

FLAME



An Untamed Hell Fires MC Series



Book Six
C.L.McGinlay

Flame

An MC best Friends - Lovers Romance

Charlotte McGinlay

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Description

Flame

We've been best friends for as long as I can remember, grown up together.

But I've been in love with her since she was sixteen,

The problem; there's eight years between us,

And she deserves a better life than what I can give her,

One without the MC.

I push her away, throwing women in her face, including her own sister hoping she'll hate me,

But It was all a mistake and I realised too late,

She gets hurt because of the MC, because of me,

She blames me and leaves me without a trace.

Until I finally find her.

She's in danger but she's stubborn.

I want her home, in my life, in my arms where she belongs.

I know I screwed up but I'm willing to do anything to have her back,

Including kidnapping her.

Because whether she likes it or not, she's mine.

Always has been, always will be.

And ready or not Star, I'm coming for you.

Star

I've been in love with my best friend for as long as I can remember.

He was my hero, my heart.

But he kept pushing me away, throwing women in my face
whenever he could.

Including my own sister who uses me whenever she can as her
piggy bank.

I try to just be his friend but it's hard,

He hurts me every day thinking I'm better without this life,
without him,

But he forgets, I was born into it, born to be his.

I'm the club princess while he's always been my biker prince.

And I wanted him, he just didn't want me enough back to
fight.

Then I get hurt because of him, because of the club,

And I know I can't stay; I have to leave.

Leave him.

I decide to give him a part of me no one ever has before
leaving for good,

Finding my own path without my demons,

Without my mother and sister taking everything from me,

Without the man who I loved more anything but treated me
like crap in return.

Without my family.

I guess I didn't think he'd try to find me,

But I'm not their Starfish anymore, or his Firefly.

He may come after me and try to bring me home but I won't
make it easy for him.

I won't fall at his knees anymore, I won't let his touch ignite
me,

Instead I'm going to watch him burn from the fire for what he
put me through.

Come and get me Flame, I dare you.

This can be read as a standalone but is better if books are read in order to get an understanding of other characters. This is book 6 of 7 of Untamed Hell fire's MC series, with a HEA. Due to mature content and themes this book is recommended for readers aged 18+, this novel may contain triggers.

Prologue

Star – Age 10

I quickly checked my purple dress in the mirror one more time. The yellow gold star bracelet shines against my wrist that Zayne bought me, and I smile wide. My dark blonde hair is up in a neat bun that my momma did for me, while my caramel eyes shine with happiness. Today's my art show at school. The teacher said she'd never seen someone my age with this kind of talent.

I'm nervous but excited. My daddy, who has been away on club business, said he's coming to it because my best friend Zayne has to be with the club that both our fathers are a part of. He's eight years older than me, but he has always been by my side and my person. He bought me the bracelet last week and made me promise to never take it off.

I quickly rush out of my pink room, heading down the stairs.

My sister is sitting on the black sofa on her phone. Her long blonde hair is up in a messy bun. She's four years older than me and really mean; for as long as I can remember, she's treated me badly. If momma or daddy paid any attention to me, she tried to take it away again, and most days I'd come home to find my pocket money gone. I turn the corner, heading towards the kitchen, ignoring her, when a grin takes hold of my face and I squeal.

“DADDY.”

Momma chuckles while he grins at me; his caramel eyes, much like my own, much to my sister's dismay, are shining with happiness as I run over to him. He catches me with ease, lifting me up, and I hold onto him tightly. “I missed you, Daddy.”

He squeezes me, kissing my head.

“Not as much as I missed you, Starry.”

I grin at my nickname and hold onto him tighter before he drops me down. I can see Emma in the corner of my eye scowling while Daddy takes me in. “You look like the perfect princess. Are you ready to go?” I swallow hard and nod, trying to hide my nerves, but he sees it; he always does. “You’re going to do amazing, Star; I promise, I’ve seen your work.” I grin at him before he kisses my forehead. He goes over to Momma and gives her a chaste kiss, making her smile wide before he wraps his arm around my shoulders, guiding me to the door. He points at Emma and says, “Stay out of trouble, Emzy.”

She smiles at him before sneering at me when he’s not looking, like the immature girl she is, but I ignore her as we go out the glass front door. Who knew I was more grown up than my older sister?

Daddy passes me my yellow daisy helmet, and I climb onto the back of his gray Harley when he’s seated before wrapping my arms around his waist. I love riding on the back of my dad’s bike. It’s like freedom and peace all wrapped up together.

My dad drives away from our country-styled brown home, which is a few miles away from the club, heading towards my school.

I’m so nervous.

What if it’s not good enough?

What if they all laugh at me?

What if Daddy doesn’t like it? I mean, some of my paintings are of his bike!

I squeeze my dad tighter, trying to stop my thoughts from going over and over before something smashes into the back of his bike. I scream as my dad keeps control of the bike; he curses before squeezing my hands. I turn my head and manage to just see a man in his early twenties on a dirt bike with no helmet on grinning. He has a devil’s cut on him, his greasy hair is all over the place, and his dark brown eyes look dead, and I swallow hard. He revs up to us again, making me gasp as

my dad tries to lose him when the man points a gun at us. He shoots, and I scream as it hits my leg, pain shooting through me.

Dad curses again, revving his bike before going even faster.

“HOLD ON STARRY.”

I do as I’m told, holding my daddy even tighter, my heart racing. He tries to lose the bike before the man behind us shoots again, hitting my dad’s back tire. It goes bang, and I scream as we’re both flown off it. I go flying in the air before scraping across the gravel, the stones burning into my skin. I hit my head hard, making me go dizzy despite my helmet. I felt so dizzy that I felt sick, and my eyes started to go black before I heard my dad call my name.

I pass out with only one thought on my mind:

Daddy.

I blink my eyes; the light is blinding. It takes me a minute. I look around, seeing that I’m in a hospital. My momma’s talking with Uncle Doc, a club brother, while Emma stands near my bed, not really seeing anything, her eyes cloudy.

“Doc, it’s been three days; when will she wake?”

Her face is red and puffy, and I remember, Daddy. My body starts to shake, and just as Doc is about to talk, I start screaming as pain shoots through my body.

“DADDY...DADDY...WHERE’S MY DADDY...”

My mom gasps as tears run down my face. I want my daddy.

Uncle Doc rushes over to me while Momma cries, looking into my eyes, which look so much like her husband.

“I WANT MY DADDY!” I scream.

Momma snaps out of it and rushes over to me, gently moving my hair out of my face. “I’m s-sorry b-baby, daddy-daddy’s gone.”

I shake my head and scream out in pain as she sobs, trying to calm me down, but it won’t work.

“DADDYYYYY..” I scream and start to thrash about in bed.

This is my fault; he’s gone because of me because I begged him to take me to my art show.

But he can’t be gone; I heard him shouting for me.

That’s the last thing I remember as the world goes black again.

It’s all my fault.

Flame - Age 18

I groan as Ginger deep-throats my cock. Fuck me, that feels good. She looks up, her green eyes sparkling, while I grip her brightly dyed ginger hair. She used to go to school with us; she’s a few years older than me and had hung around the club a lot, liking the brother’s attention. She had applied to work for us, cleaning, cooking, and maintaining the clubhouse along with other women, but had decided to become a sweet butt too. They are women who love to please the brothers, which I finally patched in as an hour ago, and this right here is my reward.

She circles her tongue around the head of my cock before sucking me deep, one of her hands fondling my balls and making my spine tingle.

Fuccckkk.

I grip her hair tighter and grunt out, “As good as that feels, baby, I want your cunt.”

She lets my cock go with a pop and grins at me before getting up, then I turn her around and mount her over the pool table where Gunner is currently fucking Clitter. I flip the barely there black skirt Ginger has on up, then sheath myself before gripping her hips, placing the head of my cock at her panty-free, dripping entrance, then slamming into her wet cunt. She gasps, “Yes,” before I start thrusting hard.

I lean over her, not stopping my pace as I pull her bra down, tugging on her nipples, her cunt tightening around me. “Flame, shit, yes,” she mumbles over and over before I reach down between her and the pool table, finding her throbbing clit and then pinching it hard before she

cums screaming my name. I move my hips faster, prolonging her orgasm before I pull out because you never fucking cum in a sweet butt, gripping my cock, then stroke myself before cumming in the condom groaning.

Fuck me, that was good.

I grin as she lays on top of the pool table, breathing heavily, and I tap her ass while taking the condom off. She turns around, her fake tits pop out nicely, and she opens her mouth. I proceed to empty the condom into her mouth, watching her swallow every last drop, making my grin turn into a smirk. I put my now flaccid cock away before pecking her lips, then rasping near the mouth, "Be ready for me later, baby." She grins wide while I walk away, fucking loving being out of the prospect faze, as I throw the condom in the bin, then give a nod to Carl for a beer. He also went to school with us but is now only starting out as a prospect.

Us generation of kids gets to start at seventeen, while Carl had to hang around during that time to ensure he was loyal enough to even prospect with us and couldn't start prospecting until he turned eighteen. He slides a beer over to me, and I give him a nod in thanks before taking a sip and watching my brothers celebrate. I wasn't the only one who patched in today; most of us generation kids did, and it's fucking awesome.

An hour later, we're all still celebrating when Dead Shot, Axel's father, and our president rushes into the room. The music is switched off, and everyone looks at him. His eyes are glossy, making everyone tense before he clears his throat.

"About half an hour ago, when Bones was taking Star to her art show, they were attacked by what Tank found on the cameras to be a Devil's member on a dirt bike. He shot at them both."

I stand up, my body vibrating. I was supposed to take her, but the club called me in on business, which was me being patched in. My Pres looks me dead in the eyes. "The route Bones went on the cameras

had been shut off; Bones is presumably dead; his body was missing on site.”

My breathing picks up. “Star?” is all I can rasp; she’s my best friend, has been since she was born, and I was the only one who could calm her down every time she was crying at only eight years old.

She has to be okay.

His eyes go glossy again, and my heart pounds. “She was found unconscious, barely breathing, a mile away from the bike; her body had been torn up by the gravel, and she had a bullet wound in her right calf. She’s currently in an induced coma.”

My anger takes hold.

Axel and Gunner rush over to me, but not soon enough, as I grab a stool and throw it across the room, narrowly missing my mother, who rushes over to me at the same time as my father. Axel and Gunner grab a hold of me as my mother crashes into my body, tears streaking her cheeks, while my father grabs a hold of my head, placing his forehead against mine, trying to comfort me all while I feel fucking guilty for not taking her instead. I put the club first when I should have been there for her.

Three days later, I’m slowly walking to Star’s room in the hospital. She still hasn’t woken up despite being weaned off her sedatives yesterday, but Doc said she should any day; her body and mind are healing. There’s a chance she won’t remember what happened, but there’s also a chance she might and will have to be sedated again. Her momma is struggling, scared she’s going to lose her daughter along with her husband. We brothers have searched high and low but can’t find Bones. We believe he’s definitely dead; it’s just hard because we haven’t found his body. Dead Shot spoke to the Devil’s VP Snake, who is the President’s son. He’s adamant they never put a hit out on us; they don’t want a war; they know they’ll lose, but it doesn’t fucking make sense, so we’re trying to search all areas to find out what the fuck happened and why.

I round the corner, my head going round and round about whether they're trying to screw with us and whether I should hack their servers when I hear Star screaming.

“I WANT MY DADDY.”

My heart pounds as I take off on a run towards her room.

“DADDYYYYY..”

She sounds in so much pain that I rush inside to see her momma crying inconsolably while her sister stands numbly near her bed, watching on in horror as Doc sedates her sister, pain etching her features. I rush over to Star's bed, picking up her hand that's full of road rash before gently moving her dark blonde hair out of her face. I look towards Doc, and he nods, pain etching his features. “It's the first time she's woken; give her time.” I nodded because we knew this could happen.

I lean down, kissing her forehead as her mother cries in the background, but I ignore her, leaning down towards Star's ear, rasping.

“I'll always protect you, my Firefly.”

I move to look at her face again, running my fingers through her hair, and I make that promise over and over in my head to always protect her.

It's just a shame at this moment that I don't realize I'd be the reason for most of her fucking pain over the years.

Chapter 1

Star – Age 16

I blink, realizing class has finished, and I quickly close my sketchbook every day, ignoring what I've drawn before getting my bag. It's not like I don't see them every hour of every day anyway.

Dark brown eyes—so dark they look black—swim my vision all the time. I've sketched them so many times over the years. The club, even momma, all believe Daddy's gone and dead, but I don't think he is. He shouted for me after the bike crashed; he was still alive. I can feel it, despite everyone telling me it's my imagination. I will find him, even if it takes me years, and I'll prove them all wrong.

My daddy's alive; I just know it.

I walk out of class heading to the cafeteria to grab something before disappearing to the art room until my next class. I didn't have any friends, and not for lack of trying, but when my sister came to Parkerville High, she was the school mean girl but also known as easy. If someone wanted to get laid behind the bleachers, they went to her, so because of her reputation as well as the fact that I'm a club brat, technically a princess of the club, no one wants to be my friend; instead, I'm bullied almost daily. The girls leave condoms in my locker, take my clothes during PE, and trip me in the hallway before trying to corner me in the bathrooms with scissors, while the guys, well, try to proposition me daily, all while degrading me.

I quickly grab a sandwich and a drink, not really hungry, before walking quickly out of the cafeteria, ignoring the snickering, and head to the art room, thinking about calling Zayne, or as the club's brothers now call him, Flame. I'm the only one who can call him by his given name; he's my best friend, my world. Before my dad went missing, he was my protector, someone I looked up to too, but afterward, he became someone I could rely on, and my feelings turned from

platonic to a crush to, well, madly deeply, soul-crushing love, but he doesn't see me that way. To him, I'm his little sister, and it's hard, especially when I see him with the sweet butts, women who are basically like my sister.

mean and slutty.

Sighing; I round the corner near the art room when someone grips my arm roughly, slamming me into the lockers, and I gasp in pain when my head hits the metal hard. I look up into Barney's gleaming blue eyes. He's my main tormentor, and why? Because I turned him down over and over again while my sister decided to break the fucking law and sleep with him, he's only seventeen!

I try to shove him but he's a linebacker on our schools football team and triple my size.

He chuckles when I attempt to shove him again before he cups my privates. Bile rises up my throat while my left-hand presses the record button on my phone in my hoodie pocket, "GET OFF ME!" I shout, and he just chuckles.

"Now why would I do that, hmm?" He bends forward, inhaling me, and I try to struggle, acting out like I'm some damsel, before he realizes who he's messing with. Daddy will be proud of my theatrics. "No one here will ever believe you over me when I rip through your virginity.

Maybe if you weren't such a prissy prude then I wouldn't have to grab your tight cunt like this would I?"

My nostrils flare before I bring my head back and slam it forward, hitting his nose. He cries out as it crunches before I lift my leg, hitting his crown jewels hard. He bends forward, coughing, and I shove him again. This time he falls on his butt while cupping his junk, falling on his side, gasping in pain, and I lean forward and sneer.

"Next time, don't go putting your hands on a girl's privates without her consent, jackass."

I spit on him before rushing towards the doors, refusing to stay at this school any longer. I need to speak to Momma and see if

she can speak to the head for me because I can guarantee that with his star player injured, he'll ignore the recording. I need a flipping adult to help fight my battle. I get home twenty minutes later, not noticing the bike in the driveway, and rush into the kitchen looking for Momma, but she's not there, which means she probably didn't get out of bed again. She has her bad days where she'll be in the kitchen cooking a storm where several shopping bags will be placed all for her and my sister on the side, ignoring the fact she has another daughter who reminds her too much of her supposedly dead husband, or she'll have her bad-bad days where she'll stay in bed numb.

Sighing, I go up the stairs. I miss my sweet and kind momma, but ever since daddy disappeared, she's been disconnected, and ever since my so-called sister put a seed in momma's head, she now blames me for daddy's disappearance, so instead of being comforted and nursed back to health during my skin grafts due to the severe road burns, I had to go through it all on my own, which thankfully wasn't done by Doc. If the club finds out how she's treated me, she'll be kicked out and homeless. This house is in the club's name.

I never told Zayne about how I've been treated over the years, anyone really. The president is only just aware of what my sister is like because he saw how she spoke to me last weekend when she thought no one was looking, so I told him snippets and made him promise to keep quiet about it. I only have two years left, then I'll move out and use the money Daddy left for me to get an apartment.

I go around the corner when my sister's bright purple door opens, and I tense, expecting another lashing from her, but instead, absolute heartbreak shatters through me as Zayne walks out while putting his cutback on. His black hair is all messy, and he has a few hickeys on his neck. My tears start to build up when my sister props herself against the doorframe, looking at his bum. Her hair is also a mess, and she's on nothing but a sheet.

He slept with my sister?

My heart beats frantically in my chest, and I quickly rush into the bathroom, closing the door gently as my tears start to fall.

The club women I could handle, not my own sister.

I know I have no claim on him but he knows about my feelings. Is this his way to push me back, seriously? All he had to do was tell me he'd never be interested, not sleep with my mean-flipping sister!

I hear her door click shut before the front door closes, and I wait until I hear his bike that I didn't even see when I walked in, and I wipe my tears quickly, taking a deep breath before leaving the bathroom.

Maybe this is for the best, and I can finally move on from my feelings for him. Maybe even distancing myself from him. If he can do this knowing what it would do to me and knowing my sister would brag and throw it in my face, then maybe he's not even a friend to begin with.

I sniffled again before opening my mother's bedroom door. She's lying in bed, cuddling my dad's housecoat, and I clear my throat.

"Momma? I was, uh, wondering if we could talk." She doesn't acknowledge me as usual, and I swallow hard, feeling unwanted. With what Zayne's just done, I feel like I have no one. "Momma? A boy in school, he, uh, he grabbed a hold of me on the way to art class..." I don't get to finish. Her eyes snap to mine, anger shining through them as well as disgust making me flinch.

"I've told you once; I won't tell you again. Art is no way of a future; drop the class or I'll drop it for you, Star!"

Her eyes are so full of hate, just like my sisters, every time she looks at me. My tears fall again, and I quickly wipe them away and nod my head before leaving her room. Clearly, I can never speak to my mother about things again; why I keep trying, I don't know. She'll forget about this conversation, which is a good thing because, like hell, am I allowing her to drop my only passion! I'll run away before that happens.

I shut the door behind me before taking a deep breath. There's one person I know who will listen to me and help me out. I start to walk down the hallway again when my

sister's door opens again. I ignore her, but it doesn't stop her from being nasty.

“Well, if it isn't the little murderer, Ditching School now, are we? Do yourself a favor, bitchface; stay away from Flame; he's mine now.”

I continue to ignore her and go down the stairs and out the front door before starting the walk to the clubhouse. When I get there, the prospect lets me in, and I give him a small smile. A few brothers are on their bikes, so they must have a club run today. Good, that means Zayne will be going because he's the road captain, and a break from him seems like a good idea to me right now. I make it near the door when I hear Zayne shout, and I sigh.

“FIREFLY!”

He rushes over to me, his hickey standing out. He goes to pick me up and swivel me around like he normally does, but I step back, making him frown. “Star? What's wrong? And why are you not in school?”

I snort and shake my head at him. “Seriously? You sleep with my sister, the person who has treated me poorly all my life when you knew I had feelings for you, and you stand there looking all confused, then question why I'm not in school like you have a right?”

He sighs and drops his head. “Look, Star, you are only sixteen, so you won't understand, but what I get up to with your sister is between me and her, and I think it's about time you got over your little crush, and if this helps, then great.”

Son of a...

He swallows hard, seeing the coldness in my eyes, before I give him a fake smile and a peck on the cheek before I whisper, “All you had to do was tell it to me straight, but instead you turned into the biggest jackass going, who I no longer see as my best friend. I hope she gave you the Chlamydia she was diagnosed with yesterday; get lost Flame.”

He flinches when I call him by his road name, which I never do unless he's upset me, and I wave to the other brothers

before heading inside, completely ignoring him as he calls for me.

So much for him always having my back.

Sighing, I go into the clubhouse, ignoring the sweet butts who all look at me with raised brows, curiosity etching their features as I go past the bar, heading towards Dead Shots office. He's the Pres and was best friends with my dad and with Doc. I knock on his door before he says to enter, and I walk in.

He smiles wide at me, his blue eyes sparkling. "Starfish, shouldn't you be at school?"

I give him a small smile before getting my phone out; he looks at it confused before my shout comes over the phone, then Barney's chuckle. The more the recording goes on, the tenser Dead Shot becomes, his blue eyes getting darker, and once it's finished, he has to take several deep breaths before he can speak.

"This happened today."

I give a nod.

"You told your momma?"

I give him a shrug, and he nods, knowing she fobbed me off.

"And your sister?"

I swallowed again before getting the next recording up that I was smart enough to record when I heard her door open and her nasty voice come over the speakers. Dead Shot leans back in his chair, anger etching his features.

