevlar stops us outside another building and twists me to face him, arms going around me. "Last chance, baby, you sure you want to go in there?"

"I need to," I answer, hoping he doesn't hear or see the sheer fear trying to take hold.

I've never been one to fear anything, but here I am, fearing what Rex might say . . . what might happen next. I know in my gut it's not over with. The guys even know it's not. Dominic let me be taken from him way too easily. He sacrificed his twin brother to save his own ass. What else is he

capable of? For that matter, what's Enyo made of? Will she come at me in another way?

"We get in there, don't think you have to stay. Fuck, I'd prefer if you weren't going in there." I don't miss the way his eyes flare with irritation and how he grits his teeth.

Leaning into him, I lay my head against his chest and wrap my arms around his waist. "Thank you, Calvin."

Kevlar squeezes me and kisses the top of my head. "Don't call me that when we're about to go in a room with a man I'm ready to kill. It'll only piss me off."

"Why?" I pull away as I ask.

"Because it makes me hard, and I want to fuck you. You ain't ready for me to do that yet," he remarks.

Cocking a brow, I watch him closely. "Who says I'm not ready for you to do anything with me? What if I wanted you to fuck me? What if I want to feel you inside me, making all the horrible memories go away? To replace them with something so hot."

Kevlar's eyes get that intense look in them, and he looks ready to throw me over his shoulder and carry me back into the clubhouse to his room. Tipping his head a bit, he gets in my space, leaving no room between us. "When I get inside you, I intend to work the nightmares out of you, but first, I'm going to get you hot enough you'll want to go up in flames. I'm going to tie you to the bed and make you beg me to slide my cock inside your pretty pussy. But baby, I know you ain't ready for it. Not yet, at least."

My breath hitches in my chest, catches in my lungs, and if I don't release it soon, I might faint from lack of oxygen to my head. Kevlar's words have me soaking my panties and leave me aching for him. This shouldn't be possible, I've not had him in so long.

Maybe that's my problem, it's been as long as it has. Kevlar was the last guy I'd slept with. He marked me that night, and no other would do. The very fact that he's hard now and still not doing anything about it turns me on all the more and makes me want him.

Parting my lips, I lick my bottom one and watch him as he focuses in on my mouth. Kevlar shakes his head and sighs irritably.

"Come on, Tigress," he grunts, turning us, keeping an arm around my waist, holding me close to his side. "We'll finish this discussion tonight."

"Okay, and for the record, I'll say that I would like to finish what we

were doing earlier instead of talking about it.” I breathe, not wanting anyone else to hear me.

Before everything, I didn’t hold back what I wanted to say or who I said it to or in front of. But I learned quickly to keep my thoughts to myself or face the consequences. Sure, I’d get lippy with Dominic, but not as I would before. He made sure to show me he had no problem killing. That first week, I watched him slice the throat of two women. Two who had done nothing but beg for him to let them go. He raped one while his men did the other. Then he killed them. Ran a blade right through their necks like it was butter. The worst of it was he’d come over to me and wipe the edge of the bloody blade against my cheek and tell me to do as I was told or I’d face the same fate.

I shudder at the memory, and Kevlar feels it. He doesn’t question me, he probably thinks it’s because of what we’re about to do now, but it’s not.

Kevlar opens the door, and I immediately hear Rex shouting.

“You’re going to pay for this. You won’t get away with taking me this way. I know people. They’ll make you suffer for this.”

Kevlar’s arm tenses and his fingers dig into my waist.

“Yeah, and who would that be?” Wolf asks.

Wolf wasn’t at the Original’s clubhouse, but Jade explained to me that the members here came from different charters. He’s from the Franklin Charter, along with another guy named Sabor. The ones from the Original Charter are Viper, Cyprus, Kevlar, and Aries. Vulture and the others, I don’t know yet which clubs they came from, but it was either from Tennessee, Southeast, or Colorado.

I find it weird the club has some they call by states or cities, but then you have Southeast and Originals. Why not also call them by a state? But then that wouldn’t work for the Franklin Charter since it’s in the same state as the Originals.

“I’m not telling you shit. You’ll figure it out soon enough.” Rex sneers.

“Why don’t you tell me?” I speak up, keeping my emotions in check. I refuse to let him see what he did to me and how it affected my life.

Rex nearly pulls an exorcism move, twisting around, eyes beading out of his head, and he stares at me like he was seeing a ghost with the way he pales. “How?” he croaks.

“I see you’re changing your tone,” Kevlar says, moving us forward.

Rex takes in the hold Kevlar has on me and narrows his gaze, lip curling. “I knew you were fuckin’ him.”

“What’s this got to do with him fuckin’ Rosemary?” Viper demands, cutting into the conversation.

I glance at the other man and see the way his face contorts. When he’d first gotten with Jade, I wasn’t too sure about him. Then I got to know him, and he’s become like a big brother to me since.

Rex ignores Viper and keeps his gaze leveled on me. “You shouldn’t have gotten involved with him.”

“Why? Why did you do what you did?” I can’t even say the words even with keeping my emotions locked down.

“Because you refused me. You refused to be mine. I wanted you, and you gave yourself to biker scum,” he snaps.

“You were my boss and friend. Hell, we were roommates. I told you plenty of times that I thought of you as one of my best friends.” I had actually thought of him as this. I mean, the guy could make me laugh while doing burpees. He pushed me when I was in the ring and told me where I was weak and needed to work on. Helped me train to become better and even helped me when I had classes to teach.

“And we were perfect together. You should have been mine. But you had to give yourself over to some biker who doesn’t know what you’re capable of. How you need to be able to spread your wings. He was going to keep you stuck when you needed to make a name for yourself.”

Baffled by this statement, I shake my head and look away. I don’t know what else to say to him. It’s clear he’s delusional. Kevlar and I spent one night together. One night. I hadn’t even said anything to him about it, so how did he know?

“Why did you sell her out? Was it just because of the business going bankrupt? Or because she turned your ass down?” Kevlar demands, his tone sends chills down my spine. He lets me go and steps forward, and I realize what’s happening. This isn’t just the man right now, this is Kevlar. Fury all but visible as it vibrates off him. Those taut muscles of his, you can see the veins bulging.

I swear I’m not getting turned on by seeing him like this. He’s not cocky in any way. There’s only one word to describe him at this moment . . . dangerous. That’s exactly what he is. Rex has him pissed, and he’s ready to commit murder.

You can see it in the way he moves, the expression on his face, and how he prowls forward, not walk, prowls like a predator stalking its prey. The

sight of him like this is hot, but it's not something I think I can handle right now. I need to get out of here.

I learned what I needed to know, at least what I figured was what Rex was going to say. He's delusional, and I'm just done. I don't want or need to hear more. He confirmed and proved his craziness. That's enough for me to know I don't need to be here for what's about to happen next.

Backing away, I catch Kevlar's eyes. He gives me a sharp nod and jerks his chin toward the door. In his gaze, I see what he doesn't say. He'll catch up with me later, and I know just how I want him to find me.

CHAPTER 12

KEVLAR

Never before have I ever been so happy to see Rosemary walk away as I am right now. She doesn't need to be here for what's about to happen. Fuck, if it wasn't hard to restrain myself as I have so far.

"You want to use electricity?" Wolf asks once the door closes behind Rosemary.

"No." This fucker was going to feel pain by my hands no other way about it. Rex is a delusional fucker thinking I tainted Rosemary by fucking her.

Fuck that.

Fuck him.

He's about to learn real quick what happens when you mess with me or the club. There's a reason the club had dubbed me with Fist while I was a prospect before earning my road name. I thought I'd be Fist to the club, but I earned my name as Kevlar with that shit that happened during Jade's situation. But that part of me is still there. I've always been a fighter.

My dad taught me to fight when I was just a kid. I've learned everything from karate, jujitsu, boxing, hand to hand. Anything and everything I could, he taught me. It was a way of discipline. To learn to control my anger. It works for the most part, but as my mother once told him, it also makes me a danger to myself. She knew as mothers, good moms who give a damn know.

"Oh fuck," Aries mutters and announces, "he's going to fight the bastard." Aries has known me for years. We grew up with each other. His parents actually live off-grid in the same area as mine. Where I was an only child, Aries has two sisters and a brother. I always thought he was lucky to have siblings. One of his sisters is in New York working as a photographer, while the other is still home with their parents. His brother disappeared, and no one knows where he went off to. No one's heard from him in a year now.

"I've heard what he can do in a ring." Wolf chuckles as a few of my other brothers grumble.

"Let's get to it then," Viper commands harshly. "Maybe he'll spew some more shit while getting his ass handed to him."

"Fuck all of y'all," Rex snaps. "You'll regret messing with me."

"Shut the fuck up about regretting shit," I snarl, stepping into the cell,

closing it behind me. The jarring sound of it locking doesn't even phase me. Not in the least. It's simply a cage fight. One that will end with Rex's death.

It's kind of ironic, really. The bastard who helped in all of this is going to die the same way my woman's been forced to kill other women. You could even say it was whimsical, a twist of fate.

"You think you can beat me?" Rex sneers, stretching his neck out, and bobbing his head side to side while hopping around, shaking his hands. "I'm a professional fighter. You're nothing more than a measly biker."

"Measly biker." Aries chuckles. "This douche doesn't know what he's up against."

"Come on, big guy, you want to talk shit, go ahead and try me. Hell, if you beat me, maybe you'll live to see another day," I drawl, knowing good and well he won't be beating me.

Rex rushes me, and so it begins. With each punch he throws, I block, landing one of my own. I don't bother playing around. I'm not in the mood to joke around and spar. No, this fucker is going to die at my hands. Visions of the other night, seeing Rosemary the way I did, the dead look in her eyes, it's enough to cause me to go insane. Beating Rex bloody. His body crumples to the floor, and I straddle him, only to bash his face in until he's no longer recognizable.

Aries and Wolf pull me off of Rex's dead body, both men struggling as Viper gets into my space.

"Kevlar, you good? Calm back down, brother."

Nodding, I let out a heavy breath and shrug my brothers' grips away. I don't need them holding me back. I am able to control my blood lust, as Aries likes to call it. Flexing my fingers, I glance down to examine the bloody knuckles. Some of it is mine where the skin busted, the rest is all Rex's.

"Better hope his ass didn't have some disease," Aries drawls.

"I highly doubt that fucker had anything but a shriveled-up dick from all the steroids he probably took," Wolf mutters, shaking his head. "This shit's going to be a joy to clean up. Fucker bleeds like a stuck pig."

"Get the prospects to clean 'em up," Viper commands, sounding as pissed as I feel.

We didn't get much out of him, but I highly doubt he knows anything.

"The guys who brought him down, also brought his laptop and shit," Vulture announces. "I'll start diving into it sometime today or tomorrow."

“Do it tomorrow,” Cyprus remarks. “I’d say today, but we’ve got some other shit to handle first things with the businesses. If we don’t get that handled, then we’re up shits creek.”

I nod, agreeing with him. I’d prefer for Vulture to be looking into what Rex had on his laptop, but Cyprus is right, we got other shit to handle as well. We’re a new club and need to get money rolling in sooner rather than later.

“Yeah, we’ve got to go see to the progress and see how long it’s going to take so we can open,” Viper says, also agreeing. “Kevlar, you go see to your hands. Then check on Rosemary. Make sure she’s good. Her dad and brother, lucky enough, didn’t fight us on taking her away, but I know they wanted to. Cobra’s already texted me asking for updates.”

“I think if they didn’t have shit going on they had to get back and handle, they’d be here all up in our business,” Cyprus grumbles.

“Cobra gave me the fuckin’ heebie-jeebies.” Aries snorts. “That fucker’s eyes alone are enough to give a bastard nightmares.”

“Shut the fuck up.” I cast my brother a sideways glare. I don’t want to think of anything else but getting to Rosemary. That includes her damn brother. I know he’s talking about when it comes to Cobra’s eyes, but he isn’t here now. They left the situation to us, and I intend to see to it, and I will. I’ll handle this shit going on and what I’ve got to do for the club.

Viper, Cyprus, Wolf, and I are supposed to go meet with Matteo in a few days. He’s Noelle’s cousin, as ironic as that shit is. When we’d all found out, it was a mind fuck for sure. My VP’s ol’ lady didn’t even know her own history, not until recently. Even still, she lived in terror for years until Cyprus pulled his head out of his ass where she was concerned. They don’t talk about what all happened, but I was there to see it for myself. It’s their story to tell, not mine. I’m just glad they’re both in a better place. Even Bride, Cyprus’s little sister he has custody of. She’s been thriving the last couple months here in Mississippi.

When we moved here, we agreed to help Matteo with his business endeavors, but we weren’t getting our hands dirty with the hardcore drugs. Guns, we’ve got no problem with. Women, to a certain extent, we’re here for it. But what we won’t do is put up with drugs and sex slaves. When it comes to women, it has to be their choice, nothing more.

I give my brothers a two-finger salute and make my way out of there toward the clubhouse. My cock hardens at the thought of seeing Rosemary again.

I wonder what she'll think seeing the blood on my hands. She'll know what I've done. I won't hide it from her. It's not who I am. I don't have it in me to keep secrets like what I did just now. She's what's important.

If she can't handle it, then I'll do what I have to make sure she's never affected by the harsh truth that lies within me. I'm a killer through and through. I'm the person that she's not, and because of that, I'll fight to keep her from ever becoming like me.

CHAPTER 13

DOMINIC

“You should have gotten rid of him when I told you to,” Enyo snaps, pacing around the office. “Now they’ve taken him, and I’m sure he’ll have squealed like a pig.”

“We thought he wouldn’t be an issue,” I mutter, glaring in her direction.

“You thought wrong.” Enyo turns that evil glare of hers in my direction. Unlike the others, it doesn’t affect me in the slightest. I’m used to it. She’s given me the same look when I’ve displeased her over the years. My twin, on the other hand, couldn’t stand to upset her. It’s why he didn’t mind sacrificing himself the way he did.

We knew the moment they stepped into the fight club. Enyo always planned things out in advance, and I agreed to it. I loved my twin, but he wasn’t Rosemary. Nor was he strong enough to handle the day-to-day as I do.

“We need to get her back. There’s a fight coming in a month, and I want her in it.”