"Alright, I will go to school tomorrow and sort this out, and as for your sister..."

I butt in, "She doesn't matter; nothing really changed with her uncle; let's just leave it, please. Two years, and I can move out."

He sighs but nods. "Okay, but if I hear her saying this shit in person, don't expect me to keep my mouth shut, sweetheart."

I give him a relieved smile before I get up and round his desk, giving him a hug and a peck on the cheek. "I'll be in Daddy's room."

He gives me a small smile and nods before I leave his office. Everyone thinks he's gone; they think me staying in his room sometimes is unhealthy, but I've convinced Dead Shot I'm in there for peace from life, to sketch, when in reality I'm still looking for him. Again, ignoring everyone in the dull, brown common room, I head to my dad's room down the hallway. I unlock the door before heading inside, then lock it again. I go over to the desk before turning the computer on, then look at the board. Picture after picture of the Devil's now VP, Hairy, the man who was on the dirt bike. So far, I've found half of his family and all of the dirty deeds he's doing behind his club's back, including screwing with our club. I've left trails for Tank, Zayne's dad, over the last two years, but not giving the culprit away. No, I need him alive, and I know his club and ours would have his blood if they knew. He keeps disappearing to Illinois, which is roughly fourteen hours by car, then to Washington, so I have feelers out under a different name. I know he still has my father, and I will find him, then I'll end Hairy myself.

I take a seat in my dad's chair before logging onto the computer, where I spend the next few hours going over data and footage when my phone rings, bringing me out of my little bubble, and I sigh, seeing who it is.

Zayne

I hit cancel, not wanting to speak to him right now, but it rings again, and I growl, hitting ignore again when I look at the footage of Hairy dragging my unconscious father into the back of a pickup van six years ago. I knew it. I fucking knew it. He is alive!

I take a deep breath. Ok, I know I can't tell the club yet; this was six years ago. They'll tell me he was dead. They'll tell me to let it go, but I won't. I won't let it go. I'll find his hideout.

My phone rings, and I growl again, hitting the pause button on the footage that an unknown

source sent me this morning and answering it, but before I can even get a word in to tell him to get lost, Zayne's angry voice echoes through the speakers.

“When exactly Star were you going to tell me someone fucking assaulted you today?”

Damn, Dead Shot.

Chapter 2

Flame – Age 24

I swallow hard as I pull my jeans over my ass, knowing she's watching me. Fuck, this was the biggest mistake I've ever made, and I know it's going to fucking haunt me for the rest of my life, but I didn't have a choice, or, well, at least that's what I keep trying to tell myself.

I button my dark blue jeans up before grabbing my black t-shirt, ignoring the shooting star tattoo I have going down my left arm.

Fuck, she's going to hate me when this gets out, and it will get out.

“Can't you stay a little while longer, Flames, baby?”

Flames baby?

What the actual fuck? I shake my head before turning my head a little. “Nah, I've got to get going. You know I've been newly appointed Road Captain; I can't be late for the run.” She pouts, hating that she's not above club business, but nods her head, her dark blonde hair a mess. It's the only feature she shares with her sister, my best friend—the girl I've started to fall in love with—that's fucking blindsided me. She's only fucking sixteen, for fucks sake, yet she's all I fucking think about, and it's so fucking wrong. I swallowed hard again and picked up my cut. I had to do this to put distance between us.

I fucking had too. Right?

“Right, I've got to go. I'll see you later.”

She grins wide, getting up and clearly wanting a kiss, which is not fucking happening. I ended up fucking her from behind when she started sucking on my neck, marking me when I refused to fucking kiss her. I turn, ignoring the sheet draped over her and her brown eyes that shine with lust, heading towards the door. She shares her mother's eyes, while Star has her father's caramel eyes and tanned skin, which I'm aware is

something Emma has hated her for, so I can guarantee she'll soon throw this in her sister's face, which I know is cruel, but it's really fucking needed. Everyone knows Star has a thing for me, and now I know I've fallen for her. I need to put the distance between us, between my lingering feelings and her perfect fucking smile,

I leave out of the bright fucking purple door and quickly put my cut on. I ignore Emma watching me from behind and rush out of the house; it's like a shrine to Bones, and I need to get out of here before Star gets home from school. It's one thing to be told I fucked her sister, but it's another to shove it down her throat in person. I don't want to hurt her, fucking Emma. Fuck.

I felt like I was going to fucking vomit. My cock took a while to even play ball.

I climb on my bike, the orange flames on my tank glaring at me that Star painted last year, and I swallow hard before roaring down the road, heading back to the clubhouse with Star on my mind like she has been these past few months. My parents had noticed the change, and along with our Pres, the lingering longing looks I sent her way, or how I've held her longer than I fucking should have, and they've all agreed I could date her, but only hold her hand and basically court her until she turns eighteen, but my problem is that she lost her father to this life. There's no guarantee I won't lose mine too. Star deserves more than that; she deserves to be free from club life and the brotherhood; she deserves to be happy where the reminder of her father isn't haunting her. She deserves to be happy, and I don't think she would be tied down to a brother, so I'll push her away as much as I can while trying to keep a hold of our friendship, even if it fucking kills me.

I get to the clubhouse within five minutes before pulling up beside the van that will be transporting our goods, with a couple of prospects driving it. The club run to Wincher is only an eight-hour round trip where we ship armory to the Rebel's MC, who then sells it on. It's the first trip I've organized under the supervision of my father, Tank.

He looked like a proud fucking peacock when I refused to do his same route as last month.

I quickly rush into the clubhouse, heading to my newly appointed council brother's room, the one right next to Bones' that only Star goes into now; only she has the key that Dead Shot agreed to, to which Emma threw a hissy fit. I press my hand on his door before heading into mine, taking a quick shower to wash Emma's nasty stench off my fucking cock before getting dressed in some fresh clothes. Black jeans and a white T-shirt before messing my long hair on top. I put my cut back on, grab my keys and wallet, and rush out to my bike again, where Dagger is most likely waiting for me. He will be taking over as VP next week, so this is his first official outing in a higher position.

Just as I get near my bike, a flash of dark blonde hair catches my attention, and I furrow my brows in confusion. Star still has three hours left of school, so why in the fuck is she at the clubhouse?

I shout, using her nickname, "FIREFLY!" and rush over to her, about to pick her up and spin her around like I normally do when disgust etches her features, and she takes a step back from me, making me frown in confusion.

What the fuck?

She doesn't know about her sister yet. I mean, she doesn't, right?

Fuck, why am I suddenly regretting my decision to go down that route?

"Star? What's wrong? And why are you not in school?"

Fuck, I know what's wrong, but I need her to confirm it for me, and I need to fucking pray that I haven't lost my best friend and that I've only drawn the line between us. I can't imagine my life without my little firefly.

She snorts and shakes her head, and I know instantly, "Seriously? You sleep with my sister, the person who has treated me poorly all my life when you knew I had feelings for

you, and you stand there looking all confused, then question why I'm not in school like you have a right?"

Wait?

Treated poorly—what the fuck is she going on about?

I sigh and drop my head; she's making shit up in her head. See, this is why I couldn't try with her; she's too young, too immature, and making shit up. "Look, Star, you're only sixteen, so you won't understand, but what I get up to with your sister is between me and her, and I think it's about time you got over your little crush, and if this helps, then great."

I look up in time to see coldness in her eyes and swallow hard. She's never looked at me this way before. She gives me the fakest fucking smile going before standing on her tiptoes to kiss my cheek before whispering, not breaking eye contact, "All you had to do was tell it to me straight, but instead you turned into the biggest jackass going who I no longer see as my best friend. I hope she gave you the Chlamydia she was diagnosed with yesterday; get lost, Flame."

She turns and walks away from me, the blue summer dress swishing in the light breeze.

"STAR!"

I shout, but she ignores me, heading into the clubhouse, most likely going to her father's room, which no one has access to. For fucks sake,

Sighing, I run a hand through my hair before going to my bike. Dagger gives me a brow raise, but I just shake my head and climb on my bike, revving her up before taking my place at the passenger's side of the van that will be transporting our goods for the Rebels.

We make it to the handover in just under four hours. Dagger speaks to Shorty, the Rebel's VP, while I look at my phone, ensuring the route back is still possible as the prospects switch vans.

I'm just going over the route back when my phone rings and I furrow my brows when the Pres's name pop up, and I answer

it instantly,

“Pres?”

He sighs, “Fuck Flame.”

I tense.

“I’m not even going to go into how fucking stupid you are for trying to push Star away by fucking her sister, who, by the way, instantly threatened Star, telling her to stay away from you.” I swallow hard, shit. “But fuck, she’s going to kill me for this; Star was assaulted at school.”

I sit up straighter on my bike, my back ridged, anger overriding my emotions, causing Dagger to walk over to me with Hawk, our soon-to-be Sargent, at arms, and I place my phone on loudspeaker. Shorty joins too to make sure everything’s ok, but it’s fucking not!

“What do you mean Star was fucking assaulted?”

The men tense while Pres sighs again, “Some fucker who fucked her sister earlier this year decided she must be easy too.” I swallow hard again, bile rising in my throat. She kept turning him down, and he didn’t like it. He cornered her on the way to her art class at lunchtime and cupped her, threatening to take her virginity.” I growled along with the others. “She did well and recorded the whole thing; the guy is a linebacker and fucking popular in the school, so she knew she needed evidence. She acted like the scared little girl he thought she was until she head-butted him, broke his nose, and then kneed him. She went to tell her momma, but she was having a bad day, so she came to me. I thought you ought to know. I have called the school; the guys fucked, and I’ve pulled Star out of it; she’ll be homeschooled by Jewels until she heads to art school.”

I sigh; this is why I won’t be with her; the clubs already fucked her chances of having friends, and now guys are assaulting her, thinking she’s easy. I understand her sister giving in all the time didn’t make it any easier for Star, but now she’s not going to have the school life. At least she’ll have Jewels, though. She’s basically Dagger’s mother. His

birth mom had died during childbirth, and Jewels was his mother's best friend. His dad was forced to take him on, much to Leslie's dismay, his Step-momma.

"I'll call her now."

He clears his throat. "She may not want to talk to you, son; you fucked her sister to push her away." The brothers around me wince while Shorty's mouth drops open in shock. "I know Pres, but whether she likes it or not, I'm still her best friend."

He wishes me luck before hanging up while the brothers wince again and I nod, "Yeah, I fucked up."

"No shit," Shorty mumbles as the men chuckle while I flip them all off before we say bye to the Rebels, who offered to kidnap the fucker who assaulted Star, making us laugh as we head to George's diner for a bit of grub before catching up with the empty van that's now heading home. The brothers go in to order while I stay on my bike and call Star. She ignores my call, causing my anger to spike. I fucking fucked up big time. I know this, but she's acting a little immature about all this.

Dammit, I thought this was the best way. She deserves more than me for this fucking life. I press call again, and she finally answers. I don't give her time to talk, though.

"When exactly Star were you going to tell me someone fucking assaulted you today?"

She sighs, "I'm sorry. Was this before or after you decided to walk out of my sister's room covered in hickeys?" Fuck, that explains her anger. She saw. "Look, Zayne, I haven't got time for this. You were busy, so I went to Uncle."

I sigh, "I thought I was doing what was right, Star, your only sixteen."

"That may be so, but you should have gone about it the right way, not that way. I know you and I are never going to happen, but you didn't have to do that with someone who treated me poorly for as long as I can remember."

I swallow hard.

“Did you know she’s called me a murderer since I was ten?” My eyes widen. What the fuck? “Yeah, she blames me for my father being killed; her exact words today when I went home to see momma about what happened at school were, and I quote, ‘Well, if it isn’t the little murderer. Ditching school now, are we? Do yourself a favor, bitchface; stay away from Flame; he’s mine now.’” My nostrils flare, shit, “You say you’re my best friend, my protector, yet you’re the one who just hurt me all to try and push me away without even trying to talk to me first.

And for your information, WHEN have I ever acted on my feelings for you? NEVER, you say I’m the immature one; maybe you need to take a hard look in the mirror.”

I wince again. Fuck, I know she never acted on them; today was more for me because of my feelings. Dammit, maybe I am the immature fucking one like she said. I sigh, “I’m sorry, Firefly; I really am. I just thought this would be the one way to try and help squash those pesky feelings I knew you were developing,” *while also keeping my own at bay*, but I don’t say it out loud; instead, I rasp, “I don’t want to lose my best friend.”

She sighs, “It’s fine; besides, I got my justice because you most likely have Chlamydia now anyway.”

My eyes widen. “I thought you were just saying that to fucking scare me.”

She chuckles. “Nope, momma took her to the doctor yesterday; she’s on medication for the treatment; you may want to go and see Doc before it rots off.”

I swear, while she laughs the little devil, shaking my head, “I’ll message him in a minute about this fucker.”

“He has been dealt with; my sore head shows for it too, so don’t worry; now I’ve got to go; school work to catch up on; I’ll see you tomorrow.”

I smile. “Our friend’s date is still on Firefly.”

“Ok, but expect a kick in the crowned jewels.”

I chuckle as we say bye before I sigh because I know she'll nut junk me. I should have just spoken to her like a fucking man because now I've probably got the fucking clap. Shaking my head, I quickly message Doc as I head into the diner for some grub.

Me – can you schedule me for some tests? I fucked up and fucked Emma to push Star away. Yes, we used a condom, but better safe than sorry. She's got Chlamydia. My finger hovers over the send button before I curse and press the damn button.

He messages back straight away, and I narrow my eyes, shaking my head.

Doc – sure! I should have picked myself off the floor from laughing so hard from the karma that brought it justice for your fuckup by the time you get back later.

For fucks sake, this is probably going to fucking spread around the brothers. Fucking Emma!

Chapter 3

Star – Age 18

I giggle as I run away from a flour-covered Zayne in the club's garden. I waited patiently for him to come into the club's kitchen that I was banned from after nearly burning the place down. He didn't expect it, and as soon as he walked in, he looked like a deer in headlights seeing me in a kitchen, which is why I've booked myself into cooking lessons where I'll hopefully get better. But anyway, the reason I was in the kitchen was because I threw a flour bomb at his face that exploded all over him before I rushed out of the side door.

“GET BACK HERE, YOU LITTLE WITCH.”

I giggle some more, going quicker, “MAYBE NEXT TIME YOU'LL THINK AGAIN BEFORE SPILLING MY PAINTS.”

I hear his growl as I pick up speed: “IT WAS A FUCKING ACCIDENT.”

“YEAH, SO WAS THE FLOUR.”

I hear him growl again, but he can't hide the chuckle. I dodge a bench before stupidly looking behind me, and Zayne's arms automatically wrap around me, and we both tumble on the grass laughing. I end up on my back while he leans over me and says, “You are not supposed to be in a kitchen, Firefly.”

I giggle and shrug while his eyes shine with pure happiness, and I swallow hard. I'm eighteen, and I always said I would try just once, and if he knocks me back, then fine.

With all the courage I could find, I lean up and kiss his lips gently.

He freezes just like I knew he would, then wrenches his lips away from mine like I burned him, and pain slices through me, and it's absolutely frustrating because I know he feels the same as me. He holds onto me longer when we hug, he smells my hair often, and his gaze always lingers on me. Longing

shines through his eyes every time, yet he has it in his head that I cannot be a part of club life when I'm already flipping living in it. I have been since I was born; it's in my blood just like it's in his, but as usual, the alpha male in him seems to think I'm this damsel in distress who needs telling what to do. He gets off me and helps me up before he scowls at me. Ah, here comes the bone-crushing, heartbreaking, wrenching lie he's about to give me, where he pretends he never realized I still harbored feelings for him.

“Star...”

I don't let him finish, and I wave my hand up before passing him. “Yeah, yeah, I know.”

He grips my arm, making me look at him. “I see you as a sister, Star; that cannot and will not happen again.”

I nod my head, hiding my hurt and the snort that ironically wants to come out. For the past two years, the brothers have told him my feelings are still very real, and for two years he's acted clueless on purpose, hoping they'll just disappear while he screws anything with a vagina, mainly Ginger, to hide his feelings, and I tell yah, it's getting old.

I shake my head at him before turning again, heading towards the club's gates, and he shouts for me,

“STAR!”

I put my hand up, not stopping while talking loudly over my shoulder, “It's fine, Zayne, I've got an appointment to get to,” before mumbling, “and maybe a dating website to sign up for because I'm done waiting around for someone who doesn't think I'm worth fighting for.”

I get to the Jeep Wrangler that my father left for me with Dead Shot when I was only 8 years old. He also taught me to drive before he disappeared. I head towards Rosie's house, where her granddaughter Annalise will teach me how to hopefully cook and take my mind off my heartbreak.

One can only hope.

I get there in under ten minutes, and a beautiful woman who looks around three or maybe four years older than me stands

on the porch waiting. Her long blonde hair hangs down her back while her eyes shine with happiness. Rosie mentioned on the phone when I called asking for cooking lessons from her that her granddaughter was homeschooled and doesn't have much of a social life and that this would be right up her street, which sounds really like me, even though I'm more of a painter than a cook.

At least we're the same height, though.

I get out and smile at her, making her smile back before we hug it out. "You must be Star."

I nod. "Yep, and you must be Annalise?"

She smiles wide. "You can call me Annie; come on in."

We walk through her grandmother's flowered wallpaper living area towards the kitchen, and she hands me an apron and says, "OK, what experience do you have in the kitchen?"

I wince, "I managed to set the club kitchen alight, making toast."

Her eyes widen, and I nod before she swallows hard. "OK, so starting at the basics, I got it."

We spend the next three hours going over the basics, and I actually don't suck while she tells me all about Sweet Treats, a bakery she's opening. She mentioned Rosie showing her some of my artwork and asked if she could hang it on her walls, and I must admit, embarrassingly so, I squealed in delight. Annie and I clicked instantly in the time we spent in the kitchen, and I just knew we'd be great friends, which is amazing considering no one ever wants anything to do with me, not even my own mother.

After we set up another appointment, I give Annie a kiss on her cheek before leaving, heading home with a sigh. I wanted to have my own place by now, but unfortunately, when I contacted the lawyer the club has on retainer about my trust, he said I'd already signed documents gaining access that morning on my birthday two weeks ago, and he asked if I was 'ok.' I had to swallow my anger. When I got home, my mother and sister were loading

bags into a cab. My sister had smirked, climbing into the back while my mother looked down on me, refusing to look into my caramel eyes that were so much like my father's.

“I’ve withdrawn the \$10,000 my husband left you. I’m taking your sister on holiday; it’s the least you could do; seems as though you killed my love.”

I just stood there in shock, like seriously, my mother committed fraud and stole from me without a care in the world, and when I went to my room, my draws had been emptied and the envelope of cash I had been saving from the café job I got at sixteen to pay for my clothes because my mother refused to because I had ‘killed her husband’ was gone. They stole my hard-earned wages and my trust from my father, all while leaving the house in a mess that I had to clean up before they got back and restocked the fridge per her request in a note. The lawyer had called me back after I hung up on him, rushing home. He asked if I wanted to press charges, but I obviously declined; they’re my family, and what would have been the point?

I pull up in front of my mother’s home and sigh again before getting out, grabbing the extra paint supplies I’d picked up on the way back so Annie has some new paintings for her walls, and head inside. My mother is sitting on the sofa, drinking a glass of wine, and sneers when she sees my supplies. She hates that I’m in art school and has made it perfectly clear that it’s not a job that will continue to pay her bills and put food on her table. My wages from my job either go to her or I’m out on my ass; it’s just a good thing she doesn’t know how much I earn, including tips.

“Where’s your wage?”

She asks me this every time she sees me, and I just shake my head at her: “I don’t get paid until the end of the week, you know that.” She sneers again, but I ignore her, going to my room, already fed up with being here. I’m tempted to move into my father’s room at the clubhouse. No one else can gain access, so they’ll never know I’m there unless the prospect at the gate tells Axel, the new Pres who is also Dead Shots’ son and someone I see as a brother. I know my mother would still

demand my wages, though, because, you know, I killed her husband and all.

I shake my head before going to my door but stop when I hear my sisters moan, “Oh, Flame, yes, yes, right there, fuck your cock is so big.”

My whole body vibrates.

Please, no, please don't tell me I kissed him and he decided to go to my sister yet again.

I stand here for another couple of minutes, hoping I'm wrong, when his long groan echoes through the hallway, “Fuck, yesssss,” and my tears instantly spill. How much more hurt can someone take?

I go to my room and look around.

I have locks on my draws that Emma has bitch slapped me for time and time again. This isn't home anymore; it's tainted because of them and because of him. With that thought in mind, I grab my suitcase from under my bed and the two duffle bags. I don't have much to pack; my sister and mother have slowly been clearing out my belongings and selling them. That's why I've locked away the precious things my father got me, like the fairy musical box, the money my mother doesn't know about, and the necklace that has a sapphire gem on it that my sister had been eyeing for months after Daddy bought it. I grab the locked box from under my bed; new knife marks are on it, and I roll my eyes before putting it in my suitcase. I then pack the rest of my clothes, which aren't much, before grabbing the pictures of my dad and me as well as my paint supplies.

Quietly as I can, I grab the suitcase and two bags and slowly make my way out of my now-old room, ignoring the moans coming from Emma's bathroom and the pain that shoots through me. I make my way down to see my momma passed out and nod my head before going out. I look towards my right and see Zayne's bike; another tear falls, and for once I decide to do something really petty that he kept accusing me of time and time again. I chuck my things in my Jeep before grabbing my keys.

I walk over to his bike and admire the orange flames I did for him before running the key over it several times so it's all scratched up and ruined, not giving a crap about a brother's bike being sacred because, well, guess what? So was my heart, and he tore it out. I walk back to my Jeep and turn on the hands-free after starting her up. Dead Shot answers after the second ring,

“Sweetheart, is everything okay?”

I clear my throat. “I'm going to stay in Dad's room for a few weeks until I get my own flat. Is that okay?”

He's quiet for a few moments as I drive away from my childhood home before he clears his throat. “Yeah, Starfish, that's fine; I'll let the prospects know to keep it on the down low. Do you want to talk about it?”

“Not really, but thanks, Uncle. I'll see you later.”

I hang up before going to the clubhouse, where I'll need to try my hardest to ignore Ginger and her sneering looks and whatever Zayne does in his room. Thankfully, the walls are soundproof. I won't be there for long, though, even if I have to get the crappiest flat in town.

Hopefully, I can find the courage to leave this town behind as soon as I have the money, but first I need to find my dad. I'm close; I know I am. I can feel it. Hairy will mess up, and I'll be there to witness it.

Chapter 4

Flame – Age 26

I take another swig out of the whiskey bottle before walking up to Star's house. We need to talk; her kissing me today was a mistake, and she needs to realize that. We can't be together; she deserves a better life than this one with me.

Fuck, just feeling her lips against mine, I take another swig out of the bottle. I really shouldn't have ridden here like this.

The door opens before I can knock, and Emma stands there, grinning at me in nothing but a towel. My dick likes what he sees, but that could just be the booze. While some men get whiskey dick, mine fucking perks up. She bites her bottom lip, and my stupid idea from two years ago comes back to mind. It took me a year to get Star and me back to well-being, Star and I but I think she needs another realization.

We're never going to happen, no matter how much I want us to.

I take a step forward before grabbing Emma's ass, and she squeals, which goes right through me, but I ignore it. I need to do this; Star needs to know we can only be friends. I won't hold her back from living her life club-free. Emma puts her face into my neck, sucking lightly as I walk us to her room, slamming the door shut behind us before I drop her on her bed. I flip her over, the towel falling away, before gripping her plump ass. I notice some blood, and I roll my eyes while she moans.

"Don't worry about my period; just take my ass, baby."

I tilt my head, then shrug, whatever.

I pull my hard cock out. My Star comes to mind, and guilt starts to rise, but I ignore it. She needs this push to move on from me, so maybe I can try and move on from her. I sheath myself before taking the lube she hands out to me. Squirting a

decent amount on her puckered hole, then placing the head of my cock there and pushing in, I groan in displeasure.

How in the fuck is her ass so loose?

Shaking my head, I bottom out as she moans, pushing back on me hard and giving me the go-ahead to fuck her how I want, so I do. I twist my hand in her hair, gripping it tightly while holding her head up, and fuck her ass hard, groaning as I finally start to feel her tighten.

“Oh, Flame, yes, yes, right there, fuck your cock is so big.” She moans, and my hips move faster. I can feel my spine tingle as more liquid gushes from her cunt, her orgasm taking hold with a mixture of blood, and I quickly pull out, cumming in the condom while groaning, “Fuck, yesssss.” She turns and grins, and I know I need more. I need to betray Star so she moves on from me, which even in my drunken, fucked-up brain I know is fucking stupid, and I’m going to regret this in the morning, but unfortunately for me, my brains are not working; my body’s taking over.

“Get your ass in the shower.”

She giggles before rushing into her suite, and I follow, stripping as I do before hopping in with her, fucking her mouth this time while trying to forget my love for her sister, for someone who deserves more than my fucked-up self.

The next morning I woke up with a pounding headache and a passed-out Emma sprawled across me,

“Fuck, what did I do?” I whisper before gently moving her over, getting up, and thankfully not waking her. I look at the time and see it’s only 4 a.m., so I quickly dress, knowing I’ll have to scrub myself clean when I get back to the club. I have dried blood on my pubic hair, and it’s fucking disgusting.

Shaking my head, I quietly leave but not before longingly looking at Star’s door. She won’t want me at all after this, and I can’t fucking blame her, but that’s a good thing, I guess. This is what she needs in order to kick me to the curb fully. I don’t want to lose our friendship; she’s my everything, but we can’t have anything more, so hopefully her

feelings for me will now disappear and I can try and move on as well.

As soon as I get to the clubhouse, I rush to my room, then into my shower, where I burn myself with how hot the water is, washing Emma's fluids off me.

Thank fuck, I was smart enough to use my condoms the two times we fucked after the shower and not the ones she offered; you can never be too careful. Shaking my head, I climb out and dry myself. The shooting star tattoo catches my attention on my left arm, the letters 'Always my star, forever my heart' staring back at me, and a tear leaks out of my eye, sliding down my cheek.

I fucking wish I was good enough for her, that I didn't have blood on my hands or live through this lifestyle to give her the best life, but this is who I am; the club is in my blood, and she deserves a better, normal life without worrying about me day in and day out. I shake my head and continue drying before climbing into bed to get a couple more hours of sleep before work.

A few hours later, I'm walking into the club's kitchen, my head pounding. Ginger grins at me, placing a plate on the table for me. I thank her before digging in, letting the pancakes soak up the liquor from last night along with the bad fucking decisions I made that will forever haunt me. Dead Shot, Cammy, and Axel sit down with me, tucking into their breakfasts, when Shayla, Star's mom, rushes into the kitchen, looking frazzled and well-hung over. Her brown hair is a mess, while her brown eyes are red. Dead Shot looks at her before turning back to his food, and I furrow my brows at his behavior before she gets my attention.

"Flame, have you seen Star?"

I tilt my head. "Nah, not since yesterday morning. Why?"

She clears her throat and says, "She's missing." I went into her room this morning to grab... I mean to ask her something, but all her stuff was gone."

My brows shoot to my hairline. What does she mean, gone?

I go to open my mouth as concern shoots through me when Dead Shot speaks up but is not looking at her, causing Axel to look at his dad funny with the same look I'm most likely looking at him with.

“She's not missing if her belongings are gone, Shayla. Star's eighteen, and I'm pretty sure she was left a bit of money just like Emma was; she's probably found herself a flat to become more independent.”

Shayla's eyes shift, making me narrow mine at her before she clears her throat. “Actually, she doesn't have any money left; she said she spent it on crap as soon as she turned eighteen. Is there anywhere you all can think of as to where she'd be?”

I jerk back at her accusations while Dead Shot narrows his eyes at her, not believing a word she's saying, and I must admit, it doesn't sound like Star to blow 10k on shit yet she's never had money on her when we're together, so what really is fucking going on?

“No, I don't know where she's gone, but again, Shayla, she's packed her bags, so she's not in any danger; she's eighteen, probably wanting independence. She'll be in touch when she's most likely settled. You know Star; she likes to have everything in order.”

Shayla grinds her teeth, frustration and anger etching her features, making my suspicions of her grow. She nods before turning to leave while we watch her go. When the door shuts, I look at Dead Shot with a raised brow, and he clears his throat clearly, not wanting to tell me anything but sighs when Axel does the same raised brow as me. “She rang me yesterday; she's ready to not live in the shrine that is her childhood home. I know where she is, and she's safe and sound, so leave her be, all of you.” He pointedly looks at me, and I nod in understanding. She wants a life outside of her family, a life I'm trying to help her get by making her lose her feelings for me. She deserves to be happy, even if that means I'll be miserable. Sighing, I get up and place my plate in the sink, ignoring Ginger.

“Alright, I’m off to the garage,” I say as I pat Axel on the back. He and his father nod while I kiss Cammy’s cheek before heading to my bike. I own Fire’s Garage with the club co-signing, and currently, I have six cars that need checking over two that need their tyres changed, and three bikes in for autotuning. Busy fucking day with a hangover, but hey, at least business is fucking booming.

I get halfway to work when I notice Star walking out of the paint supply shop, and I quickly pull in near her.

“FIREFLY!” I shout to get her attention, but she ignores me, making me furrow my brows before climbing off my Harley and rushing after her, her yellow sundress swishing as she picks up speed.

What the fuck?

I quickly rush up to her, grabbing her arm lightly, making her turn to me, and I furrow my brows at the blatant coldness shining through her caramel eyes.

“Star, I shouted, and you ignored me,” I say in confusion, and she just shrugs. “It’s my time of the month; I’m in a prissy mood.”

I tilt my head. Star’s not that fucking prissy during her monthly. Normally she texts me demanding chocolate, which she hasn’t done, but fucking why? Why would she ignore me? I mean, I know I let her down yesterday after our kiss, but she had to know...

My thoughts stop, and I know she knows about Emma. Clearly, her sister decided to gloat instantly. Fuck, I’m not ready for her hate yet. “Look, Star about Emma.”

She doesn’t let me finish; she butts in, shrugging her shoulders as she starts to walk backwards. “What you and she do is none of my business; I’d just prefer not to listen to it.” I swallow hard. Fuck, she heard? She turns around and walks away from me, waving her hand up. “Sorry, I can’t stop and talk; I have a date to get ready for later.”

My hands fist at my sides with her words. A date? A fucking date? Dammit, I know I said this is what needed to happen, but

why in the fuck do I feel like I'm fucking dying on the inside?

And of course, I know the fucking answer.

Because she's the love of my life and I can never have her,
that's why.

Chapter 5

Star – Age 20

I pick up my bottle of water and have a sip. The last few years haven't been easy. After I left home, I got a crappy small apartment that I'm still stuck in because my mother still takes half of my fucking wages, and yes, I just swore when I cannot stand the language; being brought up around bikers and slutty women constantly swearing puts you off it, but my mother is still blaming me for my father's supposedly dead death, and I've been trying to keep my platonic relationship with Zayne at arm's length after he decided to screw my sister again, who seems to think she has a hold on him now, and I've had enough.

Shaking my head, I take another sip of my water, worry about my friend etching through me.

Annalise and I became really close; she's brought my cooking skills up level by level over the past two years, and she's managed to make me thousands on my paintings through her bakery. My mother obviously found out about it and decided it was her money. Despite ruining my chances at art college, she somehow managed to get me pulled out a year later. She had taken every cent I made on them until Annie found out last year. She lies whenever my mother goes in for my takings, telling her I haven't sold any when in reality I have. The money I've made is left in Annie's safe; I only take what I need for new paint supplies. Annie and I have become so close that she's actually the only person I've told about following Hairy, who finally messed up. Next week I'll be moving to Louisiana, where I've finally found him moving my now very thin dad blindfolded. I lost them through the camera, but he's definitely still in the area of Illinois. As far as the club will be aware, I'm attending their art school after my mother pulled me out of the one I was attending; only Annie will know the truth, and she's sworn to secrecy.

I'm brought out of my head when Zayne nudges me, worry-etching his features, but I just look forward. Annie, my sweet friend, was kidnapped by a man who killed her mother when she was small—a man who nearly killed her too, a man who was supposed to love and care for her. Her father had been released from prison and had been threatening her recently after she and Axel became a couple. She tried to push him away out of fear for his life, but he wouldn't let her; he held on tight, so she caved after finding out she was pregnant and told her to love everything only for her father to kidnap her, to kick her baby out of her body, and now she's laid up at the General in a comatose state, refusing to talk.

A tear falls, and Zayne quickly wipes it away, then clears his throat. "You know what we haven't done in a few years?" I shrug. "A friend date." I hold in my snort. Of course, we haven't; he screwed my sister after I gave him my first flipping kiss at eighteen because he's all I ever wanted. Heck, I still haven't gone out on a date with anyone; I've tried but canceled at the last minute every single fricking time, all while he screws around over and over again.

I'm that stupid girl in books who waits around for a guy who doesn't deserve her.

Stupid, stupid, stupid.

"Come on, we'll go to the bar for a little while; Leah's working."

Ah, Leah.

She's worked at Untamed Fire for a little while now. We started to become friends until Carl, who is now known as Razor, stated they were together and she cheated, so I hung back and ignored her, but not because I believed him; no, because I'd found out he's a traitor. When he cried, how heartbroken he was, while Cara, a waitress, sobbed how horrible Leah had treated her 'friend' in Gunner's ear, a club brother who had an instant connection with Leah, would run into her bed upset that his dream girl was apparently a 'patch chaser' nothing was adding up from the sweet girl who helped

Slicer see a girl he was crewing was trying to frame him. Now I knew they were working together, so Cara could win over Gunner. What Razor got out of any of it, I don't know, and even to this day, I still don't know.

When Razor started sleeping around as soon as he "broke up" with Leah, I monitored him all while staying back from a woman I started becoming friends with, not wanting to tip him off, and my patience played off because he contacted Hairy about the club's next run of shipments.

What a flipping shocker!

Razor hated not being on the council. He hated that he had to wait an extra year to prospect because he wasn't an MC brat. He was jealous and petty and decided to screw the club over, thinking he was too good to get caught.

I've gathered the evidence ready for Axel, but he's not having it until I find out where Hairy has hidden my dad and why Razor is suddenly involved, especially when he grew up with the brothers, but his story about Leah still isn't adding up. Why get her involved in his lies? What is it that Cara offered him to get him to comply to begin with, especially with him working for Hairy?

Her body, maybe?

"Come Firefly."

I nod, might as well do something, right?

We say bye to Axel, who is struggling without Annie, and head to my Jeep. Only girlfriends and old ladies go on the back of a brother's bike. The only one I've ever ridden was my father's, and I'd probably never get on the back of one again, although I am aware that Ginger has tried to get on the back of Zayne's a couple of times.

We get to the bar within five minutes before heading inside. I give a small wave to Leah, who furrows her brows before hope shines through her eyes, making me give her a small smile. Yeah, something's definitely not right with Razor's story about her; they just don't match. She's not high maintenance and hates drama, the complete opposite of what's

been said, and not once have I seen her with a man or even flirt with a brother apart from the longing looks to Gunner. I need to try and dig deeper; maybe I should have a look at her medical records. With that thought, I take a seat at a table while Zayne orders us some drinks.

We sit for about half an hour, where I finally loosen up, and we end up laughing just like old times, connecting again. I finally start to relax, and hope enters my chest that maybe, just maybe, we could start something until Ginger, who was not long ago at the clubhouse, saunters over, which means she followed us here. She leans down, smirking at me while whispering something in Zayne's ear, and instantly he smirks, and my heart sinks because surely he won't leave me right now, not when I need him.

He knocks on the table twice, not even thinking about his actions, not giving a crap that he's leaving me on our first friend date in two years. He gets up, wrapping his arm around a smirking Ginger, before giving me a smirk of his own: "I'll grab a lift home with Ginger so you can just head straight to your flat. I'll see you tomorrow, Firefly."

I flinch at his use of the nickname while he completely ignores me, going off with Ginger, who gives me the finger, and I swallow hard, tears starting to build. My best friend is in the hospital; it was his fricking idea to come here to begin with, and he leaves after only half an hour with a sweet butt.

I can feel my tears starting to fall, and I quickly get up, gathering my jacket and bag before rushing over to the ladies with a frowning Leah following me with her eyes before she glares at the front door where my so-called friend left, a friend I know no longer want to speak too; this is the last straw.

I get near the corner of the exit about to enter the ladies when a hand comes out of nowhere, covering my mouth roughly. I try to struggle as the person drags me out of the exit near the camera out the back, where I'm shoved to the floor, holding my face against the graveled concrete. I try to fight, kicking my legs out and bucking my body, but the person's got me pinned down, and my heart beats wildly when they lean over me.

No, no, no. I start to panic as a hand reaches around me and pinches my nipple, bile instantly wanting to come up as I thrash around to get away until the person speaks and I freeze.

“Did you really think Shags wouldn’t inform me that you were asking about me? Your daddy’s dead, and you can’t prove I did fuck all; now you’re going to be punished not just for your curious mind but also for your club’s sins.”

My heart beats harder. No, my dad’s not dead; I know he isn’t; I saw the footage. I stupidly asked Shags last week about when Hairy was back in town, saying he owed me money because I lost him underground. He’s put two and two together, coming up with five. He doesn’t realize that I’ve been following him; he just thinks I’m asking questions to get him sent down.

He chuckles, “Tell Flame and the club; I said hello, yeah, doll face; this is their penance for killing my cousin; this being you just makes it even better.”

Tears start to fall as he brings his hands to the bottom of my skirt, lifting it up, and my fight-or-flight instincts kick in. Now that the shock of him has evaporated, I start to fight to get away from him while laying my legs flat, not allowing him to gain access while screaming loudly. I’m a fucking virgin; he took my father from me for ten years; he won’t take this too. No, no, no.

I start to struggle harder; my screams go louder when Hairy grips my panties, ripping them off my body, and I start screaming some more, thrashing around. I know Leah won’t hear me because of the bar music, but Razor’s only around the corner. Razor, no, no, no, he’s already been working with this disgusting man. He’s not coming to my aid; he’s probably acting as a lookout. I hear rustling and try to get away from him before I feel him near my back entrance.

NO, NO, NO.

I start screaming louder and louder before he shoves into me really hard, making my whole body jolt forward as pain shoots through me. I feel like being torn in two, and I sob, screaming for help. He thrusts harder and harder, and I feel like I want to

die; this can't be happening. I can feel the blood dripping down my legs as my tears fall harder while his thrusts go faster, grunting with pleasure. Bile rises again in my throat.

My fight fails me, realizing I'm not going to get out of this, and I go numb, my mind blanking, going black as I stare straight ahead to protect my mental health while he uses my body, taking it, tearing my back hole in the process.

I don't know how long he goes on before I feel him rip out of me, roughly causing more pain. Wetness splashes over my bum while he chuckles before some more rustling hits my ears, but I don't move; my whole body is numb. I hear his feet shuffle near me before he spits on my face, leaving me in the alleyway whistling as he goes all while I wish and pray to die.

Dirty, I feel so dirty.

Chapter 6

Star

I don't move; I just lay here on the dirty floor, staring at the wall as uncontrollable tears fall harder down my cheeks.

That happened; it really just happened.

Thought after thought rushes through me. My best friend left me; he chose a whore over me, and I was raped because of him and the club.

They did this; they left me vulnerable. He left me vulnerable to his enemies. He left me.

I need to move; I need to get to the hospital; I need to make a plan. I'll scream and cry later, but right now I need to be the strong girl my father taught me to be.

Very slowly, as I move to my hands and knees, pain radiates through my whole body as I place my hand on the wall, using it to take my weight as I get to my feet. I can feel the blood pouring down my legs, and I see my torn underwear from my side-eye. Bile wants to come up again, but I ignore it and them while using the wall to guide me towards the road. I ensure to stay away from the door that Razor is currently manning as the bouncer. His time will come, and I'll ensure it.

I see a white sedan about to drive off down the road, and I quickly flag the person down who frowns, opening the window. My tears fall harder when I see it's Silver, another waitress. Her eyes widen in shock as I lean down and speak in the car window. She's not in her Beatle, so if the cameras are working, they won't see it's her. I clear my throat as my tears fall. "I need y-you to take me t-to the h-hospital; I've been r-raped." Her eyes fill with tears, and she nods frantically, "but y-you can-can't tell a-anyone."

She nods again before I get in the back of the car, trying to sit on my side as pain shoots through me and a sob

comes out as Silver wheelspins, doing a U-turn and heading to the General.

She breaks every speeding law to get me to the hospital in record time, her tires squealing as she comes to a stop in the emergency bay, and I pray Doc's not working tonight. A few people rush out, and I sigh in relief at not seeing Doc when Silver clears her throat, rasping, "Doc's at the bar with his old lady." I nod as she gets out, opening my door, when Mel, the nurse who has been looking after Annie, rushes to me. Shock etches her features, taking in my state before her blue eyes start to fill with tears. She turns her head and says, "I NEED A GURNEY HERE, MEG."

A doctor who I'm guessing is Meg rushes over before they both help me out, and I rasp, "d-don't tell t-the club." They both look at each other before nodding, then they rush me into the hospital towards the triage room, which was most likely the one where Annie went into. They start to attach me to the machine, helping me out of my dress and into a hospital gown. Mel squeezes my hand. "What happened, Star?"