I know she wants Rosemary to fight. She loves watching the way Rosemary loses a part of herself. It’s definitely a sight to see her fight. Hell, I want to feel her trying to fight me. I’d love nothing more than to have had her in my bed all this time. I’d have restrained her and kept her in my bed, however, until the other night, the orders were to keep her secluded in that damn cage alone.

This doesn’t mean I didn’t watch her on the cameras. The woman is sexy as fuck, and I wanted her from the first time I saw her picture. She’s absolutely perfection in every way. But my loyalty will always be to Enyo, and because of this, I refuse to go against her for reasons we both know. If not for her, I’d have been dead a long time ago. She’s all but become my mother, and a son must listen to his mother. Protect her and help her in every way possible.

“We’ll get her back.” And we would, I was going to make sure of it. I always knew there was a possibility of her being found. It’s why I have several different plans I’ve come up with.

“How do you intend to do that?” Enyo demands, spinning to face me, eyes narrowing to tiny little slits. “Her father and that brother of hers won’t

leave this alone.”

“Neither will that club she’s associated with. Her best friend is with a member.” I looked into Rosemary. Did my homework to find out her weaknesses and her strengths. I know everything there is to know about the woman. Because of this, it’s why I know what I know, and I will use it to regain her. She won’t endanger those she cares for. “I will get her back. I can promise you that. I know your daughter and where to strike.”

“She is not my daughter,” Enyo snaps. “Do not call her that.” Her eyes grow tender as she moves toward me. “However, you’re my son, just as Cobra should have been. It’s why I love you so much.” I stand still as she tosses her hair over her shoulder, cups my cheek, and strokes her thumb over my bottom lip. “You always stick with me and give me everything I need.”

I don’t bother giving her an answer, I know what she wants. It’s what she always wants. To be worshipped. The center of attention. To have everyone give in to her demands and needs. For the longest time, my needs felt as if they were hers, but in the past months, they’ve shifted to someone else. Someone who Enyo despises for her own selfish reasons.

Taking her in my arms, I slam my mouth to hers and push all other thoughts for the time being away. For now, it’s time to please Enyo and give her what she needs. I scoop her in my arms, still kissing her, and carry her from the office to her room, where I lay her on the bed. A thought creeps in, and I change my plans. I will always keep my loyalty to Enyo, but it’s time for a change. Lifting, I distract her while reaching for a pillow. Fisting the fabric encasing the pillow, I bring it back while straddling Enyo’s small frame. I lower my head to her tits and listen to her moans right before I bring the pillow over her face, smothering her.

Enyo’s body struggles and her fingers claw at my wrists.

“I’m sorry, Enyo, but this is the way it must be. It’s time for a change in power,” I remark as she takes her last breath. Pulling the pillow away, I stare down into her sightless eyes as I reach with my free hand to close them. “I won’t let you down. I’ll see to your legacy. That it remains and grows. I will get her back, and together she and I will reign as king and queen. She’ll help me rule what you started.”

Hopping off the bed, I readjust my clothes and make my way to the doors, pulling out my cell. It’s time to put my plans into action. Enyo is right about there being a fight in a month’s time. One that Rosemary must fight in, and I will ensure that she’s there. That she wins the fight and gives herself to

me. I'll start by taking from her the one person she cherishes most.

CHAPTER 14

ROSEMARY

I'm waiting impatiently for Kevlar to get back from what he's doing to Rex. I don't have to be in there to know he's probably killing him. He had the same look in his eyes the last time I saw him. I wasn't going to stand in the way of whatever he was going to do. Rex deserves what he gets. If he lives, it'll only be because someone deemed he deserved it, but I highly doubt he'll be given the chance to breathe again once they finish.

In fact, I know he won't, and honestly, as bad as it sounds, as horrible as it makes me, I'm okay with that. Because of him, I was forced to kill innocent women. They were only doing what I was also doing in order to survive until the next day.

The sound of the door opening draws me from my thoughts, and I sit upright in the middle of the bed, wearing nothing more than one of Kevlar's shirts. I thought about being completely naked, but I felt uncomfortable just waiting around with nothing on.

It didn't feel right.

Putting one of Kevlar's shirts on, yeah, that made things better for me. I brushed out my hair and left it long. In the past months, it'd gotten even longer, and I don't know how to feel about the length. Usually, I've always kept it around my shoulder blades now it was about three inches farther down my back. I'm tempted to cut it, but I'm not sure. There's a small part of me that likes the way Kevlar's fingers tangled in the locks like he had when kissing me. Another part hates it because it feels weighted. Dominic had enjoyed touching it as well.

Kevlar steps into the room, eyes instantly coming to mine. He holds my gaze, not looking anywhere else, while closing and locking the door behind him.

"What are you doing, Tigress?" he finally asks, coming farther into the room, eyes dipping to take in my appearance.

"Waiting on you," I answer softly, licking my lips and scanning over him, making sure he's okay. The air grows tense, and I hope I'm not making the wrong choice right now in wanting him to have sex with me. "Are you okay?" My eyes drop to Kevlar's fists, seeing the blood coating them, and I

know without asking the answer to the unspoken question between us.

“I need a shower,” Kevlar grunts and makes his way to the ensuite bathroom, stripping out of his clothes as he goes. I follow him with my gaze but don’t move or speak. I simply watch him until he disappears into the shower before I hear him turn on the water.

A part of me wants to run and hide, but the other, the one that craves to be with Kevlar, it screams for me to join him. To soothe the demons in his eyes.

That’s the part of me that wins the turmoil battling inside me. Kevlar has been there for me in the days since they got me away from my hell. He killed someone for me, multiple someones, I’m sure of it, and now it’s my turn.

My turn to be there for him, to give him what he needs.

Scooting to the edge of the bed, I climb to my feet, suck in a breath, take the shirt off, and walk directly to the bathroom and through the open entranceway. I watch as Kevlar stands under the spray, head bent down, partially cocked slightly, eyes on me.

“You get in here with me, I’m fuckin’ you,” Kevlar warns.

“I know,” I whisper in answer, climbing in the shower and watching as he turns toward me.

“I won’t go easy on you, Rosemary,” he remarks, gripping my hips, his fingertips digging in. “I won’t be gentle with you as you deserve.”

“That’s okay, I don’t want gentle.” I reach up, sliding my hands across his chest, wrapping my arms around his neck, and press a kiss to first his neck, then his jaw, and finally brush them against his lips. “I want whatever you give me.”

“Fuck.”

Kevlar releases one hand from my waist, grips my hair, using his firm grip to hold me still, he slams his mouth over mine. Passion swirls around us. It’s heated. So hot, my body feels scorched by it, and if he doesn’t do something to put out the flames soon, I’ll burn alive from the inside out.

I find myself spun moments later and pressed against the cool tile wall. A shudder rushes through me. Kevlar rips his mouth from mine, breathing raggedly, and presses his face into my neck, kissing me there. His arms go around me as he lifts me.

“Wrap your legs around my waist,” he orders.

I do as he commands and hold tight. I feel how thick he is, his cock lining at my entrance. The head sliding through my juices right before he plunges once, then twice, slamming fully inside me. His cock filling me, and he

doesn't just stop to let me acclimate to his girth. No, he fucks me. Relentlessly. Just as he said he would do. It's the best feeling in the world, and I want him to keep going. His thrusts are powerful, overpowering, and they send chaotic shudders through me, leaving me screaming from the sheer pleasure of him hammering into me. Using my own body to ram down on his dick at the same time.

"Fuck, baby, you're so tight. So damn tight. I could come just from the way you grip me," he says and kisses me once again, fucking me with his tongue at the same time he takes my body.

The world around us doesn't exist in this moment. Only Kevlar and me.

When my release washes over me, I break my lips away and cry out as the pleasure overtakes me. I'm barely aware of my nails sinking into his shoulders. Kevlar keeps his momentum, reaches between us, and starts circling my clit, rubbing it.

"I want you to come again, Rosemary. Drench my cock with your juices and suck my cum deep in this tight pussy."

"Oh God," I pant and do just as he commands. His groans join my moans, and his cock twitches and spasms as he comes, spilling inside me.

Long moments pass before either of us speaks or moves.

When we do, it's Kevlar who breaks the silence. "Fuckin' missed being inside your pussy, Tigress," he grunts, drawing a moan from my lips as he pulls out. He draws back only enough to meet my gaze. "Never letting you go again, baby."

"It's a good thing I like where I'm at, huh?" I quip and sigh while releasing my hold on his waist and lowering my feet to the tile floor. "But don't think I'll put up with anything from you."

"Wouldn't have it any other way." Grinning, he dips his head down and kisses me.

Together, we finish in the shower. Kevlar turns the water off, grabs two towels, and dries first me, wrapping me up, then himself. Once we're both dry, Kevlar scoops me in his arms and carries me into the room, tosses me on the bed, and comes down over me, face directly in mine.

"Now, baby, I'm gonna take my time and enjoy you before fuckin' you all over again. We're nowhere near done today. I don't think either of us will be coming up for air anytime soon."

With that, he removes the towel and goes about doing just that. The pleasure completely overtakes all other thoughts. My only thought and focus

is on the man touching me with his hands and mouth, using his fingers and tongue to drive me insane. Even more, his cock that steers me over the edge.

CHAPTER 15

ROSEMARY

One Week Later . . .

Sitting on the sidelines, I feel uneasy watching as Kevlar spars with Viper. The two of them are both throwing jabs, not hitting each other, but getting close. Why did I let Kevlar talk me into coming and sitting in here? My stomach churns, twists, and tightens. The sight of them sparring leaves me aching yet sick all at the same time.

It's bad enough I'm dealing with nightmares. Those alone are enough. They're horrible, and if not for Kevlar holding me, easing the tremors from my body, I don't know what I'd do. He's there for me, keeping me from losing my mind. When the nightmares become too much, he distracts me. Sometimes talking to me about his childhood. Other times, it's with sex.

I love the times he talks to me about his past. Knowing he had two great parents who still love him makes me happy. I now knew Kevlar's favorite color, food, and drink. He informed me he played football and baseball in school, but he wasn't the typical jock, but rather the bad boy all the girls wanted. This would explain his cockiness when I first met him. He also told me about his brother, Zain, who still lives back in Virginia and is a cop. Kevlar explained to me that he still has a good relationship with his brother, though they don't always see eye to eye. He would ask me questions about my childhood and what it was like growing up with my dad and Cobra, and I'd answer him, telling him what he wanted to know. Eventually, I'd fall back to sleep in his arms. Sometimes, we'd end up staying awake, and he'd take me outside to watch the sunrise.

With each day and each sweet act he made toward me, it was like he was claiming a part of my heart. I knew I was in love with him, though I refuse to admit it to him, 'cause if I'm honest with myself, the very idea scares me to death. I've seen that love can get someone hurt, even killed. I don't want it to be that he loses someone the way my dad lost my mom. Not the bitch who birthed me, but the one who raised me.

This past week, Dad and I talked about it more. He's planning on coming back when the dust settles back home. He's helping Cobra and the club there

with some shit that, as he said it is damn close to blowing in their faces. One of the guys had been arrested. Another killed, and the club wants to seek acts of vengeance, though whatever they do, they'll have to play it smart.

I finally ended up asking him a question I wanted to ask but didn't know how. Why they didn't come for me before? I had a tracker they placed to keep track of me though I was gone. It was a way to keep me safe even when they knew I was angry with them and refusing to talk to either of them. My dad didn't know the answer, but it was while I was talking to them that I remembered when I first got to wherever it was Dominic held me, I'd had a bandage on the back of my neck and the bottom of my foot. I didn't put it together until then, but they must have removed the tracker. Both the real one and the decoy. Technically, they were both real, but one was only to come on if the other wasn't found. Someone had to have known I had both of them, but I don't know who. That's what my dad intended to find out. There's only a handful of people who would've known.

"Rosemary, you wanna give it a try?" Viper asks, and it's then I realize they'd stopped sparring and Kevlar was coming out of the ring.

"No, thanks." There's no way I was getting in a ring again. "Maybe another time," I lie with a fake smile, and Viper knows it.

"Right, maybe next time," he grunts and starts unwinding the tape around his hands. "I need to go see if Jade's back from her appointment anyway. She wants to go house hunting again."

I knew she wanted to go house hunting. She told me about it. She's used to being in Viper's place back in Virginia, which they kept. She said they'd keep it as a getaway considering when you were there, the scenery was to die for.

"I hope you guys find what you're looking for." This time, I give him a real smile. I mean it, though. I hoped they found it, considering I've seen the set of listings Jade wants to go see. They're all pretty awesome on paper. But I also know she's looking for their forever home. She's adamant they have one, and I get it. She's freaking out about being pregnant, and her hormones have been all over the place. She's crying one minute, laughing another, even raging, which is something I've never seen her do. She's the sweetest woman, yet she's going crazy with this pregnancy. Honestly, I think it's all the changes and stress she's been dealing with.

"Same, Rosie, fuckin' same. The woman is going to drive me insane." Viper grunts, tossing the balled-up tape to one of the prospects. "She didn't

want me going to her appointment with her.”

At this bit of news, he surprises me, and I cock a brow. “She didn’t want you to go to an appointment with her? Why?” That doesn’t sound like my best friend.

“Don’t know.” Viper shrugs, pulls his phone out, stares at the screen, and shakes his head. “Now she’s saying we’re not going to look at houses, and she wants me to meet her at some address.”

Something about it doesn’t make sense. It really didn’t make sense. Furrowing my brow, I pull my new phone out of the pocket of the hoodie I stole from Kevlar. “What’s the address?” Viper relays it to me, and I look it up on my phone, finding it’s nothing more than a parcel of land. “This isn’t any of the places she showed me you guys were looking at.” I glance up from my phone to look between Viper and Kevlar. “Please tell me she didn’t go alone.”

“No fuckin’ way she’s going anywhere without someone watching out for her,” Viper grinds out and does something on his phone before putting the damn thing to his ear.

Kevlar grabs my arms, hauls me up and into his side, and pulls his phone out.

“No answer,” Viper snarls.