My tears fall again. "I was r-raped a-anally."

Everyone freezes in the room when Meg nods, her professionalism coming through nicely, taking charge as part of her black hair falls over her face that comes out of her bun. "Okay, we need a full workup on blood, an HIV test, and forensic testing as well as a full examination. The police need to be informed, and we need the counselor down here."

I shake my head, making Meg go to open her mouth to protest, "No police, no counselor, no forensic testing. Everything else is okay."

Both Meg and Mel bite their lips, not happy, but nod their heads anyway before they start the workup I need. It took them a little while, and I ended up screaming when they had to do the physical examination and needed a lot of coaxing. I have never been so traumatized in my life.

A few hours later, my tears are still falling when Meg comes in and takes a seat near my bed before taking hold of my hand.

“Ok, Star, I’m just going to peel the band-aid off, alright?” I nod. “You have extensive tearing, which will take roughly a few weeks to heal. You have some scrapes and bruises, but nothing more than that. Your blood work has come back clean, but we’ll be putting you on antibiotics as a precaution. It’s going to take up to two weeks until your HIV tests come back, but I have your number, so I’ll just ring you with the results.” I nod again, my tears continuing to fall when she whispers, “Please, Star, we need to call the police.”

I shake my head and say, “No, no police, no sheriff, no one.” She nods again before wiping her own tears.

“We would prefer to keep you in for a few days, but I know you don’t want Dr. Thomas to know you were here, so we can discharge you tonight, and Mel said she’ll take you home.”

“Thank you,” I rasp, and she nods before squeezing my hand. “Come on, I’ve got some leggings and an oversized jumper I had in my locker you can wear; I’ll help you get dressed.”

I nodded and let her help me, grateful for her and Mel.

About an hour later, I’m lying on my brown sofa in my tiny one-bed apartment, trying to breathe through the pain I’ve been through tonight. My mind is running miles and miles. I pick up my phone and surprise-surprise nothing from ‘him,’ my so-called best friend, who’s probably busy with Ginger right now while I was raped, and then physically examine what needs to be done. He’s getting his rocks off, breaking my heart while I try to deal with my traumatization.

I can’t stay around here anymore. I was going to tell the club where I was moving and then come back once I finally got my dad back, but no, I can’t. I need a fresh break from them and from their way of life that got me raped. I’m going to find my dad, make that bastard pay, and then I’m going to live my life club-free.

No more brothers who don’t think about the consequences of their actions.

No more sisters spreading crap about me.

No more mothers blaming me for something I didn’t even do.

No more family stealing from me over and over, sponging off my wages, and treating me like crap.

And no more 'Flame' breaking my heart over and over again.

It's time to say goodbye to my old life.

I bring Annie's number up and press call. It rings and rings before going to voicemail, and I hang up, wiping the tears off my cheeks with the back of my hand before texting her,

Me – I need you; can we talk, please?

I stare straight ahead at my walls; the mold is coming back again due to dampness. I sit like this as my assault swims through me for about an hour when my phone finally rings. I look at it, hoping it's Annie, but huff in frustration.

Mom

I shake my head and ignore her call. I can't deal with my mother right now.

I need a plan; I need to disappear and leave.

My phone beeps, and I look at it, my tears falling again.

Mom – WHERE IS MY MONEY STAR? STOP BEING A GREEDY BITCH. YOUR SISTER NEEDS SOME NEW SHOES. IT'S THE LEAST YOU COULD DO FOR KILLING HER FATHER.

I sniffle.

How can a mother blame her daughter for ten years like this? I was ten years old, and it wasn't my fault; even if my father had been killed, it still wouldn't have been my fault. No, it's the club's fault for getting involved with bad people in the first place and upsetting them.

The club ruins everything.

Flame ruins everything.

And now they're all going to realize exactly how good I am with computers; I'm going to make myself disappear, but not before giving Flame a screw you first. Let's see how he feels having his heart torn out day after day.

Chapter 7

Flame – Age 28

I stretch my arms above my head before shutting my computer down. I've been working on the next run in a week's time. A thunderstorm is due around that time, so I've booked the cozy inn again while also looking into some new roots to take to keep the cops off our backs. The Sheriff may be Daggers and Ink's uncle but we don't need to make his job any more complicated, do we?

I check my phone and frown. Still nothing from Star. She's barely said two words to me since our friend's date when I stupidly left her for Ginger half an hour in, although I guess I should feel grateful that she's just ghosting me and didn't destroy my paintwork again that I had to go over myself when she refused a few years back after I drunkenly and mistakenly fucked her sister. Again. Fuck, I couldn't even be pissed at it when I noticed it after bumping into Star on the streets.

How in the fuck didn't I notice it beforehand I'll never fucking know.

I sigh. I know it was a fucked-up thing to leave her at the bar two weeks ago, but I could feel myself wanting to hold her and comfort her in a non-friendly way. Her pain was killing me, and I promised myself—I promised her that I wouldn't keep her in this lifestyle—but the more I've taken time these past two weeks since our friend's date, the more I've realized that I should have fucking realized sooner;

She stayed.

She never left like I thought she would; she's put down some roots here, selling her paintings. I'm not good enough for her, and I know that; fuck do I know that, but I also don't think I can hold back any longer; I don't think I can hold the love that I have for her away from her anymore. I miss her so fucking much, and I need her like I need air to breathe. If she'd gone,

left Parkerville, then fair enough, I knew I made the right decision to keep pushing her away, but she didn't, just like I haven't seen her with anyone else either. Now don't get me wrong, I know she's not a virgin; she can't be, and that fucking pisses me off, but I'm also not a fucking hypocrite, and knowing someone else touched her is just something I'd just have to live with for the rest of my life.

But one thing is for sure: she's mine; she always has been, and I think it's about time I manned the fuck up and claimed my girl on my fucking hands and knees before someone takes her from me.

I get up and grab my cut from the back of my chair, putting it on before heading to the common room, hoping Star is here. Today would have been her father's 46th birthday, and usually she comes to celebrate his life with the brothers. Normally, she'd call me to ask me to pick her up, but like I mentioned, she's ignored me for the past two weeks.

I shouldn't have left her on our first friend's date in two years; I should have fucking manned up to my feelings and taken what I really wanted then and there: my fucking girl's heart.

I have a lot of shit to grovel for. Maybe I can buy her a puppy like Axel did for Annalise. I mean, Star did try to dognap it and would have done it if I hadn't lifted her away.

Sighing again I lock my door before following the music of ACDC, where I find the old ladies dancing with their old men while the sweet butts try it on with any brother willing to fuck, which they won't do until after ten tonight per club rules; no one wants the original first lady, Axel's momma, after them. I look around the room, searching for my girl, ignoring Ginger, who's glaring at me, still pissed.

When I left the bar with her, I literally got a lift back to the clubhouse, and instead of going to her room, I went to the home that I built on the club's land. My light and dark brown country-style two-story house that Star helped me design when I turned eighteen is situated next to Slicer's light gray two-story cottage-style house; Gunner's is next to his, while Hawks is next to mine on the

end. My home is the one place no woman has ever stayed, including Star. I couldn't have her staying with me knowing my feelings; I'd never want her to fucking leave, but alas, Ginger's pissed I didn't fuck her, and I don't give two fucking shits.

I continue looking around the room when I catch Stars' dark blonde hair that's hanging loose down her back at the bar. She's in a t-shirt dress and her cowgirl boots, her head down, looking at her now empty glass, her hand going to the whiskey bottle in front of her.

Shit.

She's never believed her dad was killed. She swore she heard him scream her name after she landed on the concrete, and my dad and I have both tried to search every crack, but nothing has come up—absolutely nothing. But she hasn't stopped believing, and I know she doesn't know it, but I also know she hasn't given up searching for him.

The problem is, though, that we don't even know who ordered the hit or why. Snake, The Devil's President, is still trying to find answers to this day, especially considering it nearly brought a war between the two clubs.

Sighing, I start to walk over to her when my mother, whom I love dearly, steps in my way, and my father is quick behind her. She crosses her arms over her chest, narrowing her brown eyes at me, trying to intimidate me like I'm not 9 inches taller than her.

I bite back my smirk. “Yes, momma?”

She huffs, “Don't yes, momma me.” My dad snorts but covers it with a cough. He may be the man of the house, so to speak, but he's still shit scared of my momma; her bite is as bad as a venomous snake. Where everyone calls Axel's momma Cammy a bulldog due to her temper, they call my momma venom because her bites are poisonous.

“Leave her alone!”

I raise a brow at her while my father tenses. My parents never get in between myself and Star; they know not to. So this is a

fucking shock. I tilt my head at her, and she swallows hard, probably wondering if she made the right decision by confronting me right now.

“Look, I know you love her... you’re in love with her,” she pauses, expecting me to deny it as I have for years, but I keep my cold stare on her while my father stands back, ready to intervene if he has to, knowing Star is a touchy subject. “But you don’t want her, you...”

I butt in, “I do want her momma.”

I say it softly so she knows I’m not pissed at her for confronting me because I know she loves Star like a daughter, and she nods, “But you’re jerking her around constantly. You throw the sweet butts in her face, including her own sister. She’s been in love with you since she was ten years old, grieving the loss of her father. She tried to start something with you, and you pushed her back. I understand you think she wants out of this life, but it’s in her blood; it always has been, and for years she’s had to watch the love of her life pine for her from afar while sleeping with anything that has a skirt just to keep her at a distance. Please, son, leave her alone.”

I give Momma a small smile before kissing her cheek, then I rasp, “But I can’t leave her alone, momma. Like you said, I’m in love with her, and I’m done forcing that love down; I’m done holding back.

I think it’s about time I manned up and let Star decide whether this life is good enough for her, whether I’m good enough for her, and stop making the decisions myself.” My father smiles, sighing in relief, while my mother’s eyes tear up. “I won’t hurt her again, momma, I promise; I need her, and I’m done living without her. I just need to fucking grovel for everything I’ve actually put her through, but hopefully, it’ll help that I haven’t fucked another woman since I fucked up and got drunk with her sister. That was two years ago.”

My mother’s eyes widen in shock. “But Ginger?”

I shrug. “She has been bullshitting; she wants my patch momma, so she’ll tell whoever will listen that she’s my main girl when she isn’t; no one has been. Two weeks ago, I made

Star believe I went home with Ginger to fuck when in reality she was my lift because I didn't want to take advantage of her upset state. I could feel myself wanting to give in.

When I finally claimed her, I wanted her to be completely with it, but as far as anyone is concerned, Ginger and I fucked until I set them straight, until I got my girl, which I'm now going to fucking do because I cannot wait any longer."

My mother's tears fall before she leaps into my arms, and I grin, holding her tightly before my father pulls her back into his arms and nods his head towards Star. "Go finally get your girl, son." I give him a half smile before patting his back, then I walk toward my girl. I walk up behind her, wrapping my arms around her waist from behind. She tenses for about a minute until I put my head into the crook of her neck and rasp, "How's my Firefly on this hard day?"

She snuffles, leaning back against me, and shrugs. "Coping?"

I smile at the sound of the question. Each year that passes and she hasn't found her dad alive, the harder the day becomes. "Come on, baby, let's go to my room, and we can drink in there without prying eyes and without people constantly asking if you're okay." I lean back and hold my hand out for her, and she nods, taking my hand willingly before I wrap my arm around her shoulders, holding her to me as I guide her back to my room, as I've always done on this day, where we'll sit on my bed, drinking and relishing in memories.

We drink for a few hours talking about her father before the talk then leads down to memories of us growing up, and before I know it, I've finally got her perfect smile out of her, and we end up laughing until suddenly and fucking finally my lips are on hers, hers are on mine, and this time I don't fucking pull back like I did when she was eighteen; instead, I thrust my tongue into her mouth while using my body to lie her down on my dark brown sheets, her legs parting, allowing my hips access between them as my fingers link with hers, lifting them over her head.

Home, I'm fucking home.

I grind my now-hard jean-covered cock against her pantie-covered cunt as her dress rides up, and she moans into my mouth while I groan before breaking the kiss. I rub my nose along hers before looking into her beautiful caramel eyes, my fingers squeezing hers tightly as I rasp, "I'm done holding back, Firefly."

Her eyes shine with unshed tears before she leans up and kisses me again, our tongues tangling together, and fucking finally, everything feels in place. Every time I managed to get even fucking hard for someone else, which admittedly is when Star came to mind, I felt fucking dirty like I was cheating, but no more, I'm home.

I kiss her harder, grinding myself down on her before I let go of her hands, gliding mine down her arms, past the side swell of her braless fucking tits, before gripping her dress and slowly lifting it up her body. I break the kiss, but only to latch onto a nipple with my lips gently sucking it into my mouth before biting it as I throw her dress onto the floor, accidentally ripping the hem but not giving a shit before kissing back up her body, sucking her neck, marking her. I quickly remove my cut and t-shirt before lying back over her, my mouth fusing with hers as she grabs a hold of the chain that she bought me roughly eight years ago. Our kiss turns frantic, our tongues dueling, and I lean on my right arm near her head, taking my weight as I grip her panties with my left hand, ripping them from her body before I quickly undo my jeans, shucking them down my ass, my hard cock popping free. I don't even kick them off as I place myself at her entrance, not wanting to lose her lips.

She wraps her legs around my waist and her arms around my neck, our kiss never breaking as I thrust forward.

I swear, I feel like I'm ripping through something, but my mind doesn't focus on it because she bites my bottom lip. I groan, moving my hips back before thrusting forward again, hard. She gasps and moans in my mouth before I break the kiss, placing my forehead against hers, keeping eye contact,

“I’m going to make love to you now, Firefly; later, we’ll fuck hard and dirty, but for the first time, I’m making love to you.”

Some tears fall from her eyes, and I quickly kiss them away before I kiss her on the lips more gently. Our tongues tangle together while I move my hips back before thrusting forward again, hard, angling them to hit her g-spot. She moans in my mouth as I keep the slow pace, making love to the only woman I ever wanted.

I slowly glide my hands up her sides, towards her armpits, before gently forcing her arms to release my neck. Our fingers link before I place our hands on either side of her head, thrusting into her hard but keeping my pace slow. I can feel her starting to tighten around me, making my spine tingle, and it takes everything in me not to go faster. Instead, I ensure to grind my pelvis against her clit on every thrust forward.

“Zayne,” she gasps, her lips wrenching from mine, and I place my forehead against hers again. “Look at me, beautiful; I want to see your eyes when you cum all over my cock, when I finally fucking claim you.”

She looks deep into my eyes, and confusion, and love shines back at me. The confusion will go away over time; I’ll fucking make sure of it. I can feel her tighten even more around my cock as her cunt flutters, squeezing me, and liquid gushes between us as she gasps out her orgasm while I groan, my cum spurting out of the tip of my cock, painting her walls.

I keep making slow thrusts, ensuring I’ve pumped everything I have into her, my cock going limp, but I still don’t stop my small thrusts as she gasps. I want to go again, and I know my cock will be ready again soon; it always is for her. I lean down and kiss her gently several times before I rasp, “I hope you’re not tired, Firefly.”

She squeezes her legs around my waist, and I smile against her lips before kissing her again, my cock hardening during my small thrusts. We spend the rest of the night making love, then doing some hard fucking.

I finally have my fucking girl. I finally gave in, and it's the best fucking decision I ever made. She's my home, my heart.

It's just a shame how fucking stupid I've been over the years and how much pain I've caused the only girl I've ever loved.

It's a shame I never felt her leave my fucking bed.

Chapter 8

Star

I bite my lip, hoping I don't cry as I place the last box in my Jeep.

“That’s it, Starry; dip the clutch; that’s it; that’s my girl.” I giggle as Zayne laughs from the back seat. “Get it, Firefly.”

I blink my eyes, wiping away some of my tears at the memory. I was only 8 years old when my father came home with this Jeep Wrangler for me. I remember like it was yesterday: my mother was worried while my sister was pissed because she was told she'd have had to have mom's old car because of her behavior in school, while Zayne jumped in the back laughing his butt off because my dad was trying to hold me at a certain height in order to see the windshield while also touching the pedals.

I wipe away the tears and take a deep breath. I can do this; I know I can.

Am I scared? Yes, yes, I am.

But I can do this for my dad; my results came back negative, so it's time.

I climb into the driver's seat, not even looking at my tiny, moldy flat, before reversing out of the parking spot. I'm meeting a guy named Timmy who's in high school. I swallow hard; I can do this.

I get to the high school parking lot within ten minutes, where he requested we meet, and a geeky kid stands next to an old blue Ford, looking concerned when I pull up next to it. He swallows hard, seeing my car, and I quickly climb out while he puts his hands up. “I don't know what game you're playing, Miss, but it seems you've got the perfect car, so I don't understand why you'd want to buy mine.”

I give him a smile. “My car is perfect, but I need to go under the radar for a little bit, and I

was wondering instead of me buying your car.” I take a deep breath. *I’m sorry, Daddy.* “What about a swap?”

His chocolate eyes pop out of his head; they widen that much, and I just give him a smile. “I know you want money to add to your savings to buy a new one, so I thought this would be the perfect solution for both of us, but there’s one condition,” he nods, still speechless, “you treat this car with respect.”

“You serious?”

I nod. “I need a fresh start, and I’ll also need help swapping my stuff over.”

That snaps him out of his shocked state before he opens all his car doors and boot, then goes over to my Jeep. No, now his Jeep is helping me move all of my stuff to my new old car, which should keep me incognito not only from the club but also from Hairy, the Devil’s VP, their traitor, and the man who thought my father screwed his mother, knocking her up and ultimately causing her death.

I finally found out the truth after years of searching, and it wasn’t easy.

Hairy’s mother had a ‘thing’ with his then-current president, who also happened to be Snake’s dad. She kept videos of her riding the then-passed-out Pres, who is still very much with his old lady, whom he adores, hidden away, and I finally found them after delving into their pasts. She drugged him, and her online diary—seriously amateur—stated she bought roofies and basically raped him, and to this day he is unaware. When Hairy’s dad, Bullet, found out she was cheating after he found the pregnancy tests, knowing he was sterile, she panicked, thinking the man whom she was obsessed with would be killed, so she told him and her son that it was my dad because he was in their clubhouse at the time doing business. It was the wrong time and the wrong place for my dad. Bullet didn’t believe her because he knew how much my father loved my mother and his kids, so Bullet killed her for what she did, but only when her blood tests came back that there was no baby, and that obviously ticked Hairy off, still believing my dad’s

the culprit despite his mother being crazy and decided to take my dad while screwing with our club over the years.

I was just collateral damage to the whole thing.

Swallowing hard I take one last look at my dark blue Jeep. Memory after memory of myself, my father, and Zayne flash through my mind. I give Timmy a one-handed wave before getting in the Ford, happy he cleaned it before starting it up, driving away from the last thing I've ever treasured. I drive for about twenty minutes before coming up to the parking lot next to the Hudson Bridge, and I quickly park and lock the car up, then head to the Uber I ordered before leaving the high school.

It was time to put my plans into motion and say goodbye.

A few hours later, I'm sitting at the club bar, drinking whiskey. I'm only on my first glass. I don't want to be intoxicated by this. I'm in my own head, with my father on my mind. Today's his 46th birthday—another birthday he has to spend with a psycho.

Like mother, like son if you ask me.

I drown the rest of my glass, putting my hand on the whiskey bottle in front of me, wondering if another glass would be wise when two very strong tattooed arms wrap around my waist. I tense up. I know it's Zayne; my body knew the moment he entered the dull brown common room.

I look down and see the shooting star on his left arm, the words, 'Always my star forever my heart' coming into view, and my eyes tear up.

One night, I'll forget about everything.

He didn't shove women in my face.

He didn't shove my own sister in my face.

He didn't leave me on our friend's date, where I ended up being raped.

I wasn't raped, and I don't feel dirty all the time.

One night, just him and me.

He puts his face in the crook of my neck from behind before rasping, “How’s my Firefly on this hard day?”

My tears fall and I snifle, my answer coming out as a question, “Co-coping?”

I feel him smile a little before he gently says, “Come on, baby, let’s go to my room, and we can drink in there without prying eyes and without people constantly asking if you’re okay,” and I don’t fight him when he leans back and takes my hand before wrapping his arm around my shoulders. I don’t fight him when he takes me to his room, where we reminisce and laugh at old memories.

I don’t fight when he kisses me.

I don’t fight when he lays me down, his body going over mine; instead, I welcome it.

I don’t fight when I give him my virginity; instead, I pretend every bad thing that’s happened between us never happened, that this is us starting our lives together like we were supposed to.

I pretend for one night that we’re finally getting our happily ever after as he worships my body over and over.

I slowly trace the firefly tattoo with my name under it on Zayne’s chest, right next to his heart. Over the years, I knew he loved me as much as I loved him, but he thought I deserved better. It didn’t matter how much I tried to win him over; he always went to other women, and yet he got this tattoo on his chest dedicated to me; he got a shooting star on his forearm with those heartfelt words.

Tears start to spill down my cheeks, and I quickly wipe them away. It’s early—really early—but if he wakes up and I’m still here, I know he’ll never let me go, and I need to go. I need to start fresh. I love him so much; he’s not just my best friend, but he’s also my heart that he broke.

He tore it out of my chest and shredded it before burning the pieces. Why couldn’t he have come to the conclusion he did last night months ago? Why did

he have to come to the realization that I could make my own decisions before I was raped?

Wiping my tears again, I gently trace his strong jawline that's covered in a small beard as his chest rises slowly with his even breaths. I silently say goodbye to my love, my heart, and my past before I get up quietly. I put my torn dress back on before grabbing the shirt he wore last night, adamant to take this last piece of him with me, before taking off my bracelet that he gave me and placing it on his bedside table. I'm aware it has a tracker in it, so despite my never taking it off, it needs to stay.

I go to his door, looking at him one more time, knowing that when I leave this room, our one night is done and my pain will come back tenfold. I swallow hard and quickly leave. I ordered an Uber, and they should be outside now. Wiping my tears, I get into the common room, heading for the front door, but come to a sudden halt, my eyes widening with fear. He can't stop me from leaving; I need this; I have to go.

Axel, the President My pseudo-brother

He raises a brow at me, obviously taking in my state and putting two and two together, but I'm also leaving, and he's obviously confused as to why I would leave when the man I'm in love with finally claimed me.

“Star?”

He questions, walking towards me, but I take a step back, making him lift his hands up in surrender, and I hate that I did that; it's out of reflex; I couldn't help it. I know he'd never hurt me, but the pain in his eyes that I've just done it kills me. “Star? You know I'd never hurt you, right?”

He goes to walk over to me again, and tears fill my eyes, spilling over onto my cheeks, and I shake my head at him. “I know you wouldn't, but please stay there.” He furrows his brows, but I plead with him, “Please, Logan,” using his given name, and he tilts his head.

“What happened, sweetheart?”

I shake my head again, my tears falling hard and fast. “I’m leaving.”

He nods. “OK, I’m not going to stop you, but I would like to know what’s going on with a woman who I see as a sister.”

I shake my head again. “No, Logan, I’m leaving Parkerville.”

His eyes widen in shock. “Star, this is your home; you’ve finally got Flame; why would you...” He trails off, studying me, and I see the moment he notices my bracelet is gone because he tenses.

“Why would you leave Star? What happened?”

His voice hardens, and I rasp, “Hairy says hello” as a sob leaves me, my body shaking before the man in front of me instantly switches roles from brother to Pres. I won’t tell him everything; I refuse to. They have a couple of rats in the club, and one of them, I’m certain, is Ginger. It’s not a coincidence that she showed up to get Zayne’s attention before I was raped. I need to find my dad’s location before I tell him everything, and it could take months.

“When did the Devil’s VP talk to you, Star?”

Sobs wrack my body before I take a deep breath. “Two weeks ago, when Flame” I spit his name, hating he’s one of the causes of this, for my pain, “decided fucking Ginger on our friend’s date was a better idea than spending it with me. H-He grabbed me by-by the toilets.” I can see the realization hit him, and I sob, “He dragged me outside, and-and, oh God.” My whole body trembles before I find myself in his arms, holding me tightly to his chest, “He-he said F-Flame killed his-his cousin, and I I’m-I’m his punishment.”

“What did he do, sweetheart?” He rasps, and I rasp back, “He-he raped me.”

He staggers back, bending forward and struggling to breathe while I rub my arms, the feel of him still on me.

“Fuck, no, no, no.” It’s all he says before he looks at me, realization kicking in full swing: “This was your goodbye to him, wasn’t it? You slept with him as a goodbye, but you can’t stay and fight because you don’t think you can forgive him.”

I shake my head and rasp, “The women constantly thrown-thrown at me was killing me slowly, Logan, but this time he left me for someone else again, and I-I-I.” I can’t say it again; I can’t. I gather myself and say, “It’s all on CCTV. He made sure to do it in front of the camera. I need to leave; please let me leave.” He slowly closes his eyes, and he nods. “We will always be your family, you hear me. You are my sister in every way but blood. He swallows hard. “He will try to find you though Star; he might not have shown it, but he loves you more than life itself.”

I walk up to him and place a kiss on his cheek before whispering, “Just not enough to choose me. I love you, Logan; you are my family always, but make sure you always choose her; she needs you.” Annalise is struggling, and she needs him. It’s time he pulled his finger out of his butt.

I walk out, leaving my family, before rushing to the gates. The prospect furrows his brows, but I ignore him and climb into the back of the Uber before the woman takes me to the Ford, where I spin out of the parking lot.

I’m an hour out of town when I hear the roaring of bikes. I look into my mirror and am instantly tense, pulling my hat down when I notice Dead Shot’s, Axel’s, and Zayne’s bikes. They fly past me before I pull off the next junction and breathe a sigh of relief before tears spill down my cheeks.

Thirteen hours before Illinois, before I watch the house, Hairy accidentally let slip.

I’m coming, Daddy; I’ll save you even if it takes me years.

Chapter 9

Flame

I blink my eyes when pounding on the door wakes me. I look to my left, my hand going over to Star, but the space is empty, only slightly warm.

I furrow my brows before looking towards the bathroom door; it's open slightly but the lights are off. The pounding continues, and I quickly get up, covering myself with a sheet before going to answer it. I scowl at a pissed-off Axel.

“Get fucking dressed and meet me in church right fucking now, hurry.”

I frown when he rushes away before I go to get dressed. I drop the sheet about to put some jeans on when I halt, noticing blood on my cock, and I swallow hard before looking at the bed. Fuck, there's also some blood on the sheets.

She was a virgin; my Star gave me her virginity.

I swallow again, trying not to fucking celebrate like a douche. She obviously fucking freaked and left before Axel knocked.

I need to see her.

I quickly dressed, noticing my shirt from last night was missing, making me grin stupidly while I grabbed my cut. My grin soon wipes though when I see Star's bracelet I gave her when she was only ten.

What the fuck?

I quickly grab it, putting it in my pocket, intending to put it back on her fucking wrist where it belongs, before rushing out of my room and heading to church, where Dead Shot and I arrive at the same time.

He looks just as confused as I do.

“Axe, is this going to take long? I need to call Star.” I need her to know she's mine and I'm hers. We're doing this now; last

night just cemented it.

He shakes his head. “She’s gone; you won’t find her. Last night was her saying goodbye.”

I freeze. Gone?

“What do you mean, son?”

He messes with the computer before switching on the screen, and my face pales when I see the footage of me walking off with Ginger, my arm wrapped around her, while Star looks ready to fall apart two fucking weeks ago. My head soon shoots his way though when he uses my given name.

“Brace yourselves, especially you, Zayne.” He clears his throat. “She said Hairy said hello.”

“Hairy? As in the Devil’s VP?” He nods to his father’s question, but his eyes remain on me while I look at him in complete confusion until his next statement, and I instantly want to fucking vomit.

“Killer’s cousin.” The fucker who sold laced cocaine to our dancers and I burned him alive

Axel plays the footage while my heart pounds.

We watch as tears start to fall down her cheeks while I stupidly fucking walk off without even looking back. Pain shoots through me as we watch as she gathers her belongings before heading to the ladies, making Axel switch cameras. We see a hand come out from around the corner near the fire exit and grab her roughly, putting his hand over her mouth and then dragging her out of view.

I hear Dead Shot gasp while Axel’s eyes tear up, but I shake my head. No, no, no.

“No, she wasn’t; I know she wasn’t.” Axe sighs, but I’m adamant, especially after the fucking blood this morning. “No, Logan, she wasn’t; she was a virgin; I took her virginity last night.”

He looks at me, confused. “She told me she was raped.”

He switches the camera in time to see the fucker shove her to the floor, making sure her face digs into the concrete ground while smirking at the camera. He whispers his message into her ear. Then we watch in horror as she tries to fight to get away from him, trying to put her legs flat on the ground as he pushes her skirt up.

No, fucking no, it didn't fucking happen; it didn't. My heart feels ready to explode as I grip my hair.

“NO, HE DIDN'T FUCKING RAPE HER; I TOOK HER VIRGINITY LAST NIGHT,” I scream. He didn't fucking rape her; no, no, no, I didn't fucking leave her like a lamb, ready to be fucking slaughtered. Please, please, please, please.

Please.

Dead Shot grips my shoulder as we watch Hairy grip her panties, ripping them off. You can see she's screaming, but no one comes to her aid. He pulls his jeans down a little, then shoves himself inside her. Her whole body jolts with pain as he rips into her hard and fast.

You can see blood start to drip down her legs, and my tears fall hard as I watch this vile creature anally rape my girl, my love, who I fucking left because I wasn't man enough to be what she needed.

“No, n-no.” I sob as I fall to the floor, Dead Shot gripping me in his arms.

Firefly, my Firefly. No.

We watch as her body goes still. She's gone numb, and I sob some more. She's given up the fight; she's shut fucking down while he tears through her.

After about seven minutes, the soon-to-be-dead man pulls out and cums all over her ass and my fury builds. She doesn't move as he chuckles and pulls his jeans back up before fucking spitting on her and walking off onto the street. Star doesn't move for about five minutes; we can see the tears trailing down her cheeks as she stares forward, not moving, and my fucking heart shatters in my chest.

This is my fucking fault, mine.

When she does move, she uses the wall to help herself up, leaving her underwear. She grips the wall and uses it to guide her to the street. Axel switches the camera again, this time to the street, and we watch as she makes sure to stay away from the door, then flags down a driver on the road. I growl when she speaks to them through the window, and we see their eyes widen. It looks like a female, maybe Silver? They nod, and she gets in the backseat, the car doing a U-turn, heading towards the hospital.

I'm in a state of shock, my eyes glued to the screen, when Axel clears his throat.

“Do we call Doc? Or do you want to hack the hospital for her records?”

I take a deep breath before clearing my throat as Dead Shot helps me stand, and I go to the computer, hacking into the hospital data. It only takes me a couple of minutes before I find her folder and click on it. Dead Shot reads it out.

“Ok, she had been raped—raped anally. She had extensive tearing, which took a minimum of a few weeks to heal. She had scrapes and bruises, but nothing more extensive than that. Her blood work and HIV tests came back clear, and she was offered counseling as well as the police to be called in, but she refused both.”

My anger takes over; I can't hold back as I pick the chair up in front of me, throwing it against the wall before pointing at Axel and saying, “Call Snake, now.” He nods and grabs his phone, putting it on speaker. Snake answers after six rings,

“Axel, do you have any idea what fucking time it is?”

Axel clears his throat. “Hairy is your traitor.”

He's quiet for a moment, and I can't take it. I throw another fucking chair as Dead Shot mumbles, “Shit.”

“Axel?”

Axel doesn't speak; I do instead: "Your VP Snake anally raped my girl two weeks ago because I burned his cousin, the man who was against your club, trying to cause a war between us, alive."

He sucks in a breath. "Hairy vanished a week and a half ago, and half our fucking safe was gone. MOTHERFUCKER."

He breathes heavily.

"Your girl, is she okay?"

My tears fall again, and I shake my head. I can't speak. Last night was her goodbye; she fucking left me, and I don't fucking blame her. Axel clears his throat. "She's ran. basically said goodbye to him last night and ran."

"Fuck! We'll start searching; the fucker is dead, as is anyone else who's working with him."

Axel and Snake talk for a few more minutes, arranging for Slicer to potentially travel out with Snake when we get word on where Hairy is before I'm flying out of church hoping to catch up with my girl. She can't leave me; I'll fucking handcuff her to the bed if I have to; I've just got her fully; I can't lose her; I can't. Dead Shot and Axel rush after me, both gripping my arms before Axel gets in my face.

"Let her go, Zayne. Just for now, you left her and fucked Ginger. Please, brother, she needs to go."

My temper explodes, and I shove him hard. "I HAVEN'T FUCKED ANYONE IN TWO FUCKING YEARS!"

Their eyes widen in shock, and I drop my chin to my chest before I rasp, "I haven't fucked anyone since I got blacked out drunk and fucked her sister for the second time; Ginger has been fucking lying for years; I just let her so Star kept away." I lift my head to see tears in Axel's eyes. "It's all good she needing space, brother, but Dad taught her everything he knows."

Both their eyes widen some more before muttering fuck and then rushing to their bikes while I rush to mine. If we lose her, we lose her for good because she's just as good as I am with computers, which means she has the means to disappear.

We searched for a couple of hours, but she was nowhere to be found, which means she's fucking swapped her car, her baby—the Jeep her dad bought her. Fuck.

Shaking my head to Axel as he calls for me when we enter the clubhouse, everyone looks at me with concern, but I ignore them and go to my room at the clubhouse. I need to find that fucking Jeep because if I know Star, which I do, getting rid of her treasure from her father probably killed her.

It's been roughly eighteen hours since she left, and finally, fucking finally, I found her Jeep. Some high schooler has it. With a nod, I get up and put my cut on. I need that fucking Jeep back. Just as I grab the envelope on my desk, my phone rings, and I instantly get it, hoping it's news on Star but scowling when I see it's her mother, Shayla.

I debate not answering, but I know she'll just show up here.

“Yeah?” I know it's rude, but I'm not in the fucking mood.

“Hey Flame, have you seen Star? I went by her flat, but someone else is living there; is she staying in ‘his’ room?” his room being her old man's. She can't bring herself to say his name.

I clear my throat. “Uh, no, she's gone, Shayla, packed up and left, even sold her Jeep.”

I hear her gasp out a cry as Emma in the background asks what's happened, but I ignore them both. “Look, Shayla. I need to get going. I'll let you know if I hear anything.”

I hang up before rushing out of my room, ensuring it's locked, before gripping Cal by the back of his shirt and making him come with me. I jump in the club's 4X4, with Cal getting into the passenger seat and keeping his mouth shut, before I spin out of the clubhouse, heading towards the school. When we get out, I tell Cal to go back to the club, making him frown in confusion, but, do as asked before, I go to my girl's Jeep. It's still in really good condition; the club has looked after it for her since her father passed. I lean against it and wait until a sophomore comes out, looking just like his picture with

shaggy hair and chocolate eyes. He freezes at the sight of me before he gingerly walks over, his glasses falling from his nose a couple of times.

“Can I uh help you?”

I give him a little smile, not wanting to scare him. It’s not his fault my girl left; nope, it’s mine.

“This Jeep was my girl.”

His eyes widen, and he nods. “Yeah, I uh was selling my old car, and she asked for a swap.”

I nod.

I know said car has also been ditched four hours from here; the cameras were jammed, which was Star’s doing, so I don’t know what other car she got into. “I want it back,” he says, going to open his mouth, but I put my hand up. “Her deceased father bought this for her; I know you need a ride, which is why in my hand right here is \$35,000.” His eyes widen. “I want the Jeep back, so when she comes home, which she will do, she’ll have it. What do you say?”

He shakes his head, and I grind my teeth, not wanting to kick the shit out of him until he opens his mouth, making me respect the shit out of him. “I’ll take \$3,000 for it; that amount is too much.”

I give him a smile; he has a heart. I’d give him that, but I also know his family could use the money and hand the envelope to him and say, “It’s yours. Keys.”

His eyes widen when he takes the envelope, not knowing what to do with that amount of cash, but I don’t give a shit; that amount doesn’t even break the bank; I could retire and live off what I have for three lifetimes; money is no issue for me. I hold my hand out, and he gives me the keys. I give him a head nod before climbing into my girl’s Jeep, readjusting the seat, and peeling out of the school. I head back to the club but make my way around the back to my home before putting the Jeep in my garage. I sit here for a moment before swallowing hard. I grab my phone and ring her number again, but I want to sob like a baby when her voicemail picks up.

“Hey, this is Star; I can’t get to the phone right now, probably hanging with Flame, but leave me a message and I’ll get back to you.”

I always asked why she called me Flame in her voicemail and in her exact words.

‘Your my Zayne, no one else’s.’

Fuck I’m an idiot.

Her phone beeps, and I rasp, “I love you, Firefly.”

Chapter 10

Star – Six months later

The beep echoes in my room.

“182 days, 4380 hours, 262,800 minutes.

Six months.

That’s a long time, Firefly—a long time not to hear your voice or see your gorgeous caramel eyes. It’s a long fucking time, Star, not to smell your vanilla shampoo with a hint of paint, to hold you in my arms, a long time not being able to breathe properly, Star; a long fucking time. I miss you, baby, so fucking much.” He sighs, *“I fucking miss you.”*

The phone beeps, and I wipe my cheeks, which are full of tears before the next message beeps through.

“I was the one who had Dag’s and Ink’s Uncle arrest your prom date because I didn’t like someone else touching you, and I knew you’d hate me if I showed up.

I love you, my firefly.”

I shake my head and drop my phone. Ten years I prayed he’d say those three words to me—ten fricking years—and yet, as much as I ach missing him I also despise him for what he put me through over those ten years. I understood he thought I deserved better than the club life, but wasn’t that my decision to make, not his? And now look at us. He slept with anything that wore a skirt, including my own sister twice, and then because of him, because of the club, I was, well, I was.

Sighing, I shake my head. Six months, and I can still hardly say it. I took up counseling when I got here to Illinois, and she said people cope in different ways; this is just my mind’s way of protecting itself.

Every day I receive phone calls or messages. Annie leaves me updates on everyone, keeping me up to date on their lives, including the fact that she and Axel had a courthouse wedding; she’s waiting for me until they

have a ceremony, while Mel, who is in love with Dagger, calls once a week along with Meghan, the resident doctor, who helped me during my worst time wanting to know if I'm ok. My mother leaves me a nasty voicemail at least once a day telling me how selfish I am for leaving them with no money after I took my father from her; my sister calls me a bitch daily; and Zayne, well, he bleeds his emotions out at least once a day. Like Annie, he calls, telling me everyone's news, how he's trying to find Hairy to no avail, and how Dag is head over heels for Mel but screwed up by letting another woman touch him.

I shake my head again. Flipping bikers are their own worst enemy sometimes.

He also gives me one truth a day, like today with my prom date. I wonder how he'd feel if he knew Aaron was gay and he was basically doing me a favor. I bite my lip. Yesterday, he told me he was the one who left me the heart earrings taped to my locker at school on Valentine's Day, and the day before that, he was the one who accidentally spilled half a bottle of salt in my casserole at the club. That had ticked me off. It was before I decided to take cooking classes, and instead of fessing up, he stood back and watched half the club choke, which he thought was hilarious. He also tells me how much he loves me and misses me.

I wish he'd said all this before everything happened. When I spoke to my counselor about my feelings towards Zayne—how I hate him but miss him, how I despise him but love him—she said it's a natural reaction. I've been in love with him for ten years, but he's been pushing me away, thinking he knows what's right for me, and now he's having to face the consequences of his actions. His first voicemail came to mind when I nearly gave in and called him back.

“Star, baby, please, p-please come back, p-please, p-please, I need you to c-come back, please. Tell me what I s-saw was wrong. Please tell me I didn't leave y-you to be. FUCK, PLEASE STAR PLEASE TELL ME I DIDN'T LEAVE YOU TO BE FUCKING RAPED PLEASE. P-please, please.”
He sobs, and I squeeze my eyes shut, my tears falling down

my cheeks. "Please, baby, please, I-I d-didn't leave y-you to be raped; please tell me I didn't just lose you; that you didn't leave me, please." He breaks down over the voicemail, and I sob, clutching my stomach in pain. "You're my best friend, Firefly, my-my heart, my soul, m-my fucking everything, please, please. I-I love you, please."

The line goes dead, and I fall against the wall of the cheap motel I'm crashing into tonight.

How can I hate him and still love him so much at the same time?

Six months later, and I've spoken to no one. I moved to Illinois in a small two-bed apartment, got a job at a small café, and watched Hairy's movements like a hawk. Heck, I haven't even picked up a paintbrush since I left my family. My phone rings again, and I sigh, looking at the screen to see Annie's name pop up. I wait until it stops ringing, then wait a further few minutes before it beeps with a message, and I smile, wondering if Buzz, the newly patched brother who was an amazing prospect, finally got the courage to take Bubbles, who is now known as Amy, as his old lady. Annie said something along the lines of Amy not wanting to be a sweet butt but wanting security, which is funny because she was a cleaner for the club anyway. I need Annie to explain it more clearly for me, I think because it's just confusing. I dial my voicemail before it beeps, and Annie's voice comes through, and I instantly tense; she sounds breathless.