“Vulture,” Kevlar growls. “Check the location of the prospect’s and Jade’s phones.” He pauses for a minute, tenses further, and fury radiates off him. “Right, get the others together and meet us at the front of the clubhouse.” Hanging up, he looks at Viper. “Vulture says the phones are in two different places.”

“Fuck.” Viper’s voice lowers threateningly, and he moves, heading for the exit of the gym they built at the back of the clubhouse. You have to go outside and walk toward the front to go back inside.

By the time we reach the front of it, a truck is squealing into the parking lot. It comes to a halt as I take in the people inside the cab. A small breath of relief whooshes past my lips. It’s Jade and Wrecker.

“Viper,” I utter and cling to Kevlar to keep myself upright. My legs feel weak and like I was going to fall if I didn’t hold on.

“Jade,” Viper roars and rushes the truck. Throwing the passenger door open, he yanks a crying Jade into his arms as he demands, “The fuck happened, prospect?”

“Jade was coming out of the doctor’s office when someone tried to nab

her. She fought 'em off long enough for me to get to her. Sorry, Prez, I was trying to stay back enough so she wouldn't know she had a tail. I fucked up."

At least he admitted to it.

"They took my purse." Jade's voice hitches, and she leans into Viper. "They took everything I had in it. My phone. Wallet. And my surprise I was going to give to you," she breathes, shaking her head.

"Surprise?" Viper quips, sounding disbelieving. "What are you talkin' about? You went for your appointment."

"I know I did." Jade rolls her eyes and looks totally upset. "It was an ultrasound appointment, and I wanted to do something special for it so I asked the doctor's office if I could order something and send it to them so I could surprise you later with it." She stomps her foot and looks upset. "I wanted to do something special, and now it's ruined. And on top of that, I was almost kidnapped."

The way she says this makes me want to laugh. That or stare at her like she's grown two heads.

"Darlin', I think you getting nearly kidnapped is more important than whatever surprise you were trying to do," Viper grumbles.

And in that moment, it might have been the wrong thing to say. I know this, considering the way Jade's face turned a beet red.

"So, you're saying me wanting to surprise you with the fact we're pregnant with not just one but two babies isn't important?" Jade snaps, shoves out of his arms, and stomps into the clubhouse. "Well, thanks a lot. See if I try to do anything else for you."

"Oh shit," I remark, staring wide-eyed at the doors. My best friend is pregnant with twins. No wonder she's been all crazy lately.

"The hell just happened?" Kevlar mutters.

Viper looks pale and ready to keel over at any moment. "Twins," he utters, totally in a daze.

"Viper, I suggest you snap out of it and go see to Jade," I speak up. The words are barely out of my mouth before he's doing just that.

"Come on, baby, let's get inside. I've got to still figure out what the fuck happened," Kevlar grunts, leading me in the same direction Jade and Viper went with Wrecker directly behind us.

CHAPTER 16

KEVLAR

Stepping into the clubhouse, I let out a heavy breath, shaking my head. Talk about wanting to do my head in. It's a good thing I'm not Viper right about now. He's got his plate full to the point it's nearly overflowing. Right now, his ass needs to deal with his woman and let us take care of the rest.

I keep Rosemary tucked against me while Viper grabs hold of Jade, pulls her into his arms, and whispers something none of us can hear. She nods and sinks into him. He turns and looks behind me. "Wrecker, tell us what happened," he commands.

"What's going on?" Cyprus demands, having just come into the room, Noelle right behind him.

"Jade was nearly kidnapped today leaving her doctor's appointment." Viper sneers.

Tension fills the room, and I've got a feeling I know why she'd been nearly taken, and it doesn't sit well with me. Over the past week, I'd spent enough time with Rosemary to know her and become able to read her a hell of a lot better. And if I'm right, she'll try to take the guilt for this.

Wrecker fills us all in on what happened, and my fury grows all the more. What if Rosemary had been with them? What if they'd actually succeeded in taking Jade?

"It was Dominic's men," Rosemary whispers. "I'm sure of it. They want me back."

"They're not gonna get you back, baby." I squeeze her to me and kiss the side of her head. "I won't let them."

"Why would they want Viper to come meet them? Why fake being Jade?" Rosemary asks, curling into me.

Her questions are definitely something I'd like the answers to myself. The only way to get them is to go to the address and find out. I'm willing to bet the bastard is still there waiting.

Letting her go, I meet her gaze. "You stay inside the clubhouse. Don't leave. I'll be back as soon as I can." I don't give her a chance to respond. I kiss her briefly and move toward the door. My brothers following. I don't need Viper's phone to look at the address. I swiped Rosemary's phone and

will use it to get the coordinates I need.

“What are you doing, brother?” Cyprus demands.

“Gonna check out the address they texted to Prez,” I answer, straddling my bike. I pull up what I’m looking for. “There’s going to be hell to pay for if I find them still there.”

“Right.” Cyprus grunts, nodding, moving to his bike. “Then let’s go.”

Grinning, I start my bike, revving the throttle and backing out, Aries following suit next to me along with Cyprus, and others.

My gut is churning on this one, and I don’t like it. Not in the least.

Pulling up to the property, I knew I was right. There’s an SUV sitting there, men standing on either side of one of the back passenger doors. It opens just as we park, and out steps the man, I can only assume to be Dominic. He looks similar to his twin brother, and I intend to make him pay for what he did to my woman. Rosemary told me about what he did and how he would flirt and watch her. She opened up to me about the time she spent under his thumb.

I take the guy’s stance in, the smug grin on his face and the way he doesn’t look at any of the other men but keeps his gaze on me.

“I see you got the message,” he says. His voice grates my nerves.

“You attempted to kidnap my ol’ lady,” Viper snarls, stepping forward, getting the guy’s attention. I don’t know when he joined us, but from the look on his face, he’s ready to rip this douche’s head off.

“Is that what I was doing?” He snickers and looks in Viper’s direction. “Let me officially introduce myself. I’m Dominic Rowe.”

“Figured that much out.” I narrow my gaze on the fucker. “Give me one good reason I shouldn’t put a bullet in you right now.”

“Because if you do, my men will give the signal to take out that little clubhouse of yours.” Dominic smirks. “I see with this news I have your attention.”

“What the fuck do you want?” Cyprus demands.

“Well, there’s plenty that I want, but we can start with the fact that I want Rosemary back.”

“That won’t happen.” Interrupting him, I step forward. “You won’t be getting Rosemary back.”

“I will be getting her back.” Dominic’s smirk switches to a malicious grin. “You see, she has several more fights before she can officially be set free. She’s won six so far, and that leaves her with fourteen more. Until those are completed, she’s still my property.”

“Bullshit,” Viper snarls.

“If you do not give her back, then what I do next will be on all of you, and I’m sure she will not appreciate it.”

“The hell does that mean?” I sneer, more than ready to put my fist through the fucker’s face. Better yet, a bullet between the eyes.

“If you don’t know,” Dominic snickers, that grin of his widening, “you might want to ask her. What will I take from her that she cares about most? Ask her and see if she tells you what it seems I know, but you don’t. I wonder if even Jade knows who my Rosemary cares about most.” He moves to get back in his vehicle. “Tell her she has three days. After that, I will come for her.”

The door closes behind him, and I stare after it, unable to think. To figure out what the hell is going on here.

“What the fuck just happened?” Viper demands, voice rumbling and sounding harsher than normal.

Slowly, I turn toward him and the others. “Fucker’s playing with us.”

“His attempt to get Jade was him playing with us. Getting our attention,” Wolf remarks.

“Yeah, and I don’t like the feeling I’m getting. What does he mean? What are we missing?” Aries asks.

“Let’s get back to the clubhouse. Kevlar, you talk to Rosie, get her to tell you. Don’t tell her that he’s giving her three days. Just find out what the hell he’s got, and we don’t,” Viper orders.

I nod, not speaking. I don’t think I could if I wanted to. My throat thickens as I think about the different possibilities. What could that bastard have on her? What hasn’t she told me yet? The bastard could have easily gotten Jade instead of just her purse. A thought pops into my head, and it makes me sick as I make my way to my bike. I don’t even want to voice the very idea. The guy took Jade’s purse. Kept her phone. Could Jade really know what my woman cares about most? Could there have been something in Jade’s purse? Something that would have told Dominic what we now need to know.

Swear to fuck, these women are going to do my head in. First, neither of

them told any of us that Rosemary's family was from another club. Then, when she went missing, instead of outright telling us, Jade kept it a secret until it was too late.

Now, there's something else. What the fuck it could be is the million-dollar question, and I intend to find out the moment I get back. I don't give a fuck who's around to listen.

I don't bother waiting on my brothers when we get back to the clubhouse. I don't have the patience to wait. My focus is on getting to Rosemary and finding out what the fuck I need to know.

Throwing open the doors, I find her sitting at a table with Jade. The two of them looked concerned. Rosemary's eyes come straight to me, and she seems to pale further than she already is. With her captivity she hadn't been out in the sun and had lost her sexy tan that she always seemed to have.

I stalk over to her table, brace my hands on the top, and lean toward her. "You want to tell me what the fuck Dominic has on you? What the fuck you're hiding?"

Rosemary stills and slowly starts shaking her head. "No," she whispers.

"Rosie, you need to tell him," Jade whispers just as softly.

"I can't." Tears swell in Rosemary's eyes and spill over her cheeks. "I just can't."

"If you don't. I will," Jade declares, her voice not changing from the softness, but there's a firmness to it now. "They need to know. I can't keep keeping secrets."

"Someone better start talking," Viper commands.

"Start talking. What are you two hiding?" I demand.

Rosemary closes her eyes, her breath hitches, and she lowers her head. "He's threatened to kill my son."

With those few words, it's like my world is kicked out from under me and I'm left trying to find a hold on something. Anything.

"Your son?" Viper speaks, sounding just as shocked.

"When we both moved, Rosie found out she was pregnant," Jade whispers and sucks in a breath. "What no one, not even her dad or brother, knows is she was raped the same night her mom was killed. No one knew

who the guy was—”

“I do know who he was,” Rosemary interrupts, breathing heavily, shaking her head. “He’ll take Joshua and kill his parents. That’s what he told me. He told me about knowing of the rape.” Rosemary lifts her head to look only at Jade. “Only you and I knew about that night. He knew about it. It was him who did it. He found out about Joshua, and that’s what he’s holding over my head.” Shaking her head, tears streaming freely down her cheeks. “Now he wants me back. He wants me to fight. I have no choice but to go back. I have to keep fighting. I have to protect Joshua.”

“You’re not fuckin’ going back to that bastard,” I snarl, the words ripping themselves from my chest. This shit is too fucking much, but still, I won’t let my woman think she’s doing this alone. Stepping away from the table, I turn from it and start walking away, only to call out over my shoulder. “Don’t let her out of your sight.”

With that said, I leave. I need time to clear my head. To figure shit out and what I’m going to do next.

CHAPTER 17

ROSEMARY

“I’m such an idiot.” Swiping at the tears streaming down my face, I stare after Kevlar, wishing for him to come back through the door.

“You’re not an idiot,” Jade utters. “This isn’t your fault.”

“Rosie, I get you not wanting to tell anyone this shit,” Viper remarks, losing the pissed-off tone and squats next to me. “But you could’ve come to me and told me.”

“There’s nothing you can do.” Shaking my head, I shift my gaze to the man who has been there for my best friend . . . who’s become a friend to me, more like family, a brother. “He was supposed to be safe. That’s why I gave him away.”

“What are the names of his parents? Where is he? Maybe we can speak with them, set up protection for him,” Cyprus suggests.

“No. I can’t.” I shake my head, knowing this is going to be the hardest part of all. “When I signed the papers, it was a closed adoption. I’ve met the man and woman who took him in, they offered to keep in contact with me, but I didn’t want it. I didn’t explain to them, but I knew they knew, it was in their eyes. I picked them because I knew they could protect him. Keep him safe and love him.”

“Babe, you don’t give us names, I’ll search for them and find them myself,” Vulture remarks sternly. “We won’t let them or that boy get hurt.”

I suck in a harsh breath and get to my feet. “He doesn’t know about me,” I whisper. “I need to get out of here. I can’t let any of them be hurt. He could end up hurting you all too. I’m a danger to be around. He’s not going to leave me alone.”

“So, he said,” Viper growls, getting to his feet. “You’re not going anywhere, Rosie. We’re not losing you again. Fuck. That fucker already took a part of you, he won’t get the chance to take the rest. Now we’ve got three days to come up with a plan. You’re gonna give us that, and you’re gonna tell us the names of Joshua’s parents. And you’re gonna do that right fuckin’ now. You and Jade are done keeping secrets from me.”

“Jason,” Jade utters.

“Don’t fuckin’ Jason me, darlin’, your ass is in trouble too. I get you

wanting to surprise me and shit, but you know the bullshit going on right now. I should have been with you. Otherwise, this shit wouldn't have happened to you. You two and your secrets, that shit ends now. Got me?"

I stare at Viper and don't see the man I've always seen him as but rather the man who became the President of a club. I see why he was picked to do the job.

"No more secrets," I murmur, nodding. "No more. That's everything. I swear."

"I don't believe that shit, but I'll let your ol' man deal with you," Viper grumbles and looks from me to Jade. "You get me, darlin'?"

"Jason," she snaps huffingly, "You know I don't hold secrets unless it's someone else's."

"I don't give a fuck it belongs to the damn Queen of England. Someone tells you something, and it's something I need to know to keep your ass safe, you damn well tell me."

"Fine," Jade clips, turns, and stalks away.

Viper lets out a heavy breath and looks at me. He opens his mouth to say something, but I get there first.

"You need to go talk to her," I advise. "You know what she's like, and considering she's pregnant with twins, she's all over the place. If you don't talk to her, she'll end up calling Jensen or Jonah, and you know those two will end up coming down here."

"Don't I fuckin' know it." Viper levels a glare on me. "She's gonna be the death of me."

"No, she won't." I knew he was letting out frustration, but I also knew he loved Jade. She was his world, and he'd walk through fire for her. "I'm going to my room. I promise I won't do anything stupid and leave. I heard what Kevlar said. I won't leave." But that doesn't mean I'm going to go to his room to wait for him.

The way he left . . . the look in his eyes . . . I know he's done with me. I refuse to wait for him to tell me.

"I'll walk you there," Aries announces, stepping forward.

"I know where it is." I don't need a babysitter and refuse to let him treat me as if I do.

Turning away, I swipe away the tears still streaming down my cheeks and walk away, leaving them all watching me head for the hall and my room. Thankfully, the club didn't have any clubwhores hanging around yet, so it

was only the members who I embarrassed myself in front of by letting the tears fall.

It took a lot for me to decide to open the boxes Jade had stacked in here. Most of them were my clothes, a few of them held my mementos and whatnot. Sitting on the bed, I flip through one of the many albums, remembering all of the things they stand for. A lot of them are of me in the ring, my hand held high. Others are with me teaching kids to box and kick.

So many of my memories are surrounded by being in the ring. It's bittersweet. I miss the days when it was just me having fun. Now, it's marred by all the blood on my hands.

Closing the album, I shove it aside, lay on the bed, and curl into myself. A shuddered breath leaves my lips as thoughts of fighting fill my head. The images of the women I had to fight. Dominic's threats to take the ones I care for most haunts me the most. I didn't fulfill what he would call a contract, and it scares me because now I'm putting others on the line.

Viper mentioned three days. Three days for what? For them to figure out that there's nothing they can do? Three days to hand me over? For them to get killed because of me? I should just slip out, find a place to wait, and let Dominic come for me. I'm sure since he knows where I am, he has men watching for me.

If I just leave, then none of them would get in trouble or killed.

The door slamming open causes me to jerk upright and stare as Kevlar stalks in the room, the vibes radiating off him, sending shivers down my spine. The look on his face scares me even more.

"The hell are you doing in here?" he demands, coming toward me. "Don't answer that," he snarls, comes closer, bends, grabs me up, and throws me over his shoulder.

A gasp leaves my lips as the shock of his entrance wears off, and I regain myself. "What are you doing? Put me down, Kevlar." I kick and shove at his back, but he doesn't do as I demand. Instead, he carries me out of the room, down to his door, and into his room. Only when the door closes, sealing us in, does he let me go. Even then, it's to send me flying backward and landing on his bed. "Seriously, Kevlar, this is uncalled for."

“Uncalled for?” he growls, coming over me, straddling my body. “You say this is uncalled for? Me going to that room and carting you back into the room you belong in. You think that’s uncalled for?”

“Yes, because you made it obvious it’s not where I belong.” I don’t want to be having this conversation.

“How do you figure that?” he demands, getting right in my face.

“If you don’t know, then I’m not going to tell you,” I snap, losing my patience. “You can figure it out yourself. Now get off me.”

“Not going to happen. Now, tell me what the fuck you’re talking about, Rosemary, or I swear to fuckin’ God I’m going to give you the spanking of a lifetime.”

My breath catches in my throat, and my body starts to hum. The idea of Kevlar’s hands on me in any way sends sparks flying, and moisture gathers between my thighs. The very idea has me wanting him to spank me. To drive me wild the way only he does.

“You like that idea, don’t you, Tigress?” His voice takes a different tone, one that I haven’t heard since that first night we slept together. “You want me to spank that fine ass of yours. You want my hands turning those pretty cheeks a bright red. Hell, the thought of it has me hard. I want that, and I want to give you more.”

“Get off me,” I snap, but it sounds more like a whimper. He’s getting to me, and he knows it.

“You wanna know what I want to give you?” he asks, leaning down, bracing himself over me, getting directly in my face. Close enough our lips brush. “I’ll tell you that I want in that ass. I want to feel you gripping me with those muscles while I fuck you. Fuck your ass while fingering your pussy. Or better yet, with that toy of yours.”

Breathing in, I try not to let those words affect me. Never before has anyone fucked my ass nor played with me there. Only Kevlar has, and that was only to massage and sink a finger in me while sliding inside my pussy.

“First though, you’re gonna strip for me. Second, I want your mouth around my cock while I fuck you that way. I remember you taking me to the back of your throat. I want to feel you do that again. Next, I’ll fuck your pussy, feel you come around me, and before I wear you out completely, I’ll have your ass. I want to make you nice and wet for me first. Get you all relaxed and all but begging for me to take you there.”

“Oh my.” I breathe.

“Yeah,” he murmurs against my lips and kisses me deeply.

My mind loses all train of thought after that. His touch, his lips, the smell of his cologne, it consumes my entire body. My soul. My anger evaporates, leaving me in a swirl of flames only he can put out.

Kevlar rolls us until I’m straddling him, breaks his lips from mine, and pushes me upward. “Strip, baby, take that shirt and bra off for me. I wanna taste your nipples.”

Biting my bottom lip, I roll my hips over his denim-covered cock and lift the hem of my shirt. I slowly draw it up and over my breasts, taking it farther up and over my head, tossing it to the side.

“Fuckin’ best sight in the world.” He groans as I unhook the front clasp and pull my bra off.

Kevlar knifes upward, one hand palming a breast, his lips covering the other nipple.

“Oh God, Calvin,” I moan, throwing my head back and cupping the back of his head. “That feels so good.”

Kevlar pinches my nipple and rolls it between two fingers. It feels amazing, the sharp sting mixing with the pleasure of his mouth suckling its twin. Long moments later, Kevlar moves us off the bed. He stands me up and releases my nipple from his mouth.

“Take your pants off, baby,” he commands.

With trembling fingers, I do as he says, unbutton my jeans, shimmy them and my panties down together before stepping out of them completely.

“Good girl, now get on your knees.”

Getting to his feet, Kevlar unbuckles his belt, unbuttons, and draws down the zipper, letting them fall down his hips to his thighs. His cock springing free, considering he’d gone commando. I don’t think he ever wears boxers of any kind, and there’s nothing wrong with this. I actually find it sexy.

I drop to my knees, my mouth watering for a taste of him. I’m more than ready to have him in my mouth. Gripping the base of his shaft, I lean in, swirl my tongue around the tip, earning a groan of approval.

“Fuck yeah, baby, that feels good, suck my cock, Rosie,” he says, voice gruff and sending a tendril of excitement down my spine.

I do as he wants, taking him to the back of my throat repeatedly. Kevlar wraps his fingers in my hair and fucks my mouth with short thrusts. His cock fucking my mouth, his groans spurring me on, turning me on at the same time.

“Love this mouth of yours, Tigress.” Kevlar pulls me away and a whimper leaves my lips in protest. I wasn’t ready for his cock to be taken from my mouth. I wanted to be able to taste his cum. “Get you like sucking my cock, baby, but I’m ready to taste that sweet pussy of yours.” Falling back on the bed, he brings me up, and spins me around. “How about I eat this sweet pussy while you go back to sucking me off?”

“Sounds good to me,” I moan, leaning down and taking him back in my mouth.

Everything from there goes wild. Kevlar drives me insane with his touch, his mouth spurring me on. It’s hard to focus, but I don’t give up. I keep sucking, teasing the tip, and doing what I hope drives him just as mad as he’s making me.

The pleasure is nearly burning me alive, and I feel myself growing closer to release. I want to think it’s going to overcome me, but Kevlar stops what he’s doing.

“Calvin,” I gasp when he jerks me up, rolls me to my stomach, and lifts me so my ass is in the air.

“You’re not about to come without me, baby,” he growls, slamming inside. He doesn’t stop just there. Instead, he fucks me until I’m crying out his name. Still, he doesn’t let me come. It’s frustrating, and the harder he takes me, the more I feel. When he adds his fingers, it’s even more intense. Kevlar draws juices soaking back to my rear entrance, using it as lube. Slipping first one finger, stretching me, the digit passes the ring of muscles, and I’m left going insane. Another finger joins the first, and he keeps thrusting, both his fingers and cock, taking me, “Come now for me, baby,” he commands, adding a third finger.

Screaming his name, I’m barely aware of him snarling mine as he comes, his cum jetting inside me, coating my inner walls.

“We’re nowhere near done, Rosemary,” he says, leaning in and pressing a kiss to my shoulder blade. Pulling his fingers out of my ass, he reaches over to the side table, opens the drawer, and pulls out a thing of lube.

I know what to expect, and a shiver rushes along my spine in anticipation.

Moments later, Kevlar presses the tip against the back entrance, and I hold my breath waiting.

“Relax for me, baby, and push back. Push back while I slide inside you,” he commands.

I do and gasp. “Calvin. Oh God, Calvin.”

“That’s it, Tigress, take me in you, let me fuck this sweet, tight, hot ass of yours.”

“Yes, fuck me, Calvin, fuck me.”

It’s all I can do to keep from screaming. The mixture of pain and pleasure become one, and I can’t stand it. It’s too much. Kevlar takes me slowly at first, letting me get used to him before picking up speed, taking me faster. His cock plowing inside me, my ass gripping him all at the same time.

Reaching around, he sinks two fingers in my pussy and sends me careening over into the deep end. Stars swirl, and when I come, there’s no breath left for me to scream. I fall forward and take everything Kevlar gives me, loving every moment.

When he comes again, he groans, slows his thrusts, and leans over me, peppering kisses against my shoulder. “Fuck baby, I don’t know what I’d do if you weren’t with me.”

“You don’t mean that,” I barely manage to croak out.

“The hell I do, baby, I more than mean it. You’re mine, and I ain’t letting you go. You hear me,” he growls just before darkness overtakes me, and I welcome it with open arms. Knowing he said that the way he did, I know he means it.

CHAPTER 18

KEVLAR

Pulling away from Rosemary's body, I grimace at the loss of her. Fucking her is the best damn thing ever. Nobody has ever felt as good as she does. Going into the bathroom, I grab a washcloth, wet it, and take it back to where she passed out. Cleaning her of sweat and between her legs, I take my time, making sure to get her all clean. I don't want her to feel any discomfort while she sleeps. Tossing the cloth to the side, I pull the covers up and over us, making sure she's securely in my arms, her head moving to rest on my chest.

My chest tightens at the little sigh she lets out.

Fuck me.

Rosemary's the most important thing to me, and I know leaving her the way I did earlier hurt her. But I couldn't let her see me pissed that way. I didn't want her to think I didn't want her because I fucking well do. I just needed to calm down. With facing off with Dominic, then finding out what the bastard has on her, I read between the lines. I know what she wasn't saying yet didn't need to in order for me to understand.

She'd been raped, and no one knew about it other than Jade. The fact Dominic knew about that could only mean one thing. He was her rapist. I don't need her to confirm it for me. I know it in my gut that he's who did it. And now he's threatening the child she gave up because of him.

The whole thing is fucked up. She and I are going to have to talk. She's going to have to tell me who the parents to Joshua are. Rosemary is going to have to trust me with this. There's no way around it. To protect the kid, she's going to have to give me something.

I close my eyes, not sleeping, but I hold her. My mind going over everything that I know about Rosemary. All that I've learned. The life she lived. The pain she endured. It's more than she should have ever had to deal with.

In my life, I've never dealt with something as horrendous as she has, but that doesn't mean I haven't had my dark moments. There's a reason my dad moved off grid with my mom. The same as my brother decided to become a cop while I went in another direction. We've all had our moments, but when shit goes down and bad shit happens, there's a difference.

Years ago, it wasn't just my parents, brother, and me. No, we had another sibling. A big brother. He was killed while deployed, and that shit affected my family. It broke my parents' hearts. They don't talk about it. None of us do. He'd been on a mission, from what I remember, and that mission got him dead. After my dad got the news about his death and the fact there wasn't even a body left to bury, he moved my mom off-grid. The two of them wanting to escape it all. That didn't mean they stopped loving us. They're still awesome parents. Always there for us when we need them. I wonder what they'll think when I tell them about Rosemary.

Hell, I'm sure Mom will have Dad's ass in the truck and on the way here the moment she finds out.

I shake the thought away and check the time on the nightstand. I need to get some rest, but that won't be happening. Not until I know how I'm going to keep her safe. The shit that's happened before with the other clubs, I'm not about to let happen with my woman. Fuck that. I get those women, and even mine are strong-willed. They take charge and handle shit themselves, that isn't about to happen. Rosemary isn't about to go off and face hell. I'll stand in front of her before I let her get burned further.

My phone rings, getting my attention, and I slowly peel myself away from Rosemary in order to get it from the pocket of my jeans I'd shed hours ago. Looking at the screen, I'm surprised to find Zain calling.

"What's going on?" I demand, answering the phone.

"Hello to you too, Kev," Zain grunts.

"It's late, and you never call unless it's when Mom wants to talk to both of us at the same time." It's all but true. Granted, we talk, but it's normally through text. Mom's the only one who can get us both on the phone, and that's when she says it's family time and she wants to catch up with both of us and not separately. The woman might be off-grid, but that doesn't mean she's not social or keeps in contact. At least once every other week, she does this. Sometimes it's every week.

"Heard some news through some of my contacts and thought you might be interested in hearing." Zain being a cop, he's damn good at it and takes pride in what he does. He's not dirty in any way and never goes against his badge, not for anyone. That doesn't mean when he hears something, he won't let me know if it's relevant to me.

"And what's that?" I ask.

For a moment, there's silence, and I almost think I'd lost the call if not for

the sounds in the background. Finally, when he does, his voice sounds off. “I know you were looking for Viper’s woman’s friend, Rosemary—”

“Found her, and she’s not just Jade’s friend, Zain, she’s my woman,” I mutter, interrupting him.

“Yeah, I put that piece to the puzzle together already, Kev,” he grumbles, “What I’m getting at is a friend of mine who knows Rosemary and is invested in what’s going on with her, has a message he wants to get to her and says she’ll know what he’s talking about. Says he’s got a package that came from somewhere else he’s intending to keep safe.”

Fuck me, he’s talking in code now.

“That package for a boy?”

“You could say that. Kids gonna love it. Looks just like the replica of what I’ve seen in the photos. Just more masculine in features.”

“How does your friend know you’d get the message to me and that I was who it was to go to?”

“Friends are friends for a reason, brother, you know that. I have mine. You have yours. All in the right places. The package is his and his wife’s. They don’t play well with others. They have a mutual one they share with you all and want her to know that the package will be kept that way. As he said, they’re going on a vacation.”