"Hi, it's me. 6 months, Star. That's a long time without my friend. My best friend, I don't care what Flame says. He misses you and hasn't stopped looking for you either." She snuffles before letting out a sob. "My guilt is building up again. I tried the exercises Tate suggested, but it's not working this time. That's why I've called you; leaving these messages helps. I feel like I'm back in my old childhood room with the blood soaking my jeans as Grant kicks my baby out of me. "She lets out another sob, and my heart races. "I feel so guilty for not being there for you, and I miss you so much, and now-now, I-I, I'm pregnant. I-I don't know w-what to do-do. It-it can't be okay to have a baby after

not keeping them safe.” Oh no, “*next month would have been my due date, and now-now I’m pregnant again, but I shouldn’t be; I’m on the pill, and we’ve been using condoms. I don’t know what to do; I can’t go through that again; I can’t lose another one; I said I didn’t want any more kids; I-I don’t deserve them; I-I don’t. I need you, Star; I need my friend; p-p-please.*” She lets out another sob before the message stops, and I quickly hang up, crap, crap, crap. I dial her number instantly; she needs me; she’s going into a panic attack.

It rings twice before she answers.

“St-Star.”

She’s breathless, and I try to keep my voice calm for her despite my racing heart: “Breathe, breathe, breathe.” She lets out a sob before gasping, “Breathe for me, Annie, in and out, nice slow breaths. That’s it, nice and slow.” She does as I say, “That’s it; I’m here; I’m here; keep breathing.” She lets out a hiccup, and I sigh in relief before rasping, “You just scared the crap out of me; are you ok now? Please tell me you’re ok now?” making her giggle a little, and I smile.

“I miss you.”

I let out a sigh before my tears fell. “I’m sorry, I just need time.”

“I understand; I understand more than anyone,” she sniffles.

“You’re doing good, Annie. And this baby is so lucky to have you as a mama, do you hear me? What happened six months ago was not your fault; it was Grants. I want to hear you say it. Say it now.” Her father deserved the slow-fricking death the brothers gave him for what he did to her.

“It wasn’t my fault, it was his.” She rasps, and I smile. “Good, and keep repeating that in your head; do not go back down that hill. I’ve kept up with your voicemails, Annie; you’re doing better. Hearing you fall apart just now, I couldn’t stay silent. I know you needed me, and I’m here. I am.”

She sniffles before letting out a small sob. “But you needed me, and I wasn’t there for-for you.”

My poor friend, I sigh, “Annie, you’ve been there for me these past 6 months with these voicemails; they’ve kept me going. You kept me going. When I called you and texted you, I knew you wouldn’t answer. I think I just wanted to tell myself. I tried to tell someone before I left to ease my guilt about leaving my family. You were going through so much; you needed me, and I left. So, let’s call it even because I miss my friend and I want a gossip catch-up.” She lets out a little giggle as I hoped before I asked, dying to know the full details: “Now tell me again about Bubbles’ transformation to Amy.” She laughs this time, making me grin before we get to chat for the next hour about anything and everything, and I must admit, I missed it. I missed her.

A little while later, she decided to bite the bullet, making me sigh.

“Are you doing okay—for money, I mean?”

Even though she can’t see me, I shrug and say, “I’m getting by.”

She clears her throat. “I have an account for you; it has the sales for the artwork you left in the storage room; there is thousands in it. I had to put it in Flame’s name because, well, your mom keeps asking for the sales, but it’s there.”

My eyes tear up. That money would be perfect. “Can you just keep it in there for me? please?” I know she’s confused, but I can’t tell her yet, especially after her breakdown.

“Of course I will, but Star, if you’re struggling?”

“How about, if I really need it, I’ll let you know?”

She sighs, “Fine.”

I chuckle. I know she hates my stubborn streak; everyone does. I check the time on my bedside table clock that houses Zayne’s t-shirt that I wear nightly with a picture of me and Zayne from about 3 years ago. I’m on his shoulders, my arms out wide, grinning at the camera while he’s holding onto my thighs and laughing. Why do I have to still love him so much? I’m like one of those idiotic bookwomen who pines for the

idiot all through the story, and the idiot doesn't open his eyes until the last few chapters. I shake my head. I have ten minutes until I need to leave, but I come up with a plan for Annie so she doesn't break down again. "Look, I've got to go get ready for work, but I'll call you every Saturday; how does that sound?"

"Promise?" There's hope in her voice.

"I promise."

"It sounds perfect because I miss you."

I smile until she clears her throat, and I sigh again, knowing what she wants to know. I'm aware they've become friends. "You can tell him, but I don't want him around when I call, and I've turned my tracker off so he can't find me. I'm just—I don't know if I'll ever forgive him, Annie. He was my best friend, and he chose to sleep with Ginger instead of sticking to our friend's date. He was supposed to be keeping my mind off of you, so I didn't worry, but instead, he broke me in more ways than one. It's because of him and the club that I was raped, and I know I shouldn't have slept with him, but in my mind, it was a goodbye I knew I would regret if it didn't happen." I sniffle and wipe my tears. It's hard to love someone so much, even though they hurt you. I hear a door in the background open.

"Logan's just walked in. Do you want me to put you on speaker?"

I clear my throat, not ready to face him just yet. He was the first person I told of my ordeal.

"No, I'm not ready, but tell him, tell him I love him, and I'm grateful he's my pseudo-brother. I'll speak to you on Saturday, and I expect every single count of Logan's reaction to your news. Tell him, Annie, I love you." I hang up and rub my hand down my face, hoping I'm not making a mistake by talking to her weekly.

My stomach moves, and I smile, looking down and gently rubbing my hand over the foot pressing out of my stomach. "I

know, baby; we'll tell Daddy all about you when we've finally found your grandpa."

He may have broken me but he deserves to know he's going to be a father. I just don't want the club to tip their rats off that I know the location of my dad. I've spent the past six months watching Hairy's every move. As soon as the baby's here, I'm going in, and then Zayne will get the chance to be a dad as long as he knows he'll have to travel to wherever I set up as home and that we're not going to happen. He broke me, and as much as I love him and as much as he grovels every day, I don't think I can trust him again.

Sighing again, I get up and get ready for work. Every penny counts. The café doesn't exactly pay a lot, but at least I know Annie was thinking straight about my paintings. The money she's saved for me is a nice little egg nest for my little one.

Chapter 11

Flame

I take a sip of my beer, looking at my phone again. A picture of Star and me grinning at the camera greets me. Her eyes twinkle while my arms are wrapped around her from behind. It's from her seventeenth birthday.

Fuck, I miss her.

I press the call button on her name, placing the phone in my ear. It rings several times before the voicemail picks up, making me sigh, my other hand gripping tightly on the bottle.

"Hey, this is Star; I can't get to the phone right now, probably hanging with Flame, but leave me a message and I'll get back to you."

I slowly close my eyes, savoring her voice as the phone beeps. "Okay, here's one that will most likely piss you off Firefly, hopefully enough to get you to ring me back." I clear my throat. "I was the one who filled your Jeep with glitter when you were sixteen; I mean, how you never put two and two together, I'll never know; you painted the clubhouse common room bright pink; I had to get you back somehow." I sigh. "I miss you, my Firefly, my shooting star.

I love you."

I hang up and swallow hard, hating not hearing her voice properly or seeing her. It's the longest we've fucking gone with no contact, and I feel like I can't fucking breathe.

"FLAME"

I turn my head to where Axel is shouting my name, and fuck me, does he look pissed?

I stand with concern. "Pres?"

"When was the last time you spoke with Shayla?"

I furrow my brows. "Last week, she called distressed, still not knowing where her daughter is. Well, it's killing her. She

keeps asking if I've found her yet. Why?"

Axel snorts, "So distressed that she stole all of her daughter's inheritance that Bones left her, as well as the money he left them."

My whole body tenses, my face going red. Shayla told me Star used it all. I didn't believe her though; I thought Star had just hidden it away. "What the fuck are you talking about?"

Annie clears her throat while Axel wraps his arm around her waist, knowing she hates being the center of attention. "She, um, she was working in a café in the next town over, giving half her wage to her mother for bills. It's why she was trying to sell her artwork at the bakery; she's basically their meal ticket, and it's probably why they want to find her so badly. They've actually come into the bakery several times asking if I have the sales money for the artwork, but I just shrug them off, telling them the money automatically goes into an account for Star that only she has access to. It pisses them off, especially since I've actually sold 14 more since she left. I have loads in the storage room and put them up once a week. I opened an account in your name, Flame, with her sales; she has roughly over \$57,000 in the account."

My eyes go wide in shock. She never told me, "Why didn't she tell me?" I can't keep the hurt out of my voice.

"She mentioned not wanting to rely on you, and she finds it difficult because you slept with Emma."

Fuck. I slowly close my eyes, pain shooting through me when Axel grips my shoulder. "Brother, maybe we should go talk in my office."

I furrow my brows at him before looking at Annie. Now only seeing her red eyes and tear-stained cheeks, panic hits me hard, and she's quick to reassure me.

"She's ok; she's ok. I, uh, for months, I've been leaving messages on her voicemail, you know, to keep her updated with the brothers who are settling down and stuff like that, and today, well, today I was having a meltdown, let's say, I

couldn't breathe, and I needed my friend, so I called like I normally do and fell apart on her voicemail." She snuffles, tears starting to fall again, and I walk up to her, wrapping my arms around her. She's been doing so well since losing her baby.

"Why were you falling apart, sweetheart?"

She snuffles again, looking at Axel, and he nods before she whispers, "I'm pregnant." I squeeze her tighter to me, knowing how hard this is going to be for her guilt, and she confirms my thoughts. "The guilt was eating me alive, and I hung up trying to breathe through my panic attack when my phone rang." I tense stepping back a bit and covering my mouth with the realization, "She called me Zayne; she called."

Axel clears his throat. "I walked in as she was on the phone to her. Star didn't want to talk to me but agreed to call every Saturday to speak to Lise."

I put my hands behind my head, linking them. "She's ok?"

Annie nods. "She is, but she's struggling a little financially, which is when I had to tell Logan about her mom and sister. She doesn't want the money just yet in the account I made her; she said she'd let me know, but um, Zayne, she, uh."

I give her a small smile in understanding, my heart cracking. "She doesn't want to talk to me, does she?" She shakes her head, her tears falling some more, and I take her into my arms again. "It's ok, it'll be ok. I know she blames me, and I know she blames the club." Most of the brothers look at me confused; only a select few know why Star left and what happened to her, but I ignore them and continue. "I know she thinks she can't forgive me or the brothers, but unless she's around us, then she'll never know. We'll get her home; her talking to you is the first step." I kiss her head. "This baby, it's a miracle, and you're going to be an amazing mama. Do you hear me?"

She nods, a sob coming out before Axe takes her from my arms. I give her another smile before heading out of the common room to my office, needing space. She made contact,

and that's fucking great, but she doesn't want anything to do with me, and that fucking sucks.

I go into my office, locking the door behind me, and take a seat behind my gray desk, grabbing my phone from my pocket before sitting. I spin it in my hands a few times before calling her again. I know she won't answer; she never does. Her voicemail picking up just proves it.

“Hey, this is Star; I can't get to the phone right now, probably hanging with Flame, but leave me a message and I'll get back to you.”

I sigh and wait for the beep. “Firefly,” I sigh again, “why didn't you tell me about your inheritance? I know I fucked up with your sister; fuck do I know this, but I thought you deserved better; I thought I wasn't good enough for you, that you'd open your eyes and realize you never actually wanted me, but I was still your best friend, Star; I was still your person.” I put the phone to my forehead for a moment, sighing before placing it back to my ear. “I was the one who sent your application to the Art School of California.

I love you, Star.”

I hang up and drop my phone on my desk. Every time I call her, I make a confession, hoping she'll call me back, but she never does.

Shaking my head, I get the map out, planning our next run. I need a fucking distraction.

A few hours later, I'm brought out of the paperwork when my phone rings and I sigh. It's not the ringtone I want to hear. Star has her own special one. Sighing, I drop my pen before grabbing my phone and scowling.

Emma

What the fuck does she want? I debate leaving it to voicemail, but I know she'll just show up because, just like her mother, she can't take a fucking hint.

“Yeah?”

She clears her throat at my tone and says, “Hey Flame, baby.”

I narrow my eyes. “What do you want, Emma?”

She sighs, “Have you found my sister yet? Has she been in touch?”

I snort, “She’s been in touch, yeah, but not with me.”

“Then who has she spoken to?”

I tilt my head at her pissed-off tone. “And what’s it to do with you, Emma?” I would bet my left fucking nut it’s about money.

She clears her throat. “She left momma and me in the lurch; she owes us back rent.”

I chuckle darkly. “She owes you back rent when she moved out over two years ago.”

“Well, I, uh, you see...”

“You miss your cash cow,” she gasps. “Yeah, I know all about how you and your mother have been using Star for years. Let me guess you blamed her for your father’s death. Right, to guilt-trip her? like it was her fault he was shot down when she was only ten years old when she was nearly killed herself?” I smirked at her silence. “You are both pathetic, and you can bet your fucking ass we’re going to take this further; you stole her inheritance because your father wasn’t there to keep up your lifestyle, which means not only is that classed as theft but also identity fraud.”

“Flame I-I please,”

I hang up on the selfish bitch. Star needed her family, but instead, they blamed her for something she had no control over. Then I fucked up by fucking her bitch of a sister while not noticing what she was being put through. I honestly thought she was bullshitting over how her sister treated her, but yet again, another fucking fuckup.

I bring Star’s number up again: “Hey, *this is Star; I can’t get to the phone right now, probably hanging with Flame, but leave me a message and I’ll get back to you.*”

I sigh when it beeps, “I miss you, my shooting Star.”

I hang up and close my eyes.

Where are you, my Firefly?

Chapter 12

Star – Three Months Later

Beep.

“nine months Firefly, nine fucking months. “It’s hard to breathe, baby, so fucking hard without you,” he sighs. “I need you, Star; I need you so fucking much. I feel like I’m missing the other half of my soul. I took for granted your being here day in and day out; I took your love for granted.” He goes quiet for a few seconds before he shocks me: “I was the one who kicked the shit out of that fucker who tried to assault you after your seventeenth, putting him in a coma.

I miss you, Firefly, and I love you more and more each day.

Happy 21st birthday, baby.”

I wipe away the tear that’s just fallen before putting my phone down. It’s hard listening to these messages. He hurt me so much, but you can’t switch off 21 years of friendship and 11 years of pure love. I’m trying to find forgiveness, but how can I after everything he’s put me through?

I never thought I’d celebrate my 21st on my own. Every year I’ve spent it with Zayne, but yet here I am. My baby moves, and I smile.

“Your right, darling, I’m not alone; I have you.”

I wipe away another tear before a sharp pain shoots through my lower stomach, and I gasp, sitting up a little in my bed. I breathe through it. I’ve had Braxton hicks the past few days and ended up going on maternity leave, so I know the pain will fade, and once it does, I stand up, wiping away another tear. I miss Zayne, and I hate that I do. I hate that I can’t breathe without him and that he’s missing this experience. Sighing, I go to take a step forward when a gush of water trails down my legs.

Shit.

“Guess you wanted to share a birthday with me, huh, baby? Didn’t fancy waiting an extra month?”

With a nod and a hard swallow, I remove my panties before grabbing a pair of pajama pants, keeping my checked shirt on that I hadn’t changed for bed yet. I grab my bag and my baby’s before rushing out of my apartment, heading to the white Honda I swapped the Ford for. I climb in and squeal out of the parking lot, heading to the Mercery Hospital.

I had to stop halfway here when a contraction hit but I did make it here safely. I park up and sign myself in before being taken to a room where an IV is placed and some tests are done. I try to breathe through the pain, my tears falling as the doctor checks to see how far along I am. She looks up and gives me a smile, her green eyes sparkling. “Your 10-cms Star looks like this baby wants to share their mother’s birthday.”

I let out a sob and nodded my head, hating that Zayne wasn’t here for this. I miss him so much, and I hate him for doing this to us. I need him.

“OK, Star, I need you to push on your next contraction.”

Taking a breath I nod my head and do as I’m told as a contraction hits me hard. I bare down, pushing as hard as I can before stopping when the contraction subsides. I gasped in pain. “It hurts.”

The doctor nods her head. “I know, and you’re doing so well.” She looks at the monitor. “I need you to push again, Star.”

On a sob, I nod and do as I’m told, wishing I’d accepted the flipping drugs now. “That’s it, Star. I can see a head covered in dark hair.”

I sob some more, trying to push. Zayne’s hair color.

I lean back, gasping, “I-I can’t, I-I can’t do it.”

The doctor grips my leg and says, “Yes, you can; the head is coming on your next contraction; give me a big push, Star.” She looks at the monitor and says, “NOW.” I do as she asks as a nurse grips my hand, helping me lean forward, and I bare

down, pushing hard, “THAT’S IT STAR KEEPING PUSHING THE HEADS OUT, KEEP GOING.”

I don’t know how long I do this until I hear the musical cries of my baby, Zayne’s baby before they place them on my chest, and I sob as the doctor’s words ring out, “It’s a boy, Star; you have a beautiful baby boy.” I sob some more looking at my boy’s blue eyes, just like his father’s, and I wish more than ever that he were here. The nurse takes some pictures before hugging me tightly and then taking my boy to weigh and measure him while I try to get myself under control and cleaned up.

When she places him back on my chest in a blanket, I instantly start tracing his features before they help me place him at my breast to nurse him. He latches on nicely, and I must admit, it stings a little at first.

“6 lb 10 oz, a healthy baby boy. Do we have a name for him?”

I don’t look up from my baby as I run my hands over his head. “Theodore Mathew Silvers after his two grandfathers. Theo for short.”

I gave Tank, Zayne’s dad, the honor of having the first name while my father has the second; I knew that’s what Zayne would have wanted, and Theo is also Zayne’s middle name.

The nurses finish their checks before I’m left alone, and another sob breaks free as I gently rock my boy. “I’m sorry your daddy’s not h-here.”

I sniffle as my phone rings. I debated ignoring it, but I can’t. I need to speak to him. I need him, and I don’t care how stupid that makes me. I pick up my phone but instantly frown upon seeing Gunner’s name. He never calls me.

I quickly answered it, panicking and lacing my voice.

“Gunner?”

“Starfish... I fucked up.”

I suck in a breath, hearing the emotions in his voice as he sniffled, and I whispered, “What happened?”

“Leah, she, fuck Star. We got it all wrong, so fucking wrong.”

He sobs, and my heart stops.

“Lucas, tell me what happened with Leah.” I use his given name, hoping he’ll talk to me.

He snuffles again. “Razor, he-he fuck, he lied Star; he and Leah were never an item; she never cheated on him; it was all a fucking ploy, so Cara got to keep me.”

Anger overrides me, making Theo murmur a little, so I tap his bottom. “She played you with his help?”

“Worse Star, so much fucking worse. Leah’s foster dad sold her virginity to Razor when he took an interest in her before we met and before she applied for the job at the bar.”

No, no, no, no.

“Lucas, please tell me he didn’t, not where I was...” I can’t finish the sentence. I couldn’t, please; she wasn’t, not where I was, not by a man I knew was a traitor. “He tore through her innocence with a razor in between his fingers the day of her interview, right outside the front door of the bar.”

I gasped out a cry.

“He never fucked her; he basically wanted what he saw as his when he realized we had a connection and that I was going to make her mine. He left permanent damage inside her. She was told she may never be able to get pregnant.” I shake my head, gasping out “no” as Theo murmurs again while he continues, “But we beat the odds, me and her. We were drunk, which is probably the only reason she even let me touch her. Her notes from the hospital go into detail on her trauma with penetration, but it happened; I had her-her; I got her pregnant against the odds; I didn’t fucking r-remember it.” He clears his throat as I look down at my son. “There’s a large chance I could lose both her and the baby before she even gives birth; she could die because of the trauma he caused her body.” God no, I let out another cry in shock, tears spilling down my cheeks. “F-for years, Star, I have been fucking Cara for years, t-throwing it in her-her face.”

I shake my head and snuffle. “You didn’t know Lucas; surely she can’t hold that against you?”

“Star, I saw them. She and Razor; Cara told me they were a couple, knowing I’d go and want to see it with my own eyes, I saw her riffling against him, but-but I thought, I thought...”

Oh god no, “you thought he was getting her off, not tearing her insides up.”

He sniffles again. “We all treated her badly, Star, except for Doc and Ava. They see her as a daughter; they’re the only reason why we know the truth; she never told anyone, and with how we were treating her, Doc couldn’t sit back any longer and risked his license.” I sucked in a breath. He loves his job helping people; “he risked his license for someone who’s a daughter to him to open our eyes to how badly we were treating her, how I was treating her, the woman I love more than anything. I was pushing her away out of loyalty to someone we never even questioned.”

“Oh, Lucas.” I try to wipe my tears.

“I don’t know what to do, Star. She’s pulling away from everyone, including Sophie, and she’s like a sister to her. I made her move in with me, and I got her to work back at the bar, but if given the chance, Star.”