“Well, fuckin’ hell,” I grumble, glancing down at the woman sleeping peacefully in my bed. “You trust this friend, Zain?” I need to know the truth. If my brother can trust this person, I can at least breathe a little easier. It still won’t stop me from having my conversation with my woman and finding out who has Joshua.

“Considering what I know about my friend, yeah, I trust him with my life,” Zain remarks, and I can all but see him through the phone smirking. “Now, you want to tell me what the fuck is going on and why my friend would come to me with vague messages?”

“Can’t really talk about it over the phone,” I caution. He knows me and knows I won’t tell him shit unless he’s in front of me.

“Right, you realize I’m a cop, Kevlar, I’m not an idiot. I can put the pieces together, and I figure shit out on my own. You might be states away now, but you’re still my brother and I’ll do what I have to do protect you. And the woman you claim as yours. With her being yours means she’s my family, and I protect family.”

Fucking hell. He’s right.

Letting out a heavy breath, I close my eyes while reaching up to pinch the bridge of my nose and finally speak again. “You able to take vacation?”

“Well, considering when you decided to move, I put in a request to be moved as well. I’m heading your way. Start at the new department in two weeks,” he states, shocking the hell out of me.

“You’re moving?” I didn’t see that happening.

“You know Mom and Dad would kick our asses if we weren’t close enough to back each other.”

“Ain’t that the fuckin’ truth.” We were raised always to have each other’s backs no matter what. “What’s your ETA?”

“Sometime in the evening, considering I’m getting on the road now, and it’s two in the morning,” he answers.

“Then I’ll see you when you get here.”

I don’t wait for him to speak further. I disconnect, toss the phone to the table next to my bed, and climb back in next to my woman. Needing to feel her close, I pull her back in my arms and hold her tight. Everything feels like it is building, and I don’t know what to do with it. I need to talk to my brothers and tell them Zain’s coming. I also need to know what else Rosemary is keeping to herself.

I should have already talked to her about it. Instead, when I got back and found out she’d gone to the room where all her shit was instead of mine, I’d lost it. I needed to get it through to her that she’s mine. Hell, I still need to make sure she gets it. But being inside her the way I was, fucking her the way I did, it was all-consuming. We both got swept up in the storm, and it felt good. Damn good, and I can’t wait to feel the flames burning us alive again.

CHAPTER 19

ROSEMARY

“Where are you going?” The question leaves my lips sleepily as I snuggle closer to Kevlar’s chest.

“Nowhere, baby,” he remarks, chuckling, pulling me tighter to him once more.

“You were moving like you were getting up,” I grumble, definitely not ready to move, let alone get up.

“Not anymore.” Kevlar presses a kiss to the top of my head and squeezes. “We can stay like this for a bit longer.”

“Good.” Settling in, I start to dose off, feeling warm and content. Safe even. When it comes to being with Kevlar, I always feel that way. I never understood why. I still don’t, but right now, I don’t care. I’m going to live in the moment.

“Rosemary, baby, we’re still gonna have to talk.”

I squeeze my eyes shut and nod. He’s right. I know this, but it’s not going to be easy. I mean, how does someone talk about something so intense . . . so painful? God, I don’t want to think about it. Not in the least.

“What do you want to know?” I finally ask.

“First things first.” Kevlar rolls me to my back and leans up on his side. “Eyes on me,” he commands. I give him my eyes and stare into the dark depths of his. “I want you to know when it comes to you and me, nothing’s changed. I meant what I told you last night. You’re mine. I’m not letting you go. That being said, I won’t let you do anything stupid either. I need to know what happened to you. Who you gave Joshua to.”

I suck in a breath, my throat feels like it was closing in on itself, but I push through it. “Joshua’s parents are Alec and Lizeth Mahoney.”

Kevlar’s eyes flash in recognition of the couple’s names. The Mahoneys, more or less, Alec Mahoney isn’t a man you mess with. He’s a highly intelligent man who runs a highly successful security company. When I’d put Joshua up for adoption, I’d still been pregnant with him. I wanted someone I knew could always keep him safe. Would be there for him, and the moment I met Alec and Lizeth, I knew they would do just that.

“Did they know the reason behind his conception?” he asks, his jaw

ticking.

“I never told them. I just told them I was too young to be a mother. I wasn’t ready.”

It was mostly true. I was old enough. I could have done it. I could have been a mother at the time, but I think it comes down to the fact of how Joshua had been conceived. I didn’t want him to think he was nothing more than a reminder.

“I can get that, baby,” Kevlar whispers and strokes a thumb over my cheek. “How did Dominic know to come after you? Did he tell you anything we need to know?”

Panic starts to seep into my veins, but I know when it comes to this man, I can trust him. I can tell him what he needs to know.

So, I do. I tell him everything. All of it. The day my mom died. How Dominic had raped me. I didn’t know it was him back then. He didn’t say anything. But I remember those eyes. They’d haunted me. I told him about finding out I was pregnant, not telling anyone about it, not my dad or brother. The only one to know about it was Jade, and she was sworn to secrecy.

Finding Alec and Lizeth were looking to adopt was a godsend. Lizeth had explained to me about her being unable to have children and loved Joshua. I’d seen it in her face the day he was born, and the little bundle was placed in her arms. They wanted me to be a part of his life, but I’d told them I couldn’t. Once a year, Alec sent an email regarding Joshua, letting me know about him and how he’s doing. At first, I didn’t read them. I couldn’t, but I’d finally gotten to a point in life I could. I still didn’t contact them. I don’t think I could even if I wanted to.

Especially after these past months and being held captive by the very man who had hurt me in the first place. He might not have touched me again, but I saw it in his eyes. The look of pure, unadulterated lust filled his malicious eyes and the way he would suggest I join him in his bed.

By the time I finished, I’ve told Kevlar everything, not leaving a single piece of detail out. Kevlar stays quiet through it all and doesn’t speak up or interrupt me once. He just stares at me, and his thumb continues to stroke my cheek as he listens.

Baring everything to him, it’s like a part of me is coming clean for the first time in my entire life, and it feels good to tell Kevlar. The way he looks at me, I see no judgment in his eyes, which I’m thankful for.

Silence fills the room, and for a moment, I don’t think Kevlar will speak,

but when he does, he surprises me.

“The bullshit you’ve dealt with, it’s done. No more.” He growls, leaning in, his nose pressing against mine. “I’m not about to let more shit happen to you.”

“What are you going to do?” I blurt out, not really thinking.

“Don’t know yet, I’ve got to talk to my brothers. See what Vulture’s found. Dominic gave us three days to give you back, and I don’t intend for him to get his hands on you again,” he states, his voice harsh and gruff.

“Three days? Viper mentioned that.” I didn’t know what it meant then, but I’m getting it now.

“Yeah, fucker wants you back desperately enough, he’s threatening the whole clubhouse. We’re not about to let him scare us.”

Panic seeps in, and my breathing becomes nearly overwhelming. I need to get out of here. Get away from the club before something happens to them.

“Rosemary,” Kevlar growls, gripping my chin, forcing me to look him in the eye. “You can get that look of fear out of your eyes. I already told you I ain’t letting you go. Not in this fuckin’ lifetime or the next. The club and I, we’re gonna handle this motherfucker, and we’re gonna take this bastard down and shut this shit down. While we’re doing that, we take out the bitch running the show.”

I blink at him, not liking the answer, but I can see the determination in his gaze. He’s not about to let this go.

CHAPTER 20

KEVLAR

Leaving Rosemary to her own devices is the last thing I want to do, but in order to fix this shit, I have no other choice at the moment. I've got to find out what Vulture's found and let them in on what I found out from my brother, as well as my woman.

By the time she finished telling me all she did this morning, I knew she wasn't hiding anything else. She came clean with me, and I'm glad for that, even if it pisses me off to know all the shit she's been through. To make matters worse, she kept it from those who would have been there for her when she needed them most.

My phone rings as I step into church. Normally, I wouldn't answer it, but I pull my phone out in order to see who it is. With Zain on the way, I want to make sure he's good. Seeing that it's Cobra, I grit my teeth and answer, "Yeah."

"Got an anonymous call two hours ago about finding something interesting at the base of the mountain not far from where our clubhouse is."

"And why are you calling me about this?" I demand, my gut tightening. Whatever it is, I'm not going to like it.

"Because that something interesting is none other than the bitch who spawned my sister and me," Cobra announces, the tone of his voice venomous. "She's dead, and there was a message carved into her forehead."

Oh fuck.

"What was the message?" I swing my gaze toward Viper and Cyprus to find them both staring at me with looks of demand. They want to know what's happening.

"Message was simple enough. I've taken a picture of it and sent it to your phone."

I yank the phone from my ear, put it on speaker, and pull up Cobra's message. The sight of a woman who looks so much Rosemary is propped up against the trunk of a tree. Carved into her forehead, is none other than the name Rosie. The fucker dared to call my woman by a name only we use.

"Fuckin' hell," I growl and turn the phone to show the others. "Anything else left with it?"

“No, but the message is clear enough.” Cobra growls.

“That’s for damn sure.” Viper sneers.

“The bastard’s done being second in command and taking over,” I grit out. “Meaning we need to step up our game.” I shake my head and turn my phone back to me. “Thanks for the call, Cobra.” I don’t bother waiting for him to say anything further. I hang up and shove the damn phone back in my pocket and throw myself in my chair across from Cyprus and next to Wolf.

Silence descends, and I take the moment to think about everything I’ve learned and the fact Enyo is now dead. Dominic raped my woman years ago. It had to be at his hands Enyo died. He took Rosemary and held her captive. Forced her to fight. Threatened her. He’s had to keep track of her all these years. But how? How was he able to keep her in his sights? He knew about the trackers that were now missing.

Fuck.

This shit just keeps getting better and better. That’s for damn sure. To ensure my woman’s safe, it looks like we’re going to have to find a way to take these motherfuckers out once and for all.

“You sure about this, Kevlar?” Aries asks two hours later.

During church earlier, I’d told them what my brother said and how he’s moving to the area. I also informed them of who adopted Joshua, and that in itself was like a bomb dropped.

Alec Mahoney might be known for his security company, but he was also a force to be reckoned with. No one messed with Mahoney Security or those under his protection. He has no problem getting involved if he has to, but from what my brother said, he’s leaving this to us and taking his wife and kid on vacation. This part is good. We don’t have to worry about him stepping into the fray.

“I’m sure,” I grumble, nodding as I climb off the back of my bike outside the building we’d gone to the night Rosemary fought. I decided to devise a plan while we were in church, and I’m here to see it through. I hadn’t told Rosemary where I was heading out to. No way in hell she’d agree to it. But I meant what I said when I told her she was mine. I’ll do whatever it takes to make sure she stays safe. That includes what I’m about to do.

For the most part, my brothers stayed behind. Viper didn't like it, and neither did Cyprus, but this is my fight, and I'm going to face off with Dominic myself. Still, Viper ordered Aries, Wolf, Falcon, and Dutch to come with me. The three of them know this is my fight, even if they don't like it.

"I think we should just go in and kill the fucker and the rest of them, now," Dutch remarks, his lip curling in disgust.

"We do that, then we won't be able to find out what else we need to know in order to shut this bitch down," Wolf reminds Dutch.

"I know, but damnit, the fucker deserves to die, and so does every last one who thinks this shit is okay. It fuckin' ain't."

I focus a look on Dutch, seeing more than he probably wants to let anyone see. Something's up with him, I just don't know what it is. I'll have to remember to ask him and find out what's going on with him. For now, though, my focus needs to be on the plan we've got.

Swinging a leg over, I straighten from my bike. "Let's just get this done with. I want to get back to Rosemary before she starts to suspect what I'm doing and starts asking questions."

"Just saying this isn't a good idea," Aries grumbles, coming up to stand beside me.

"Brother, you know he ain't gonna back down from this. Not after all that we've found out during church." Wolf snorts, coming to stand on my other side. "How about we just get in there and see what happens?"

"If guns are pulled, I'm going to shoot back," Falcon remarks, a sly grin pulling at his lips. The bastard is always a little too trigger-happy. Hell, his name should've been Trigger rather than Falcon, considering he's one hell of a shot. But they called him Falcon for his sharp instinct and eyes. It's like he sees shit we don't see right away.

"That happens, feel free to shoot to kill." I shrug and start for the doors, eyes on the men standing in front of them.

"We're closed," the beefier one declares when we're in hearing distance.

"I want to meet with Dominic. Let 'em know Kevlar's here to see him," I command. I'm not about to let this bastard think I'll simply walk away. Not until he and I speak.

The smaller dickhead pulls a phone out and makes the call, both still glaring at the lot of us, trying to look intimating which they're nothing more than some steroid junkies who need to lay off stimulants. Getting off the phone, he nods while putting the cell back in his pocket. "He says to send you

in.”

“Smart move,” Dutch mutters, right behind me.

I make a grunting noise in the back of my throat and make my way past the two men and into the building. There are a few other men just inside, waiting for the five of us. Without a word, they show us toward Dominic’s office.

My eyes lock with the other man’s the instant I pass the threshold.

“Where’s my property?” Dominic demands, eyes watching me assessingly.

“Safe away from you.” I shrug, not giving in to this bastard.

“Then what may I ask you is your reasoning for being here?” Dominic cocks a brow and crosses his arms.

“Got a deal for you.” I step closer, my brothers all coming in behind me.

“And what would that deal be?”

“You want Rosemary to finish the fights to earn her freedom. You know I’m not about to let you have my woman. Rosemary is mine, and I’ll be damned if she’ll do something that’s going to hurt her again.”

“Then I’ll simply have to kill you all and take her,” he states, waving a hand nonchalantly.

“You didn’t let me finish,” I grunt, sliding my hands in the pockets of my cut giving the appearance that his threat doesn’t bother me.

“Well then, by all means, finish.”

Someone needs to gut this smug bastard.

“Rosemary fought six fights and won so far. She’s got fourteen more to go before you allow her freedom. What we’re offering you is fourteen fights. One night and fourteen club members will fight.”

Dominic bursts out laughing. “Oh, this is good.” He chuckles. “You want to take the rest of her fights? Do you all realize these fights are death matches? You will all have to fight until you kill or be killed?”

“We’re aware of what a death match is,” I grind out, wishing I could simply kill the fucker. “However, there’s one stipulation to the matches.”

“Oh no.” Dominic loses the grin and narrows his gaze. “That’s not how this works. You see, if I agree to this, then I’ll need a little assurance that you all won’t back out of the deal.”

“You didn’t let me finish with my stipulation,” I counter.

“Not how it’s going to work.” Dominic sneers. “You want to take the fights, then so be it, but until the night of the fights, you stay here. Then, the

night of them, I want Rosemary here. She'll watch what your little club is doing for her. The first man from your club who dies will end the deal, and Rosemary leaves with me. If you beat me, then she'll be free to leave."

"Fine, you have a deal, but my match will be against you," I declare, not even worrying about the fact he's demanding I stay here until the night of the fights. Long as, in the end, Rosemary will be free of this fucker then so fucking be it.

Dominic levels a glare on me a moment before he smirks sadistically. "Fine, you want to fight me. Then we'll fight. Make it the main event of the evening."

"I'll look forward to beating your ass." I sneer.

"The fight is in roughly two weeks. Give or take a few days. Until then, you will stay and train here." Dominic cackles. "The rest of you will show up at four in the afternoon, prepared to fight those we line you up with."

Without responding to him, I turn toward my brothers. "Take care of Rosemary, tell her I'll be okay," I say while handing Aries all of the stuff from my pockets and my cut. No way will I leave anything of mine here for this douchebag to touch. "Let her know this is my decision."

"I'll let her know you decided to be a dumbass," Aries remarks, shaking his head.

I smirk and stare at him knowingly. Aries knows me. He knows what I'm like in a fight. I'll survive the next two weeks here. It'll only be a taste of what Rosemary endured. Hell, it probably won't come close, and that's okay. I'll take it and whatever else comes my way in the time frame. As long as in two weeks, she's free of this life and this bastard.

Dominic agreed to fight me. He knows it's a death match and I'm sure he'll cheat along the way, trying to make me weak in some shape or form.

Still, I'll be ready for whatever comes my way.

CHAPTER 21

ROSEMARY

“Something bad’s happened,” I murmur, glancing around the room while talking to Jade and Noelle. My stomach tightens with fear because it’s been hours since I saw Kevlar last. He left earlier with a few of his brothers and none of them have returned yet.

“I’m sure everything’s going to be okay,” Noelle utters softly, her attention mostly on Bride sitting at a table working on her schoolwork. “The guys are probably just trying to handle things quietly without us getting worried about it all.”

“You’re probably right,” Jade remarks, but I can see the nervousness in her eyes as she licks her lips. “If something were wrong, Viper would tell us, I’m sure of it.”

I nod, wanting to believe them both, but something inside me is screaming, and it has been since Kevlar left earlier to do whatever he left to do. I wish he told me where he was going or what was happening. “I still think something bad has happened.” The words barely leave my lips when the door opens and Aries, Wolf, Falcon, and Dutch step through.

That feeling in my stomach tightens when Kevlar doesn’t come in behind them.

Getting to my feet, I look directly at Aries. “Where’s Kevlar?”

Aries meets my gaze, his jaw ticking and his body tense. “Taking care of your shit,” he states and stalks away, leaving me speechless.

“What does that mean?” The question is no more than a whisper as I turn toward Viper and Cyprus. “What did Aries mean?”

“We’ll talk about it later,” Viper mutters. “I’ve got to talk with my brothers and see what’s happened.”

“No,” I snap, shaking my head. “I want to know what’s going on. What’s happened to Kevlar? Where is he? What did Aries mean about taking care. . .” Those words sink in deeper, and my eyes widen, my lips part, and my breath lodges itself in my throat. “No. Please tell me he didn’t.” I turn toward the men who left with Kevlar. “He went to Dominic, didn’t he?”

“Sorry, babe, but I can’t tell you.” Wolf grimaces.

“Rosie, we’ll talk after the brothers meet and discuss what’s happened,”

Viper growls, nostrils flaring, jaw tense. He looks ready to strike.

“Please, Viper,” I whisper, tears spilling down my cheeks. “I know he went to Dominic. I can see it in your eyes. Please, tell me what’s going on.”

Nausea has my stomach in knots. This can’t be happening. Not now.

“You’re gonna have to wait,” Viper remarks, turning toward his brothers. “Church now. Someone go get Aries.” He doesn’t give me a chance to say another word as he stalks away, his brothers following after him.

I stare after them, feeling as if my world were crumbling around me. “What have you done, Kevlar?” I murmur the question to myself, not talking to anyone. Everything seems so surreal. That’s why he wouldn’t tell me what was going on before he left. I mean, I get club business is club business, but this is different. This involves me.

Spinning around, I straighten, ready to take on Viper and demand answers, but Jade steps in front of me. “Don’t,” she whispers. “Let them figure it out, and after Viper will fill us in on what’s going on. Don’t go up against him right now. He’ll only get more pissed than he already is.”

Ugh, I know she’s right, but I hate it. So very much hate it. Still, I’ll wait until he’s out of church, and then I’ll confront him about what’s going on with Kevlar and what’s going to happen to get him back.



No one ever said patience was one of my best qualities. It never has been.

The moment Viper and the others step from the room where they’ve been held up for what feels like forever but mostly was two hours, I step forward.

“Can someone please tell me what’s going on now?” I demand, giving Viper a pleading look.

“Come on, Rosie, we’ll talk in my office,” Viper grumbles and shakes his head. “Aries, you’re with us.”

“I’m coming too,” Jade declares, coming up next to me and taking my hand. “I’m not about to be left out of what’s going on.”

“Might as well get Noelle as well,” Cyprus mutters, none too pleased.

Silently, I follow behind him, Jade holding my hand the whole way.

Once in the office and the door closes behind us, Viper moves behind his desk, taking Jade with him. He settles in the chair and sets her on his lap. “Have a seat, Rosie,” he commands. Holding his gaze, I stare at him as I do

so. I need to know what's going on, no matter the feeling I'm getting that it's going to be worse than I expected.

The others take a seat, and I'm left with Aries standing behind me.

"The club met this morning and came up with a plan for how to deal with Dominic and the bullshit he's trying to pull. He's claiming you're his property, Rosie, and threatening to kill others to get you back," Viper announces. "Claims you have fourteen more fights that you have to win in order to get your freedom."

This is true, or at least what I'd been told.

"During church, it was decided that each of us was going to do a match. Dominic agreed to the terms Kevlar gave him under the stipulations of two things. One of them being, Kevlar is to stay at the fight club until the night of the fight."

My heart threatens to beat its way out of my chest at the news. "And the second?"

"The second being you are to be in attendance the night of the fight. You're to watch each fight take place."

My heart stops altogether as I cock my head slightly to stare over my shoulder up at Aries to see him looking near murderous. The accusing tone in his voice makes me feel all the smaller and belittled. It's all my fault, all of this.

Slowly, I get to my feet, dropping my gaze, suddenly feeling like I'm going to throw up or pass out. Maybe both. More than that, I need to get away from everyone. "Excuse me." I don't wait around and give anyone a chance to say another word. Right now, I don't think I could handle hearing more.

Kevlar agreed to stay behind. They all decided to fight for me. It's too much. None of them should be involved. They should've just left me. I would have finished the fights. Fought them all and handled it all myself. Now they're all going to go in the ring, and to win, they'll have to take a life.

I barely make it to the door before Aries snags my arm.

"Don't think you're gonna do something stupid," he snaps.

Sucking in a breath, I lift my gaze to his. "I'm not going to do anything stupid. I'm not an idiot. I know what's at stake here. Kevlar's in the lion's den, and I can only imagine the hell he's going to go through because of me. I don't need you snapping at me."

"Aries, brother, back off," Cyprus grunts his command. "We've got more

to talk about.”

“What more is there?” Noelle asks. “You guys just informed us all that you’re going to be fighting in death matches.”

I can all but taste her fury. Noelle is not one for anger, but right now, I know it’s directed in my direction. She doesn’t have to look at me for this to be confirmed, it’s in her voice.

“We’re going to fight and win,” Cyprus declares, his tone holding a note in it that tells me he believes exactly what he’s saying.

“You don’t know that,” I whisper, shaking my head. “None of you know what you’re up against with this.”

“Rosie, babe, we know exactly what we’re up against. We’ve done the research into it. We’re fighters, and we’ll do what we’ve got to in order free you and end the fucker for thinking he could threaten us and get away with it,” Viper states sternly. “Kevlar knew what he was doing and what he was agreeing to. So, you’re gonna stay safe, and on the night of fights, you’re gonna go. When our brother sees you there, you’ll be his strength no matter the bullshit. He’ll deal with what’s gonna happen. You get me?”

I nod, fear threatening to choke me.

“Good,” he says and looks to Jade. “I know what’s happenin’ ain’t ideal. It’s not something any of us want to do, but it’s got to be done. We’re new to the area, and we can’t let the motherfucker get away with what he’s doing. We do, and we might as well pack our shit and move. This is our territory now, and we’re not about to let the bastard make us run scared.”

“I get it,” Jade utters, moisture shimmering in her eyes, but the tears don’t fall. “If you don’t make a stand now, someone else can think they can strike against you.”

“Exactly, so don’t blame this shit on Rosie. She’s your family,” Viper grunts.

“Goes for you too, Noelle,” Cyprus states. “This has to happen.”

“One other thing,” Aries grunts, finally letting my arm go. “Zain will be here this afternoon. He’s friends with Alec Mahoney and had given us a message from the guy. Joshua is safe. Alec is aware of the situation, and his family is taking a little vacation.”

The fact that Alec knows this isn’t surprising, but a part of me wishes he didn’t.

With Zain coming, that’s just icing on the cake. My man’s brother is coming, and he’s not here. He’ll blame me for it, I’m sure of it. I’ll have to

make sure to stay out of his sight until after this is all over. I don't think I could handle the shame of him knowing what's going on and that I'm to blame.

I drop my gaze to the floor, my chest aching. If I could do something different, I would, but what Viper says makes sense. I suppose the only thing I can hope for is that the outcome is in our favor.

CHAPTER 22

JADE

“I don’t like this,” I whisper, turning toward Viper. No sooner. Rosemary flees the room, guilt pouring off my best friend.

“Know that, darlin’, but we’ve got to do this,” my man retorts calmly. His hands running up either side of my hips, spanning my waist. “But we’ve talked about this. The club voted on it. Rosemary’s family to all of us. We can’t let this shit go. I won’t see your family hurt.”

“Isn’t there another way?” Noelle asks, her voice trembling.

“As much as I want to think there is. Prez and VP are right,” Aries remarks gruffly and lets out a harsh breath. “Someone needs to get her to stop overthinking shit.”

“It’s just who she is.” The words are no more than a whisper. My chest aches for my best friend. She was there for me when I needed her most. She helped me get through the dark and made me laugh when I wanted to weep. Now, she’s hurting even more and blaming herself. “But she’s also a woman who does need to work out what’s bothering her. The only way I’ve known her to do that is in the ring, and she’s scared to death of getting back in it.”

“Then we make her get back in it,” Aries growls.

“And how the hell do you expect to do that?” Noelle demands snapping. “Rosemary was forced to kill in a ring. She’s not going to just get back in it.”

“We make her get back in.” I hate the words that come out of my mouth, but it’s the truth. To help Rosemary, we’ve got to get her back in the ring before she ends up destroying herself with guilt.

“You got an idea how to do that, darlin’?” Viper asks, drawing me down onto his lap. “What do you suggest we do to get her back in that ring? Because in two weeks, she’s got to watch fourteen matches and be able to face each of us knowing what we’re doing for her.”

I nod and think about what Viper’s saying. For her to watch them, it’ll likely destroy her . . . unless, sighing, I meet Viper’s gaze, then shift a glance to the other two men in the room. “You get in the ring by picking her up and tossing her in, then demand she go against each of you. Tell her it’s payment for what you all are about to do for her. To free her. She’ll fight. But I think it’s going to be Kevlar who she’s really going to have to be able to face.”

“Best way to do that is for her to get in there with Zain,” Aries states. “The two of them could be twins, they look so damn alike.”

Viper leans back, taking me with him. “We’ll give her tonight and tomorrow while we talk to the others, tell them what we’re gonna do. After that, we’ll get her ass in the ring. She’s got to be ready for fight night just as the rest of us do, because I don’t intend for any of us to lose our lives in two weeks.”

Two weeks.

I swallow the bile back down and lean deeper into the man whom I love more than anything. If I lose him, I’ll lose myself. The only thing that will keep me going is the knowledge that I’m carrying our babies. I’m scared to death of the what-ifs, but I also know this man, he’ll fight like hell to come back to me. Just as he fought to save me.

This is why I know I can trust in him that everything will be okay in the end. It has to be.

CHAPTER 23

KEVLAR

Pacing the cell, I was thrown in, I'm more than ready to get the fuck back out of it. Dominic hasn't shown his face in the past two days, but that doesn't mean he hasn't made his presence known. He's sent his men down to taunt me . . . goad me into a fight that would weaken me. Other than giving me some water, I haven't had anything since before leaving the clubhouse. I expected as much beforehand that if Dominic agreed, he'd do his best to weaken me. It's a good thing I know what I'm doing. Otherwise, his plan would work.

I'm not about to let it happen. Not when I know what's at stake.

I roll my shoulders, stretching my tense muscles. Tension fills me alongside adrenaline as I anticipate the fight to come. I need to be prepared for it, but I also have to stay on guard since I'm sure Dominic will try to play a few tricks against me before the night he goes up against me.

Across from my cell are a few other men. They're beefy meatheads who look like they've all been through hell. I hate to be them if they have to be the ones to go up against my brothers. My brothers will demolish them all without blinking.

These men might be able to defend themselves, but they don't have nothing on the men in my club. Hell, Aries alone could take on three of them without breaking a sweat. I've seen the bastard do it in person as well. Same with a couple of my other brothers. The rest, well, I've sparred with them, I know what they're capable of. And I'm pretty sure in this fight, there won't be any rules. It'll be an all-out dirty fight.

I wouldn't be surprised if Dominic pitied those men against me. Compared to me, he's a weakling, and he knows it. I'm sure he knows it as much as I do. To level the playing field, he'll want to try and break me down a notch or two. What he doesn't know is it won't work. My dad trained me to be able to fight dirty. To expect the unexpected. To never turn your back on the enemy. Especially when you're in the snake pit surrounded by venomous bastards ready to strike at a moment's notice. Blink, and they'll take you out.