I swallow hard. “She’ll follow in my footsteps and run.” Crap. I take a deep breath. “Leave it with me, Lucas; I’ll figure something out.” He sniffles again. “I promise you, I’ll figure something out.”

“Star?”

I look up and smile at the nurse before talking to Gunner again. “That’s Wendy, my boss, my breakover. Leave it with me. Lucas, ok, I love you.” I hear him rasp, “I love you too, Starfish,” before I hang up and look up to the nurse as she smiles at me.

“You are ready to be discharged.”

I smile wide at her before she helps me change and get everything together. I place Theo in his car seat, then leave, taking my baby home. I wish Zayne was there, but he’s not. Instead, I walk into a quiet apartment, and my tears fall again before I gently place a sleeping Theo in his bassinet next to

my bed. I take a seat, wiping my tears. I pick up my phone as more silent tears fall down my face, seeing the picture of Zayne.

How can I love him so much and hurt so badly? Wiping my tears again, I quickly call Leah, hoping she'll answer.

She answers straight away, shock lacing her voice.

“Hello?”

I smile, “Hi Leah.”

“Star?”

I clear my throat. “Yeah, it's me. I uh, know this call is out of the blue, but I had a frantic call from Gunner.”

“Look, Star, I don't know what Gunner has said, but I don't want to talk about anything; I just want to go to sleep.”

I sigh; she doesn't know, “and neither did I; I was raped Leah behind the bar eight months ago.”

I swallow hard.

“A traitor to the Devils targeted me after the club killed his cousin for dealing drugs at Untamed Girls. Flame is the one who did the deed, and as I was technically his girl in everyone's eyes except his, I became the target one night. It was our friend's date, and Ginger sauntered over to Flame. He decided being with her was the better deal and left me alone. When I went to cry in the bathroom, Hairy grabbed me from behind. He tore through me without a care in the world in front of the camera... anally.”

She lets out a sob: “Star.”

“I know. I decided I couldn't stay around the club anymore, around Flame, so I gave him my virginity, then left, ran really, and haven't looked back. I know what you feel, Leah. I know.”

I can hear the anger in her voice, and I don't blame her. “No, Star, you don't. That man' tore through my dry walls with two of his fingers and a razor in between them, taking my innocence, destroying my chances of having a healthy

pregnancy, and ensuring I could die as well as my baby, all because Cara wanted Gunner, a man I had just met.

She didn't care about that detail; she just wanted me out of the way, and instead of letting me slink off into the night, they both decided to let me suffer, forcing me to stay and work all while she shoved her activities in my face with a man I became hopelessly in love with, a man who loved me back but decided to listen to crap, just like you did a woman I thought was becoming a friend, just like the club did who I thought was becoming family before you all decided to inform me you'd all never see me that way because I was basically a slut, a patch chaser when I'd never even had sex before. You all turned against me because of their lies, and he wasn't even a patched brother then. No one asked me; no one was willing to listen! I tried to tell you, and you told me you don't speak to liars, so I don't know why Gunner got you to call me, and I don't care why. I want nothing to do with the club or you or Gunner; now I'm sorry for what you went through. I really am, but at least you'll still have your family at your back if you decide to return. I have no one but the baby I didn't even know was possible to conceive."

I sigh, "Leah, please. I don't want you to shut down like I did. The brothers messed up, and so did I. I just want to help you earn your forgiveness like everyone else because you are family, Leah, and you always have been."

She lets out a sob: "There is no helping me, Star."

"Yes, there is, and I'm going to bring you back up again like I have for myself. I'm going to text you every day and call as much as I can. You won't feel alone or lost as I did; I won't allow that, and I know Gunner completely fluffed up big time, but he loves you, Leah; he just wants a chance for forgiveness, for you to have a relationship like you both should have had five years ago."

She sniffles, and my heart breaks for her. "I don't trust him."

I smile a little, rocking the bassinet gently.

"I know Lee-Lee, I know and trust is probably the hardest thing to get back, I should know. I don't think I can ever

forgive Flame or the club, to be honest, but if you still love him, if you are miserable and miss him crazily, then let him try to earn it back.”

She sighs, “You don’t love Flame anymore?”

I’m silent for a moment because I won’t lie to her. “I’ll always love Flame; he’s my one and always has been for as long as I can remember, but how do you let someone like him earn your trust back after everything he’s done? He knew my feelings, and I knew him, just like Gunner and you. He decided to spend nights with other women, including my own sister, who had been stealing from me, just like Gunner did to you. It destroyed me, but he left me to his enemies, the same enemies that are still at large. I was raped because of him because of the club and their dealings. Gunner didn’t mean for this to happen to you, Leah, and I know Flame didn’t expect mine to happen, but he chose to walk away with Ginger, thinking his club was invincible. Gunner misread a situation that ended in disaster, and he’s now paying for that because your pain is his pain. He cried, Leah, on the phone to me. He cried and fell apart for the pain he put you through.”

She sighs, “My assault was always going to happen.”

“What do you mean?” I ask, not wanting her to know what Gunner already told me. I can’t have her pull completely away from him.

She sniffles, “My foster dad sold my virginity to ‘him’ a few years before it happened; he liked what he saw even when I was underage, despite my never meeting him before; he heard the rumors that I wanted to wait until marriage. He wanted me, and when he saw Gunner and I make a connection the first time we looked into each other’s eyes, he wanted what he thought was his and decided to take it before I gave it to Gunner, which I would most likely have done before marriage.”

I gasp, hating hearing it again, and I can’t help the anger lacing my voice. “Please tell me the fucker is dead.”

She snorts, knowing I hate cursing. “My foster dad isn’t. Gunner killed ‘him’ though.”

I hum, “I think you need to make Gunner grovel, make him work back the trust, then knee him hard between his legs if he messes up again.” She laughs. “I know it’s easier said than done, but I just don’t want to see you give up something that could be epic, and you two, Leah, will be epic if you let the sparks take hold.”

“Are you going to take your own advice?”

I hum again, “I’ve been trying to take my own advice for the past six months. The love hasn’t gone; the longing grabs me every day; I’m just struggling with; forgiveness.”

And I’m not lying. I am trying to take my own advice, which I have done for the past six months—the first three I refused to even attempt to forgive. Too much had gone on; he hurt me badly, but the longer I was away from my best friend, the harder it became.

I just don’t know if we can have what we should have had. I want it. God do I want it, but how do I get over all the hurt and pain without also looking like a fool?

How do I even trust him again?

Chapter 13

Flame – Two weeks Later

I sigh, walking into the common room after finally getting rid of Razor, that fucker. I chuckle when I see Clitter slide up to Slicer, running her fingers down his chest.

“Baby, you’re finally back.”

He shakes his head at her with a smile.

“Yeah, I’m back, but I’m having a beer with the brothers. I’ll come see you later, alright?”

She grins and nods her head before kissing his cheek, and I grin, shaking my head at him while taking a seat next to Gunner, with Slicer taking the other side. Fuck, it’s good to have him home. He’s been on the hunt for that fucker, Hairy, but it turns out Razor was a fucking spy for him, letting him know his whereabouts.

Slicer pats Gunner’s back. “Alright, brother, let’s fucking brainstorm on how to win your girl back.”

Gunner shakes his head, taking a sip of the beer that Cal, our prospect, gave him while I take a sip of mine. “She doesn’t want me back, brother. Between the brothers and the club’s women, the shit I did to distance myself from her, I have everything stacked against me, fucking everything.”

Slicer nods. “Maybe, but that doesn’t mean you give up, brother; it just means you fight harder.”

I nudge him about to give him a pep talk, but when my phone rings and everyone shuts up, the whole clubhouse stills as ‘Love is a Battlefield’ Stars favorite song, and her fucking ringtone blares through the silent room. My girl’s ringing me.

Gunner quickly nudges me, snapping me out of my stupor, and I answer with a rasp.

“Star?”

“GET TO LEAH NOW!” she screams down the phone, making my eyes widen before I hear a scream coming from down the hallway.

“LUCASSS.”

I jump off my stool as we all rush to Gunner’s room, only to see Leah standing in the middle of the room, bent over in pain, while her white leggings are full of blood—so much fucking blood.

Fuck!

Doc shoves into the room, shouting “MEL,” getting Gunner out of his stupor as Ava screams out in pain. Gunner rushes over to Leah, catching her as her legs give out before Mel rushes in. She gasps seeing the state of Leah while Annalise cries out, “NO,” the scene reminding her of her own trauma and making Axel take her in his arms as she cups her bump. Doc and Mel quickly check for her pulse before he looks at Gunner and rasps, “Pick her up gently, Gunner; bring her to the medical room.” He nods and does as he says while I link my fingers behind my head.

Fuck, fuck, fuck.

We all follow them to the medical room as Doc gets his screen before gently lifting up Leah’s jumper, showing her bump. Taking a deep breath, he places some gel on her stomach before putting the wand over the gel, gently pressing down before pressing some buttons on his screen. It doesn’t take long before we hear a strong ‘woosh-woosh’ sound echo through the room. Gunner’s mother Hazel, Ava, Mel, and Annalise all let out a sob while Axel, Dag, Slicer, Gunner, his dad Butch, Dead Shot, Doc, and I sigh in relief.

Thank fuck.

Doc moves the wand around before pointing at the screen and saying, “Her placenta has come away from her uterus a little, which is what’s caused the bleeding.

Her passing out was mostly from the shock of the pain. She’s going to be alright, brother,” he says with a sigh. “She’ll be on bed rest for the duration, but

otherwise, all is well with her and baby, thank fuck.” Doc sighs again, cleaning up her stomach before he rasps, “Okay, everyone out; let’s give her some quiet time.”

Everyone listens, giving Leah a kiss on the head while Slicer and I take a seat as Gunner caresses Leah’s bump. We stay quiet for a while before ‘Love is a battlefield’ echoes through the room, and I swallow hard, my eyes tearing up. I fucking wanted to hear that ringtone so many times over the last eight months.

I quickly answered the phone.

“Hey, Firefly.”

Star’s voice echoes through, “Is she okay?”

I slowly close my eyes and sigh, finally content to hear her voice after so long, her voicemail not fucking counting. “Her placenta has detached a little. She’ll be on bed rest for a while, but she and the baby are okay; the heartbeat was strong.”

Star let out a little sob, making me squeeze his eyes shut, hating the sound of her tears as I rasp, “Talk to me, Firefly, please.”

She snuffles, “I-I can’t.”

“Please, Star, I miss you. I miss my best friend. Please. I love you.” *Please, baby, just give me a chance.* Silently, I beg.

I squeeze my eyes shut as she lets out another sob before she rasps, “Just not enough,” and then hangs up, making me sob. Slicer grips my neck, pulling me over and hugging me tightly, while Gunner rasps, “As hard as that was, brother, she rang you. She could have called me, but she didn’t; her first thought was to call you.” I look at him, my eyes widening in realization.

“I’m still her person.”

He nods as well as Slicer, who squeezes my neck, making me look at him and say, “You’re still her person, Zayne.” He uses my given name, so it sticks in my head. I’m still her fucking person.

“She still loves you, brother; she’s getting weaker being away from you; she’s starting to cave, and when she does, fucking hold onto her.”

I turn to look at Gunner with his words, and I nod with determination. She still fucking loves me.

I squeeze my phone as Gunner looks back at his girl, who is still out of it, before looking back at Slicer.

“What did you find on Hairy, brother?”

Slicer sighs, and I look at him as he runs his fingers through his brown hair, his hazel eyes showing frustration and anger.

“Some woman he fucked said he knocked her up, then bailed on her after slipping the plan B in her drink.”

My mouth drops open. What the actual fuck?

He nods, “Yeah, I was on his trail for about a month before ‘someone’ tipped him off, and he fell off the radar again. Other clubs affiliated with ours and Snakes are keeping an ear to the ground, and we should hear something more in the next few weeks; he can’t stay underground for long. Axel said it’ll be me going again with Snake but also with Tank as well as my dad.”

I sigh. “There must be someone else helping him from one of our clubs.” It can’t have just been Razor; he’s not that fucking smart, and he’s been locked up for two weeks before we ended him.

Gunner nods. “That’s what I thought, but the question is, fucking who? Razor’s gone, so who fucking else would betray us?”

“I honestly don’t know, brother, but leaving for months at a time is fucking exhausting.” I half smile at Slicer’s words before Leah rasps, making us all look at her with relief while chuckling a little at her words.

“You men swear too much.”

Her hand clutches her stomach, and Gunner smiles at her.

“The baby’s got a good, strong heartbeat.”

She sighs in relief as Slicer and I stand, wanting to give them privacy now that we know she's awake. She does a double take seeing Slicer, and I grin alongside him.

“Good to see you, sweetheart.”

She smiles at him as he kisses her head, and I follow suit while Gunner growls, making us chuckle as we leave. We shut the door behind us, and I patted Slicer's back, heading to my room, not wanting to go home tonight with Star on my mind.

I'm still her person.

I get to my door and see Ginger. She saunters over to me with a sly smile only in a thong, nothing else, and I roll my eyes and walk past her, making her gasp in shock. I unlock and open my door before slamming it shut, locking it for good measure right before the handle wiggles, making me roll my eyes again. She screeches in outrage, but I ignore her and sit on my bed, looking at the picture on the table of Star sitting on the grass in the club's gardens. Her hair is down, her head tilted back, and her eyes closed, while her jean-covered legs are crossed. It was taken before Annie was kidnapped. I'm sitting next to her, leaning on my elbow, my eyes firmly on her. I grab my phone and call her number.

It goes to voicemail again, and I squeeze my eyes shut, waiting for the beep.

I sniffle. “I was the one who left you 730 lilac roses for graduation after you kissed me. One for every day I realized I loved you.”

I hang up and wipe my cheeks from the tears that have fallen before I ring her number again, waiting for the beep.

“I miss you Firefly, more than words can explain. I still love you always.”

I hang up and throw my phone on my bed, trying to breathe through my pain. When my phone beeps, I sigh, thinking it's club business, but my sob echoes through my room, seeing the message.

My Firefly – I miss you too; just give me time.

Time, I can do time.

Chapter 14

Star – Daggers Wedding – Five Months Later

I click the indicator on before turning into the parking lot, and I swallow hard. Why am I doing this? Oh yeah, because I promised I'd try.

Dammit.

I check the mirror and see my boy still fast asleep. I'm taking a big risk with this; I know I am, but I also know I'd regret not going. I pull up outside the daycare center. I've been on the road for ten hours now, only stopping for one night in a motel, and I have another four hours to go. I refuse to take my boy to Parkerville; it's bad enough that I decided to go, so Wincher was my best bet.

Taking a deep breath, I get out of my car and stretch before grabbing my boy in his car seat, then his bag, and taking him inside. Marlene, the owner, smiles at me before taking Theo's bag. I gently rub my hand over his head after placing his car seat on the floor. He looks so much like his father.

"He'll be in great hands, Star."

I give her a smile. I have only left him with a babysitter while I worked; this will be the longest I'll go without him, and the thought is terrifying. It helps that I've spoken to Marelene quite a bit on FaceTime.

I gently place a kiss on my boy's head before looking back at Marelene.

"I've placed eight bottles of expressed milk as well as some homemade purees in his bag."

She nods and gives me a smile before taking him inside, and I swallow hard. Ok, I have to go; I need to; he'll be safe here. Right, with a nod of my head in determination, I turn around and get to my car before driving out of the parking lot. It's going to take about four hours, and I should get to the church

before the ceremony at 11 a.m., then be gone by 12 before getting to my boy at 4 p.m. I've booked the same motel room for tonight before getting home tomorrow, where we should arrive at roughly 5 p.m., hopefully.

Four hours later my hands start to sweat as I go over the Hudson bridge. I take a deep breath. I need to get in and get out without being seen by Zayne. His messages are killing me; every day he leaves me a new truth, and every day I can feel myself wanting to give in, especially when he admitted to buying me my own gallery last year but didn't get the chance to give it to me. But the same question always comes to mind: how can I try for us after the hurt he's caused me? How can I live in Parkerville after I was raped? How can I trust him and the club again?

I shake my head before pulling into the parking lot of the church. I see Meghan, the resident doctor who also helped me alongside Mel that night, with a beautiful little girl walking towards the church, and I swallow hard.

Can I really do this and be around my family again, even for an hour after everything?

Taking a deep breath, I climb out of my car and slowly walk towards the entrance, where I notice Annalise gently rocking her baby girl, Annabel, and I smile. She hears my heels on the concrete and looks up before her eyes widen in shock, tears instantly filling them, making me rush my steps towards her, taking her and the little girl, who is a spitting image of her daddy, in my arms and hugging them both.

"Oh God, you're really here." She let out a sob, and I hugged her tighter until the baby made a noise, and I pulled back, smiling at the beauty before taking her from her mama's arms.

"Oh Annie, she is precious."

She lets out another sob just as two arms wrap around me from behind and Tank rasps in my ear, "Fuck, you're a sight for sore eyes, sweetheart."

I grin as I pass the baby back to her mama before I turn around and hug Tank tightly. "I missed you," I whisper, and he hugs me tighter. When my father was 'killed', Tank became a dad to me; beforehand, he was always there, and I was a lot closer to him than most brothers, but that was because he's Zayne's dad, and where Zayne was, I was.

He pulls back, gently moving my hair from my face. His bright blue eyes, just like his sons and mine, shine. "He doesn't know, does he?" I shake my head. "You don't want him to either, do you?" I shake my head again; I can't see him, not yet.

He sighs but nods; gratitude fills me before I hug him again. He pulls back, giving me a gentle smile. "Alright, sweetheart, I'll go in first with Annie, then you sneak in," he says, kissing my head. "Fuck, it's good to see you," he rasps before guiding a teary-eyed Annie in, and I blow her a kiss, making her smile as Tank mutters, "Fuck, my son is going to kill me for this," making me smile at him. I wait a couple of minutes before heading inside. I sneak inside, take a seat at the back, and swallow hard, trying not to look for Zayne because I honestly don't know what I'd do.

Smack him or kiss him?

Picture after picture of him with numerous women comes to mind, including my sister, then him leaving with Ginger that night.

Smack him. Yep, definitely smack him.

I take deep breaths, trying to stay invisible as 'a thousand years by Christina Perry' starts. Leah walks out of the doorway, first sending me a side eye and a wink, and I grin at her. She's the only one who knew I'd be here. She's wearing a light pink off-the-shoulder floor-length gown, her light blonde hair clipped to one side of her head while her blue highlights are curled slightly. She looks absolutely beautiful. Meghan comes next, in the same dress as my newly best friend, whom I started messaging a few months ago. Her black hair, in the same style as Leah's, looks beautiful. Her hand is holding the little girl who I saw her with outside, her daughter. She's in a

pretty white, flowery dress. Her brown hair curly down her back, her hazel eyes hesitant as she squeezes her momma's hand, and I grin before side-eyeing Slicer because damn, she's the spitting image of him.

How is that even possible?

Oh crap!

My eyes widen in realization, my head spinning from her to Slicer, then back to her. Meg's the woman he's been trying to find for five years, and he looks ready to fall apart. Oh, Slicer, this must be the news Mel told Annie she had for Slicer. Oh man.

I look at the door again and see Sophie, Ink's woman, and I smile, loving that these men have all found their loves. It's amazing to see. I know I'm still mad at them—furious, really—but I still want them to be happy; they're my brothers, my family, and I hope Slicer can get his girl.

When the wedding march sounds, echoing through the church, everyone stands as Mel stands at the top of the aisle with her dad, who happens to be Gunner's dad, a big flipping shock there that no one saw coming. She looks perfect in an off-white floor-length gown. Her brown hair is down and curly while her eyes shine. She is finally getting to marry her love, and Dagger is one lucky man.

I look towards the front and grin when I notice Axel standing where the minister is supposed to be in a tux, his cut on it making me shake my head. Of course they managed to convince the church to allow him to marry them; they do donate a lot to them, I guess.

“We are gathered here today to finally marry these two love birds.”

Everyone chuckles before I look around the room, noticing my mother and sister sitting together, and I narrow my eyes before looking towards the groomsmen. The men I see as my brother's are all looking happy and dashing; it's a sight to see, and I'm glad I did see it. I make eye contact with a shocked Gunner, his little boy bouncing in his arms. I tilt my head at

him, showing him my pain for not being with them every day, before I give him a slight smile, which soon widens seeing his boys eyes, which are absolutely stunning in a deep gray. These babies seem to take after their daddies, don't they?

I break eye contact first to watch the ceremony, knowing I'll have to flee before the bride and groom leave because he looks ready to grab Zayne, who I noticed is right in front of him, but that's fine; I'm just happy I get to watch it.

As soon as Axel says, 'you may now kiss your old lady' making me grin, Dagger grabs his woman and plants one on her while lifting her up, making everyone cheer. I wipe a tear as I take a look around one last time, making eye contact with Annie, who I blow another kiss to. Her eyes water, and she nods before I make a break for it, hating that I can't see Zayne in a suit, but let's face it, I'm not ready to see him yet, or my mother and sister for that matter, and I just want to get to my boy.