The only thing that keeps me sane is knowing that I'm doing this to free my woman. Thinking of her and the beauty that waits for me when this

bullshit is done is what allows me to handle everything. In the end, I know when I leave this place, when I finish Dominic off, I'm going home to my Rosie.

I'm sure she'll be pissed, ready to murder me herself, but this will all be over with.

Whatever comes after fight night, we'll get through it together.

The creak of a door gets my attention, and my gut tells me that something's about to happen and it's time to focus. I've never not listened to my gut. When I spot Dominic's goons grinning in my direction, I prepare to take them on.

Two weeks of this I can see it now—the power play Dominic is attempting. Dominic wants me weak, but it won't happen. I won't let it. I'll take these bastards on, and when the time comes, I'll break the motherfucker's neck.

CHAPTER 24

ROSEMARY

For three days, I've been able to avoid anyone and everyone. I needed to be alone. To come to terms with what's happening right now and know that I'm the reason for Kevlar being held by Dominic at this moment.

Usually, I'd be in the gym sparring with someone to take out my frustration and guilt. I haven't been able to do that. I hate the idea of going against someone. Possibly hurting them or, worse, killing them.

Last night, however, I did go into the gym after I knew everyone else had gone to bed for the night. I sat there in the middle of the room staring at the ring, images of each of the fights I've had in the past months. The pain had been nearly unbearable, but I refused to cry because if I did, I knew I would wake those closest to the gym. I didn't want to do that. They'd have come in and given me those looks of pity or, worse, the ones of anger.

I deserve their anger, really, I do, and because of this, I feel the shame of what I'm putting them all through.

Especially Zain. I've yet to meet him. I'm honestly terrified of meeting him when Kevlar isn't here. It's why I'm hiding away in Kevlar's room, refusing to come out. I'd done as I've done since finding out Kevlar stayed behind. I brought enough to drink in here from the kitchen. If I want something to eat, I'll get it when no one else is around. By doing this and continuing to do so, I hopefully can manage to get through the next weeks.

Dread threatens to consume me with the very thought.

A heavy sigh passes my lips as I snuggle against Kevlar's pillows and inhale the smell of him that still lingers there. I'm sure I look pathetic with the way I'm acting, but honestly, I don't care.

I jump and flinch as the door is thrown open. My eyes widen as a man steps into the room, looking far too similar to Kevlar, but still you can tell the difference in looks. This must be Zain.

Where Kevlar's eyes are a dark shade of blue, Zain's are a lighter color. Another difference is the tattoos and how they hold themselves. Kevlar's bulkier, his body chiseled, whereas Zain looks a bit leaner. You can also see the difference in the way this man walks so confidently. Not to say Kevlar doesn't have confidence, but the way he moves is with more of a swagger,

maybe a bit of prowling. Okay a bit more than a prowl. He can be like a predator stalking his prey at times. This man is though, you can clearly see his intent and determination all over his face.

“Time for hiding and wallowing is over,” Zain remarks harshly, stalking to the side of the bed. He doesn’t give me a chance to speak. Instead, he grips my arm, bends at the waist, and jerks me up off the bed and over his shoulder. “We’re going to get a few things straight, woman, and we’re doing that now.”

What in the world is he talking about?

Zain carts me out of the room, and as soon as he turns toward the gym, I know where we’re heading, and it freaks me out.

“Put me down,” I demand, struggling against his hold on my legs. “Damn it, let me go.”

“Not a chance,” the guy snaps. He carts me through the doors and straight to where I know is the ring.

“Toss her through the ropes.”

I go still at the commanding tone I know belongs to Viper. What the hell is he doing?

“Gladly,” Zain growls and does just that, sending me rolling into the ring. I stop just inside it at Viper’s feet.

Staring up at him with wide eyes, I feel my throat tightening. “What are you doing, Viper?”

“Helping my brother by preparing you for fight night,” Viper answers and holds a hand out for me. “Get up. We’re sparring, Rosie. You and me.”

“But I don’t want to spar against you,” I whisper, unable to move.

“You’re not just sparring against me, Rosemary.” His eyes flash with pure irritation at me. “You’re going against all of us. Including Zain.”

“Why?” The question slips out as I manage to get to my feet.

“Because to help our brother, we’ve got to make sure you can handle what’s about to go down,” Aries speaks up from one corner of the ring. “We’re all fighting, risking our lives for you. As payment, you’re going to take us all on. Each day until the fight, you’re sparring with each of us.”

Oh my God.

“I can’t do this,” I utter, shaking my head.

“You can and you will,” Zain snaps, standing behind me at another ring post.

“You don’t know me. You don’t know what I can and cannot do,” I say,

shaking my head and stepping back.

“I know my brother, though, and he wouldn’t be with a weak woman. You want to make sure he survives the night of the fights? Then you need to make sure your ass is in the right state of mind. I’m a fuckin’ cop, and yet I’m helping these assholes train to go into death match fights, knowing what will happen. I’m doing it for my brother. Because he needs me, just like he fuckin’ well needs his woman to be strong for him.”

I stare at the man who looks so much like Kevlar, my chest aching, and my throat feels like it’s going to close up on me.

“Now, you’re gonna go up against Viper first, and don’t think I haven’t heard what type of fighter you are. I know what you’re capable,” Zain remarks.

“Let’s get started,” Viper commands, getting my attention.

Spinning around to face the other man, my body trembles, and I want to throw up. “Please don’t do this to me, Viper.”

“Rosie, if I didn’t see you as a little sister. Want nothing but the best for you, I wouldn’t be doing this in the first fuckin’ place. Now come on, we’re sparring,” he declares, acting like this is something we’ve done before, which we hadn’t.

The two of us circle each other, and he throws a punch that I block out of instinct. It’s all I can do not to pass out. He keeps throwing jabs, and I’m not ready for them. I don’t realize it until I fall back on my ass that tears are streaming down my face.

“Come on, Rosie, get your ass back up,” Viper commands, not even breaking a sweat.

“Prez, let me go up against her,” Aries says, climbing through the ropes.

Oh God, this isn’t good. Aries hates me, and I know it.

“Now Rosie, you can fight against me. Prove to me that you’re the woman my best friend deserves and not some bitch who uses tears to get her way.”

Aries’s statement causes me to flinch, and I can’t blame him.

Sucking in a breath, I start fighting him, sparring, my mind going to those women I killed. My head aches with the images that overtake me. Unable to focus or stay upright, I drop to my knees, my hands clutching at either side of my head, and I scream in agony at the haunting images of those innocent women. It hurts to think of them. To know that I’m the reason behind their deaths. Their blood stains my hands.

Sobs rack my body as Aries grabs both my wrists and pulls my hands away from my head.

“Look at me, Rosie,” he commands. I do as he says, but it’s hard to face him. “You’ve got to come to terms with what happened to you. What you had to do wasn’t on you. The blame lies at Dominic’s feet. You fought, babe. You did it to survive. Those women would have done the same and they might not have felt the guilt you do. You gotta let it go. If you don’t, it’ll end up consuming you.”

“But it could be you guys next, and that will be on me.”

“Rosie, it ain’t gonna happen. We’ll win our matches, and guess what?” He smirks.

“What?” I whisper, my breath hitching.

“None of us will flinch at knowing we’ll be killing in those matches. We know what we’re up against. Same with Kevlar. He won’t give two shits about killing a man long as it means he’s coming home to you after.”

Aries’s words sink in, and I nod, unable to speak through the tears still clogging my throat.

“Now, you gonna get that sweet ass up and fight or run with your tail tucked between your legs?” he asks, straightening and holding a hand for me to take.

“Fight,” I manage to croak.

“Good girl, now prove to us that you’ll be able to handle what’s gonna go down.”

I nod and let out a breath as I scamper to my feet without his help. If I’m going to prove to them and myself, I’ve got to let it go, as he said. I need to do this. Prepare myself for what I’ll have to witness because I know it’s not going to be easy to handle.

But as long as Kevlar comes out breathing, I know everything will be okay.

CHAPTER 25

KEVLAR

Tonight's the night.

It's finally here. I'll finally be free of this fucking place, and Dominic will die at my hands. My body aches, but I refuse to think of it. During the past two weeks, Dominic made sure to have his goons beat on me, but those beatings were nothing compared to what he's going to experience.

Dominic's men also underestimated me when they decided to throw fists. I won't be backing down and letting them beat me all to hell. Each day it was the same. No food, a small amount of water, and fighting the dickheads who came in here.

Now, with my adrenaline pumping, I'm ready for the fight to happen.

The doors creak open, and I expect to find Dominic coming down the stairs only to find someone else altogether. The man looks sharp in his suit, but I can also see the calculation in his gaze as he comes toward me.

"I see you're ready for tonight's events," the guy states, watching me closely, hands in his suit pockets.

"What's it to you if I am or not?" I ask, cocking a brow.

"None of us are fond of Dominic, and we know the details of tonight's fight regarding you going up against him. I also know that when it's over, someone has to take over. That will be me."

"And who the hell are you?"

This guy seems cocky, nearly as unpleasant and annoying as Dominic the douchebag.

"My name's Izaiah Cordova. I was one of Enyo's silent partners before Dominic killed her to take her place," Izaiah remarks, watching me with assessing weird colored eyes of his. "I simply wanted to come speak with you before the fight and let you know that should you all succeed, Rosemary will be free, and there will be no retaliation."

I want to believe that's true, but I have a feeling there's more to it. For now, though, I'll take him at his word if he gives it. "Simple as that? This will be done, and you'll leave our club alone?"

"I have no problems with your little club," Izaiah remarks, shrugging. "Far as I see it, you all are pissants who aren't even on my radar. You stay

out of my business, and I'll stay out of yours. This fight club will belong to me, and you all will not interfere with it."

"My brothers and I don't want anything to do with the damn thing," I inform him, completely ready to leave so I can finish preparing for the fight.

"Then you have my word. We will leave you to it if you survive the night." Izaiah doesn't wait for me to respond. He turns back in the direction he came from and makes his way back out but stops at the door. "By the way, your woman looks radiant tonight, and if you ever want to give her up, I'll surely like to be considered in her being handed over to me. I wouldn't mind her in my bed." He smirks over his shoulder at me.

Fucker.

For that alone, I should kill him, but I know he's goading me, and I won't let him. The club's already got enough on its plate we don't need more.

Time passes slowly as I watch men come and get one of the others one after another. None of them come back, which tells me all I need to know. My brothers are kicking ass with each match. I can hear the shouts and cheers in the crowd. It's loud enough to vibrate the walls.

By the time the last man is taken, I'm more than ready for this shit to get over with. I want to see my woman. Hold her in my arms and sink my cock inside her. My dick misses her as much as I do. I haven't had the time to enjoy her body as much as I want to. For that matter, a lifetime wouldn't be enough. Sliding inside Rosemary's pussy is one of the better thoughts that have kept me sane.

After I kill Dominic tonight, I'm dragging her ass out of here and taking her somewhere so neither of us will be bothered while I spend a few days fucking her until I fuck the memory of these weeks out of my head.

An hour passes before one of Dominic's men comes in, his beady eyes watching me closely. "You ready to die?" he asks.

I don't bother answering him. I get the feeling he's got something planned before I even get in that ring tonight. Dominic is nothing more than a weaselly dickhead who can't do shit without having someone else helping him out first. I'm willing to bet the fucker doesn't even take a piss without someone else holding his dick for him.

I stay alert of the man behind me, waiting to see what he's going to do for his boss, but he surprises me when he doesn't.

My eyes find Rosemary in the crowd as I'm shown to the ring, and I give her a wink, letting her know everything's gonna be okay. Next to her is my brother, and fuck if it's not good to see him there. From the look in my woman's eyes, I don't see the hauntedness that had been there, though she still looks upset with the way she's got her arms crossed over her chest.

Surrounding her are the rest of my brothers, a few of them looking worse than others. I jerk my chin up in acknowledgment and refocus on the bastard I intend to kill within the next two minutes. Five minutes tops. This shit ends now.

Dominic's goon behind me shoves me forward, and I turn on him, throwing my fist in his face and sending him to the ground. I return my attention to Dominic as I climb into the ring and sneer.

"You ready to finish this asshole?"

"It'll be you that dies tonight." He smirks.

"Is that so?" Cocking a brow, I roll my shoulders and prepare for the fight to begin.

"Yes, I do. I've waited long enough to finally have what's mine."

The fuckhead is delusional.

"Enough of the bullshit talk," I grunt. "Let's get this over with."

A man comes forward with only one word to begin.

Dominic launches himself at me, and I take in the brass knuckles he's got on his hands. The bastard must think I'm an idiot or something. He doesn't even get a punch in before I take him to the mat with a solid punch in the face. His body going down vibrates the ring and I fall on top of him, wailing on him as I did Rex, taking pleasure in the sound of his facial bones breaking.

It's only when my brothers jump in the ring and pull me off the mutilated features that belong to Dominic that I stop.

Taking a breath, I look at Aries.

"My bike out there?"

Aries nods, reaches into his pocket, and hands me the key to my motorcycle. "She's out there. Your cut's in the saddlebag."

"Good/" I grunt and head for the ropes without another word. Now that fucker's gone, no matter the fact he went quicker than he should have, it's been two weeks since I've touched my woman, and I'm about to do just that.

CHAPTER 26

ROSEMARY

I can finally breathe easy. It's over, I have Kevlar back, and I never want to let him go again. Holding on to him, I press myself against his back as he roars down the highway, heading for the clubhouse or wherever he wants to go. I still can't believe he wanted to ride his motorcycle after his fight, but I wasn't about to object. After the two weeks he spent in hell, he can have whatever he wants.

It doesn't matter to me as long as I'm with him.

Kevlar pulls into a hotel parking lot. Not just a simple by-the-hour motel, but one that's nice and cozy looking.

"Hop off, Tigress," he says, speaking to me for the first time.

He hasn't even kissed me yet, but that's okay because I know what's coming.

I do as he orders and wait for him to join me. He swings his leg over, reaches into his saddlebag, grabs his cut from inside, and slides it on. Not even a second later, he takes my hand, all but dragging me through the doors of the hotel to the check in desk. There, he demands a room, gives them his card, and rushes them through the process. The girl behind the desk looks nearly ready to call the cops, but I give her a pleasant smile and nod, letting her know everything's okay.

Moments later, we are finally in an elevator going up to our floor.

"Kevlar," I finally manage to whisper.

The moment I do, he twirls me in his arms, grips my hair at the back of my head, and slams his mouth down on mine. My toes curl instantly, and all I want to do is climb over him. Better yet, pull his cock out and let him fuck me here and now against the wall of the elevator.

Unfortunately, our time in the elevator ends far too quickly, and I'm left needing more of him.

Kevlar pulls away just enough to scoop me up in his arms. A gasp passes my lips, and I wrap my arms around his shoulders, holding on as he stalks down the hall to our room. Unlocking the door, he opens it and steps inside.

He doesn't waste a second in tossing me on the bed and coming over me. Our clothes are quickly stripped away, and between one breath and the next,

he slides inside me. From that moment, he plows ruthlessly, not relenting. The feel of his powerful movements spurs me on as I cry out, as the pleasure and pain mix within me. It's beautiful and I want more. So much more, it's unreal.

Soon, he has me coming in a whirlwind, and I love it. Just as I love him.

"Calvin," I cry out his name, digging my nails into his back.

Kevlar growls my name, and his cock twitches inside me, his release spurting from the top, coating the walls of my pussy.

"Fuck, Tigress, I fuckin' missed you," he breathes out.

"I missed you too."

"Never again, baby, will I be away from you for so long." Slowly, he starts thrusting again, drawing a moan from my lips.

"I agree. God knows I don't want to spend another night away from you as I have these past weeks." Tears prick my eyes, and I reach up, shoving my face in his neck. "I love you, Calvin, and losing you would destroy me."

"Same as it would me, Rosemary, I fuckin' love you." Wrapping his fingers in my hair, he yanks gently enough to get me to meet his gaze. "I told you I'd fight for you, baby, and I always will. No one fucks with you. Not now. Not fuckin' ever."

He doesn't give me a chance to say anything. Not that I could. So, to express my agreement, I kiss him back and hold on tight because I know in my heart, he'll do whatever it takes to fight for me as I'll do the same for him.

EPILOGUE

KEVLAR

Two Months Later . . .

If someone asked me two years ago or even a year ago, where I'd see my life, I sure as fuck wouldn't say where it is now. But I also wouldn't say I didn't want what I've got.

I've got a woman that means the world to me. She's my everything, and I would kill for her. In fact, I already have several times. I took the lives of those who hurt her, and I would do it again if it meant keeping her safe and sleeping peacefully at night. I know she still has nightmares, but with time and me by her side, she'll be good. They'll go away and stay that way.

With Dominic dead, his part in the death match business is done with. Granted, it's not shut down. There are too many hands in that honey pot, but we've stood against them, and they're not going to come at us. Not when we've proved to be a force to reckon with. You don't mess around with the Devil's Riot MC. We'll put your ass six feet under first.

Today marks the opening of one of our many businesses, and it's a big day. The club voted on opening a gym, and Rosemary will be running it for us. What happened took a lot out of her, but with my brothers' help, we've all got her back in the ring and in fighting shape. She might never compete again, and that's fine. She can teach, and that's something I know she loves doing. Teaching those who need it on how to defend themselves. My brothers helped her when she needed it most, and I'm thankful to them for it.

After everything that's happened, the two of us are finally in a good place, and she's free. Izaiah took over the fight club and so far has kept his word. They've left the club alone, but I won't hold my breath.

Everything happens for a reason, and when it comes down to it, I know if we end up facing off with them, it'll be to take down the organization. For now, though, it's none of our business. Not until they make it so.

Mateo has business with us to handle. He knows we're just running the protection for him and though he's not my favorite person, I have to respect the way he handles business. He's not like other men who treat the women who he deals with like shit. Hell, he even gave some of them the option to

work for the strip club if that's what they wanted to do.

I shake the thought of work away. We've got shit to do, and once we get it done. I'm taking my woman on a trip, just the two of us, to see her dad and brother. She hasn't been to her home in so long, it's high time. I intend to not only ask her to marry me, but I'm marrying her right then and there. I'm not waiting.

This is the woman who was made for me and vice versa. I'll give her the world and not even think twice. Fighting for Rosemary was worth fighting her in the beginning because it takes a strong woman to be with a man like me, and there's no doubt that, my woman is the strongest person I know.

BONUS SCENE

ARIES

“What’s going on, Cordy?” I ask, holding the phone to my ear while watching the security cameras in the backroom of the strip club we’ve opened. It’s similar to the one back in Stonewall Mills, but different in other ways. We’ve got different tiers to give the clientele who visit the place what they’re looking for. From the perverts to those who want class. Then there’s the ones who want kink to vanilla. We cater to it all. Guess you can call it a jack of all trades establishment. You have the look but no touch full nude and your typical strip section of the club. This is the area we see a lot of both men and women visit to watch the shows. Then you have the upper levels, where the cost gets higher, and the real fun plays out.

One area has the advanced lap dances that end with those paying for it getting that shit yanked on. The higher level is nothing more than a fuck fest. Best way to way to describe it is free for all fucking. Men come in to fuck however they want. Some women even get in on it. We’ve even got rooms for those who don’t want to participate but want to watch. It’s hilarious to me seeing the amount of people who will come just to fuck other people. Because of this, we take care of the girls we’ve hired for the job and make sure they know this is their decision, and they don’t have to work the upper levels.

Usually, nights after I finish my shift here, I head back to the clubhouse and snag one of the clubwhores and take her to my room to fuck. I’m not about to use one of the employees. I’m not that fucked up, and the women at the clubhouse, they don’t mind it when I tie their arms behind their backs or fuck their asses. Hell, they beg for it most of the time.

With Kevlar taking a few days to take Rosemary back to Colorado to see her dad and brother, I’m covering for him. Getting a call from one of my sisters is the last thing I need right now. I love both Cordelia and Tempest, but that doesn’t mean they’re not both pains in my ass. Swear to fuck, growing up, it was all Fox and I could do to keep them from driving us crazy. Now, with Fox all but vanished, it’s up to me to be there for the girls.

Cordelia’s silence meets my ear, other than her hitched breathing that tells me she’s been crying. “What’s happened, little sister?” I ask, turning my full

attention to the phone call rather than the video feed on the surveillance cameras.

“I . . . I think I’m in trouble,” she whispers, her voice breaking.

“Talk to me,” I demand, getting to my feet while pressing a button on the desk to alert Dutch and Wolf, who are working the front, that I need them both back here. If something’s up with my sister, I’m going to have to go to her.

“My friend and I were out with a couple other friends and . . . and we were attacked. They hurt my friend really bad, Aries,” she manages to explain while sobbing.

“Where are you now?” I ask, gritting my teeth at the same time both men step into the office, eyes dark and alert.

“I’m on the New Jersey Turnpike. We had to run. They were going to kill her.”

This is why I didn’t want her to move that far away. To make matters worse, I moved with my club, taking my patch as Road Captain for the Mississippi Charter. Hearing those words from my sister, though, sensing her panic, hearing fear in her voice, it pisses me off. I’m her big brother, and the fact someone put her in danger doesn’t sit well with me.

“Who is this friend?” Whoever this bitch is, she’s getting my sister wrapped in something that pisses me off.

“You know her, Aries. It’s Rory,” Cordelia says cautiously, nearly hesitant.

That’s the last name I expected ever to hear again, and my sister knows it. She knows the history there. So, what the hell is she still doing hanging around the other woman?

Closing my eyes, I tighten my grip around the phone. “Where are you heading?” I demand, fury starting to seep in. It’s all I can do to keep myself in check now, knowing who it is that’s put my sister in a situation like this.

“To you, Aries. We’re heading to you. That’s where Rory said we should go before she passed out.”

Well, fuck.

That’s the last thing I expected to hear from my sister. I thought she’d never leave New York City, she loves it there, but she’s coming here and bringing the trouble with her. That trouble circles around the one woman I never expected to see again.



Dear Readers,

I do hope you have enjoyed the first book in the new Devil's Riot MC series. Kevlar and Rosemary have been through hell, and they deserve a happily ever after. Which I'm so happy to give them. The next book will be coming out as soon as I can get it, and of course, it's Aries's story. It's going to be one hell of a story for sure.

But until then, check out the other books to come before then. I'm definitely not going to leave y'all wanting for anything when it comes to these next books.

I'm even throwing in two new series in the bunch, along with this one!

Sincerely,
E.C.

ALSO BY E.C. LAND

Devil's Riot MC

Horse's Bride

Thorn's Revenge

Twister's Survival

Reclaimed (Devil's Riot MC Boxset Bks 1 – 3)

Cleo's Rage

Connors' Devils

Hades Pain

Badger's Claim

Burner's Absolution

Redeemed (Devil's Riot MC Boxset Bks 4 – 6)

K-9's Fight

Revived Boxset (Devil's Riot MC Boxset Bks 7 — 9)

Red's Calm

Brass's Surrender

Devil's Riot MC Originals

Stoney's Property

Owning Victoria

Blaze's Mark

Taming Coyote

Luna's Shadow

Devil's Ride (DRMC Boxset 1 – 5)

Choosing Nerd

Stoney's Gift

Ranger's Fury

Carrying Blaze's Mark

Neo's Strength

Cane's Dominance

Venom's Prize

Protecting Blaze's Mark

Devil's Reign (DRMC Boxset 6 – 10)

Whip's Breath

Viper's Touch

Cyprus's Truth

Devil's Riot MC Southeast

Hammer's Pride

Malice's Soul

Axe's Devotion

Rebelling Rogue

Ruin Boxset 1 – 3

Remaining Gunner's

Savage's Honor

Devil's Riot MC Tennessee

Breaking Storm

Blow's Smoke

Nines's Time

Lucky's Streak

Defiance Boxset 0.5 – 3

Inferno's Clutch MC

Chains' Trust

Breaker's Fuse

Ryder's Rush

Axel's Promise

Fated for Pitch Black

Their Redemption Boxset 1 - 5

Tiny's Hope

Fuse's Hold

Nora's Outrage

Tyres' Wraith

Brielle's Nightmare

Their Salvation Boxset 6 - 10

Pipe's Burn

Faith's Tears
Lyrica's Lasting
Brake's Intent
Speed's Ride

Dark Lullabies

A Demon's Sorrow
A Demon's Bliss
A Demon's Harmony
A Demon's Soul
A Demon's Song
Dark Lullabies Boxset

Royal Bastards MC (Elizabeth City Charter)

Cyclone of Chaos
Spiral into Chaos

Aligned Hearts

Embraced
Entwined
Entangled
Crush Boxset 1-3
Ensnared
Entrapped

Night's Bliss

Finley's Adoration (Co-Write with Elizabeth Knox)
Cedric's Ecstasy
Arwen's Rapture
Christmas Delight

Satan's Keepers MC

Keeping Reaper
Forever Tombstone's
Hellhound's Sacrifice

Outrage Boxset 1 – 3

Mercy's Angel

Facing Daemon

Scythe's Grasp

Mayhem Boxset 4 – 6

Toxic Warriors MC

Viking

Ice

War

Storm Boxset 1 – 3

Grimm

Maverick

De Luca Crime Family

Frozen Valentine (Prequel)

Frozen Kiss

Heated Caress

Simmering Embrace

Scorched Boxset (1 – 3)

Fiery Affection

Inflamed Touch

Sons of Norhill Tops

Inheriting Trouble

Dancing Struggles

Burning Tears

Pins and Needles Series

Blood and Agony

Blood and Torment

Blood and Betrayal

Agony Boxset 1 - 3

DeLancy Crime Family

Degrade
Deprave
Detest
Desire Boxset 1 - 3
Deny
Demean
Delusion
Destroy Boxset 4 - 6

Underground Bruisers with Rae B. Lake

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Holding Beast

*Only so much pain the mind can take before it succumbs to the beast
within.*

BEAST

I watch her lose herself. Saw the pain she endured. No matter the help I wanted to give her, nothing will do. She's lost to me. There's no way she can take anymore. Nor does she need a man like me. A man who has his own demons to hold on to.

With her at the clubhouse, I need to get away, but when death comes to our door, my demons demand out. Secrets I've held onto are revealed and there's only one who keeps me sane. Her. Will she be able to handle it all? Or am I left to my own demise?

My brothers can't help. Not this time. I'm called Beast for a reason and now they all know why.

Corbin's Conflict

This life is a choice. One you make with or without conflict.

CORBIN

Things are happening in my town and my county. We're split between two clubs. Rivals that share blood and a common enemy.

Witches.

I hate them. All of them. I have my reasons, but fate seems to have other plans. Plans I don't care much for.

The day she comes into my life, I want to throw the raven-haired, emerald-eyed beauty out, but she can help in ways we need. The question is, can I resist the bond between us when the heat grows hot?

Danger swirls around us and we're left with no other choice but to trust one another. Conflicted, I decide to let my instincts lead, even when that decision puts her in my arms.

Shiner's Light

A light only shines bright for as long as it's lit. The dark is always threatening to extinguish it.

SHINER

The only things that matter to me in this world are my boy and my club. I don't need anything else. Don't want it. I'm happy with the way my life is. At least, that's what I thought, until she popped back into my life.

She vanished years ago, and I didn't think I'd ever see her again. Now, she's asking for help, and I want to turn her away, but she's my son's family, the only one who cared anything for him. Can I just walk away, or do I try to reignite the light that used to make her shine?

Striker's Yield

Life has a way of making you yield, but it won't stop me from getting what I want most.

STRIKER

The first time I saw her, I knew she was pure. Sweet and shy, it works for her. She's not the type I usually go for, but that didn't stop me from wanting her.

She didn't come around often, so it was easy for me to ignore her. Until I couldn't anymore.

Danger stalks the night and threatens her in a way that draws us in. To protect her, I have to choose, but will I be able to live with it or do I walk?

SOCIAL MEDIA

BE SURE TO FOLLOW OR STALK ME!

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