I head out the doors quietly before rushing to my car and climbing in. I start the car, then spin out of the parking lot, sighing in relief.

I make it to Wincher in under four hours and rush into daycare. The receptionist smiles at me before getting her phone to let them know I'm here before the door opens. I grin when Marlene brings my happy baby out, who instantly lifts his arms for me. I grab him and hold him tightly, sniffing his hair. "I missed you, baby."

"He was absolutely perfect; he last ate 30 minutes ago, so you should be ok for a while."

I grin at Marlene and take his bag before placing him in his car seat. "Thank you so much."

She nods, and we settle the bill before I take him out to the car. I click him in before placing his bag in the back. I lean in and kiss his head. "Let's go home, shall we?"

He grins at me before I make the trek home, stopping three times for fuel. I swear I see a bike like Zayne's, but I think I must be seeing things. We also stopped once at the motel in Missouri for about five hours so I could get some sleep and Theo could have some time out of his car seat.

We make it home just before four, making good time, and I sigh when parking up near my flat.

Longing hits me hard, but I shake it off.

I climb out of my car, about to open the back seat door, but freeze when a loud bike parks next to me, and I realize I wasn't seeing things on the way home. I think I purposely ignored it. I don't move when they turn the bike off, and I don't move when I hear shuffling. I don't need to turn around to know who it is; I always know, and my body always knows. I wasn't quick enough out of the church; Gunner must have gotten his attention straight away instead of waiting until the happy couple were out of the church.

I hear the shuffling of boots before he stands behind me, his front just touching my back before his tattooed hands glide over my hips, causing tears to fill my eyes, everything going blurry as his lips go to my ear, rasping.

“Did you really think I wouldn't find you, my Firefly?”

My tears fall, and I squeeze my eyes shut tightly before I hear my boy let out a whimper. I quickly get out of Zayne's hold, wiping my cheeks before opening the back door. I grin at my boy before unclicking him and lifting him up. I put him on my hip before taking a deep breath and turning around to face the man who broke me. His light blue eyes widen in shock, his black hair is a mess from the bike ride, and he's still in his suit that he fills out nicely,

Damn.

“Star?” he chokes out, his eyes never leaving our boy, who is playing with my hair.

I give him a slight smile, nerves shooting through me. “Zayne, I'd like you to meet our son, Theodore Mathew Silvers.”

Chapter 15

Flame

I stand here in the front row watching one of my best friends marry the woman he nearly lost due to a crazy nurse wanting more from him than he was willing to give.

Fuck, I miss my Firefly.

When she said she needed time, I didn't think she meant an extra five more fucking months; every time I've called, it still goes to voicemail, and I can't hold back any longer. I fucking need her.

Axel announces the happy couple, man and wife, before Dagger kisses his girl, sealing their future together, and I clap and smile along with everyone else, generally happy for my brother but wishing it was myself and Star, when Gunner taps me on the shoulder. I furrow my brows at him; his eyes are frantic.

“Brother, you need to fucking hurry. Star was at the back of the church; she's just left.”

My eyes widen before I rush down the other side of the aisle, nearly knocking my mother over, making her look at me with concern. Some people look at me with worry, but I ignore them as I run out of the church just in time to see a white fucking Honda spin out of the parking lot.

Gotcha baby.

With a shaky breath, I rush over to my bike, putting my helmet on, knowing this is going to be a long fucking ride if she's going where we believe she's been staying. I rev my bike and wheel spin out of the church parking lot, going in the same direction as the Honda. I catch glimpses of it for about two hours before my gas light flashes, and I curse fucking pissed before pulling into the next station, filling her up, fucking glad I put my wallet in my suit trousers. I quickly grab some food while I'm stopped and pay, ignoring the woman's flirty looks, which make her scowl, before running back to my bike,

putting my helmet back on, and then spinning away from the pump. I go as fast as I can without being pulled over, cursing, thinking I've lost her.

I pass through Wincher, ready to pull over, and fucking scream in frustration when the Honda comes into view again, making my heart pound.

FUCK YES!

I keep a few cars behind, following her, taking off every exit she does when my phone rings, the Bluetooth connecting with my helmet, and I answer.

“Yeah?”

Axel's voice comes through: “Whereabouts are you?”

I look around. “Phelps County, Missouri.”

He curses, “She's heading to Illinois, isn't she?”

I hum, “By the looks of things, yeah, she is just like we thought.”

“Fuck, which means Hairy is following her; he left an hour after she did.”

Dammit.

“Alright, I'll keep an eye out. I don't think she's driving through; she's now taking the next exit towards the motel.”

“Alright, brother, keep us updated.”

“Will do.”

I rasp as I hang up and turn my engine off, staying in the shadows as she climbs out of her car, the light barely hanging on as darkness starts to take over. She looks like a fucking vision, her dark blue off-the-shoulder dress hugging her curves nicely. I watch as she quickly grabs a bag and something else from the backseat, but I'm too far away to see what as she goes to a room, walking right in, which means she had the room last night too on her way to Dagger's wedding.

I take a seat on my bike, not willing to get myself a room and missing her when she leaves. I'll fucking

sleep when I know where she's living. I grab the sandwich from my saddle bag that I bought at the gas station and the drink before making myself comfortable. I know she won't be here long, probably wanting to get back on the road soon.

I watch for about five hours only messaging people back while also ignoring calls from Stars mother. She's been pestering me more and more since Emma told her I knew the truth. She says she just wants to explain, but what is there to explain?

She fucked up, end of.

I charge my phone on my bike's portable charger, ensuring I have enough battery for the rest of the journey before Star rushes out of the motel room at early dawn. The sun barely shows, making me get ready to put my gloves on as I swing my leg over my bike. She places what looks like a box, maybe, into the back seat of her car, then grabs the bags from the floor. She only went in with one, so she definitely stayed here before the wedding. She's now in some black leggings, and... holy fucking shit, my heart pounds. She's in my t-shirt from our night together. My eyes water. I fucking knew she still loved me; I knew it.

I watch as she gets into the driver's seat before reversing out of her spot, and I quickly put my helmet on, texting Axel, keeping the club updated.

Me – on the move.

As soon as she's out of the parking lot, I start my bike, putting my phone away before spinning after her. I find her instantly on Route 44 heading to Illinois, and again I trail behind all the way to Harding Road, Missouri. An old apartment block comes into view as she parks her shitty car; the thing looks ready to fall apart. She climbs out of her car, about to open her backdoor, when I pull up beside her, letting myself be known. She freezes, not moving a muscle, and I know she knows it's me. Just like I feel her whenever she's near, she feels me too.

We're soul mates.

I take my helmet off and slowly climb off my bike before coming up behind her, just shy of touching her back with my

front, before I glide my hands on her hips, finally feeling at fucking home again as my tense body finally relaxes for the first time in over a year.

I lean forward, my lips touching her ear.
“Did you really think I wouldn’t find you, my Firefly?”

She lets out a sob, and I have to stop myself from squeezing her hips when a whimper can be heard, and I furrow my brows as she moves out of my space, opening the backdoor. I watch on as she unclicks something before she turns around, her tears staining her cheeks, but the baby in her arms is what gains my attention.

bright blue eyes, black hair, and my nose.

Fuck me.

“Star?” I choke out, my eyes never leaving my double, my fucking beautiful double.

“Zayne, I’d like you to meet our son, Theodore Matthew Silvers.”

Our son.

My son.

I feel like I can’t fucking breathe.

I look towards my girl, whose eyes are filled with tears, but she’s trying to keep them at bay.

“You had my baby and didn’t tell me?”

I can’t keep the anger out of my voice, the hurt. I know I fucked up big time; I know I hurt her; fuck do I know but to keep our son from me.

My son.

I missed everything, everything!

Her tears spill over, and she goes to open her mouth, but I’m too angry to hear whatever fucking excuse she’s going to come up with, and I know this will fuck things up, but my mind is not thinking straight, my hurt overriding me as I pin her a look. “You kept my fucking son away from me? How old is

he, Star? four, five fucking months old. I never thought you were such a heartless fucking bitch!”

Her eyes widen, and I instantly regret my words as they turn cold. “Why not? I was raped because of you and the club, remember?”

Pain instantly shoots through me before she rushes towards her flat. I run after her but don’t get there in time when the door shuts behind her, locking automatically, and I slam my head against the wood, a sob coming out.

“Star!” I rasp, and I notice that she stops breathing heavily before turning around. She opens the door, making me stand up straight before passing our son over, who grips my cut, grinning at me, and another sob comes out. He has Stars dimple; fuck, he’s so perfect. I place my forehead against his, making him giggle.

“I won’t tell you why I’ve kept our son to myself; you don’t deserve an explanation right now.”

I grind my teeth, trying to control my anger as she takes him from my arms. “I’m not going anywhere, Firefly.” She flinches at the nickname, which fucking hurts: “Fine, I have work tomorrow; you can watch him for the day instead of him going into nursery; be here for 8 a.m.; I start at 8:30.”

I give her a nod before she turns around and walks inside.

My determination has doubled. I planned on drugging her and bringing her home, but now I have to think of the baby, Theodore, after my fucking father and my middle name.

With one last look as she disappears up the stairs, I go to my bike before climbing on. I find the nearest motel booking a room for the next month, knowing it’s going to take that long, maybe even longer, to get her home. I grab the key from the motel manager, who is devouring me with her eyes, before going to find my room on the second floor. I put the key in and entered the room, ignoring the ugly décor. I grab my phone quickly and call Axel, who answers on the third ring.

“Flame?”

I clear my throat. “I’m going to need some time off, Pres.”

He sighs, “Can’t you just drug her and bring her back?”

I chuckle, “No can do. Dad can take over with the next two runs; after that, I should be back.”

He curses, “Fuck, fine, ok; tell Starfish she’s on my shit list for taking my road caption away.”

I chuckle. “You remember you’re still on hers, right?”

He hums, “Yeah, but I’m not as much as you are, though.”

I laugh and shake my head because damn, that’s the truth before we say bye, and I drop my phone next to me, squeezing my eyes shut.

Fuck we have a son together. Biting my lip, I pick my phone up and call Star, and what a fucking shocker she doesn’t answer. She’s probably still pissed that I called her a bitch after everything I’ve done to her, so I get it, I do. I wasn’t thinking straight; all I could see was a child she kept from me, but my gut is telling me it wasn’t out of revenge. Star’s been hiding something for years. I’m not stupid; I just thought she’d come to me when she was ready, but I guess with everything I and the club have done, she couldn’t trust us enough. Well, that’s going to fucking change as far as I’m concerned.

The beep echoes in the room, and her voicemail hits, “*Hey, this is Star; I can’t get to the phone right now, probably hanging with Flame, but leave me a message and I’ll get back to you.*”

I swallow hard. “Since you turned seventeen, I stayed in your room on the floor and woke before you got up, not bearing being away from you.” I wipe away the tear that’s fallen down my cheek.

“He looks just like me, and he’s perfect. He’s the sign you need, Star, to know we’re meant to be.

I love you, my Firefly.”

I hang up, taking a deep breath before looking at the time. I’m going to check this place out for some food and clothes, and

then I have a plan to make.

It's time for a plan to bring my family home.

Chapter 16

Star – Age 21 – Two Months Later, Present Day

I sigh before wiping the last table and taking the dishes to the back. I'm the only one at the café closing up. I'm so tired. Theo has started teething, so he wakes up a lot, and trying to watch Hairy with Zayne in town has not been easy.

I never thought I'd see the day when Zayne puts the club second.

He has Theo most days when I'm working or picking him up from nursery when he has to speak to his dad about the road maps for the club, and today was one of those days. I took my boy, who is now crawling, to the nursery; Zayne should have already picked him up. I haven't said two words to Zayne in two months. He still leaves me messages, one truth a day, but I will not cave. I don't care if he was the one servicing my old Jeep all these years or the one paying for my art supplies instead of an investor, and I certainly don't care how he looks holding our son; he hurt me and he deserves to be punished, plus the trust isn't there anymore. Don't get me wrong, I trust him with our son and, most likely, with my life. I just don't trust him with my damn heart.

Why can't I just hate him? It would make things so much simpler!

After switching off all the equipment in the café, I leave out of the backdoor, locking up, before rushing to my car, fully aware that Hairy has been watching me. According to Zayne in one of his rambles trying to fill the quiet, Hairy has been following me everywhere, but what he doesn't know is that I've been following him fully aware of his obsession with me, with the daughter of the man he has captured just a street over from my flat. I welcome the danger he thinks I'm in. I have my pistol and my knife. If Hairy comes within two feet of me, then I won't hesitate.

I climb into my car and sigh. I want to go to the abandoned house that Hairy has my dad in, but I can't without backup. I finally caught a sighting of him last week, which means it's time to raid the place. Plus, I've been waiting for a day when Hairy will be there, and it's time to speak to the club for help.

Finally.

I start the car and smile as I drive away from the café. Zayne will be happy because I'm finally about to speak to him.

I get home within ten minutes before rushing inside. I climb the stairs to the second floor before heading to my cream door, which I think must have been white at some point. I unlock it before heading inside, shutting the door behind me while I throw my keys in the bowl on the stand to my right. I can't wait to see my baby. I've missed him, and I must admit, I'm a lot more relaxed knowing he's with his daddy.

I guess Zayne's being around hasn't been all bad.

I start my trek into my small living room smiling when I see a sleeping Theo in his car seat about to walk over to him when a hand comes into my vision holding a glass of wine. I give Zayne a small smile before taking a large gulp, sighing after a busy day. It's become my routine to have one glass a night. I take another look to see my boy when I suddenly feel tired, and I look at Zayne with a furrowed brow. He gives me a small smile, guilt-lacing his raspy voice.

"I'm sorry, my love, but I can't live without you anymore. Time to go home."

That son of a... my thoughts disappear as my world goes back.

I feel sick, and my head feels fuzzy. I blink my eyes and see we're in the car. I groan, making Zayne quickly pull over on the side of the road. It looks like we're about an hour out of town, and everything comes straight back to me, the selfish... "Shit, Firefly," he rasps, stopping my thoughts before opening the passenger door. I see Theo in his car seat in the front, and I get out, my head dizzy but not dizzy enough not to remember

the idiot who drugged me. Anger overrides me as he comes into view.

“YOU MOTHER FUCKER, YOU DRUGGED ME!”

He winces, knowing I hate cursing, and I screech before trying to rush around the car to my boy, getting the hell away from him. He rushes after me, and I turn around, swinging a right hook and hitting his nose. “FUCK!” he shouts before I knee him in the balls, making him bend a little, coughing, and I quickly rush to the driver’s side of the car, intending to leave his ass here. When his hand appears around me, a cloth is placed over my mouth and nose. I struggle before a needle is jabbed into my neck, and I start to see black, hearing Zayne apologize over and over in the background as he catches me from falling.

Mother...my world goes black.

I wake up to voices,

“Better. Her guilt has dimmed in her eyes, and she’s finally gone back to work. Doc’s been with her every day, which has helped her anxiety.”

Hmm, that sounds like Slicer.

“That’s good, brother; that’s really fucking good.” I start to feel sick, and I groan, catching Zayne’s attention. “Fuck, she’s waking up.”

Slicer chuckles. “I’m guessing you only gave her a little sedative?”

Zayne clears his throat while I drop my head into my hand. I’m going to kill him. “Nah brother, I uh, I’m driving back in her car towing my bike behind us, which is why I won’t be back until tomorrow. That’s the second sedative I gave her after she woke up screaming at me and tried to run, which was after she kneed me in the balls and gave me a bloody nose. Tell me again why we taught her to defend herself.”

Slicer bursts out in laughter while I growl, “I’m go-going to-to kill you, Flame!”

“It’s Zayne, and you fucking know it!” He snaps, and I narrow my eyes at him, anger flashing through them.

“Where are we?” I ask as I look around.

“Near the motel you stayed at.”

Crap, that’s like eight hours away. “Turn the car around, Flame.”

“IT’S FUCKING ZAYNE!”

I sigh, my head pounding and his shouting making it worse.

“Turn the car around, Zayne, now. We need to go back.”

He shakes his head, his hand holding our sons, making my heart melt just a tiny bit—only tiny though; he’s still a tosspot.

“Zayne, stop the car now!”

“NO!” he shouts before he takes a deep breath. “Over a fucking year I spent without you, Star, I can’t any longer. I know I fucked up; believe me, I fucking know; I’m paying for it daily. Fuck, I paid for it not seeing you round with our child and not holding your hand when you gave birth. You’re my best friend, and I fucking love you so fucking much. I can’t live without you any longer; it’s time for you to come home.”

I shake my head. “How do you expect me to come home after everything, Zayne? I was raped,” he flinches, pulling the car over on the side of the road and squeezing the steering wheel before getting out in anger. I climb out too after checking on Theo, who has somehow drifted off with the shouting. I tilt my head at Zayne before he points at me.

“I DON’T WANT TO FUCKING TALK ABOUT THAT STAR!”

My tears build: “I was raped, Zayne; it happened.” He shakes his head, but I won’t stop; he needs to hear this: “It did happen; it happened because of the club; it happened because of you,” he flinches again, “it happened because you left me unprotected so you could screw Ginger.”

He shakes his head again before he shouts, with pain lacing his voice, “I DIDN’T FUCK GINGER THAT NIGHT.”

My eyes widen in shock, and he drops his chin to his chest. “One truth for today, Firefly,” he says, looking up, his eyes shining. “I haven’t fucked another woman since I screwed up with your sister three years ago and you keyed my bike.” I stumble back, words unable to form, and I shake my head in shock while he snuffles. “I let you believe it because I still thought you deserved better than me, and I know that wasn’t my call to make; it was yours, but I clearly wasn’t thinking straight.

When you were upset about Annie, I could feel my barrier slipping, and I didn’t want to take advantage of your vulnerable state, so when Ginger sauntered over to me, I saw an opportunity to leave. She was basically my lift home. I went to the house we built together, a house that I actually had you design because a part of me always thought you’d move in, and I slept while you were getting fucking raped. That’s what I was doing that night, Star.”

He turns away from me, shaking his head while he links his fingers behind his head as he rasps, “I left you to be hurt all because I wasn’t ready to be completely yours while your friend was hurting.” He turns to me while my tears fall hard and fast. “I haven’t fucked anyone in three years, Star; you’ve got all I’ve ever wanted. I just didn’t want you to regret choosing me when you had a full road ahead of you, a world to see for your paintings. Fuck, I didn’t want to hold you back.”

I take a deep breath to try and control my emotions, which isn’t easy because my rage is wanting to come through. He walks over to me like the stupid man he is and cups my cheek with his right hand, his left cupping my hip, gently tracing his thumb along it.

I nod my head. “So you let me believe for years that you were screwing anything with a skirt to push me away?” He nods, guilt shining through his eyes. “You let me hurt.” He swallows hard, reluctant to nod, which he does, and I nod my head again before kneeling him hard between his legs, making him double over in pain. “Fuck Firefly,” he coughs, “do you not want any more kids?”

I narrow my eyes at him, completely enraged, as I cross my arms over my chest, grateful Theo is asleep because I'm about to kill his flipping father!

He blinks and coughs again, seeing my anger. "Yep, I definitely deserved it, though."

And I nodded in agreement.

Jackass!

Chapter 17

Flame – 29 years old – present day

Fuck!

An angry Star is a hot Star, but fuck me, my balls hurt. I cough again, kneeling on the ground, trying to get my bearings.

I definitely deserved it, though.

I try standing, breathing through my nose as she narrows her eyes at me, and I hold my hands up. “That should have been one truth I told you on your voicemail, fuck.”

I bend again while she growls at me, poking my chest and making me stand up before she points in my face using language she absolutely despises: “You absolute piece of fucking shit.” My eyes widen. “How dare you take my choices away from me? How dare you hurt me intentionally, thinking it’s the right thing?” She shoves my chest. “HOW FUCKING DARE YOU HURT ME LIKE THAT?” She screams, shoving me over and over, and I wrap my arms around her as she tries to punch the shit out of my chest when she realizes shoving me isn’t working. I hold her tighter as she sobs for everything I’ve done to her, and my heart is fucking breaking. “How could y-you?”

I did this—me, the man she saw as her protector, the man she loved more than anything.

I wait for however long it takes for her to calm down as I press my nose onto the top of her head, smelling her vanilla scent and noticing the faint smell of paint missing, making me furrow my brows as I gently run my fingers through her hair.

“Firefly? Why don’t you smell like your paint?” I ask once she’s calmed down fully, and she tenses, making me tense. “I haven’t painted since I left.”

I sigh and shake my head before leaning back, cupping her wet cheeks. “Then that needs to change. Painting is your life,

baby.”

She sighs, “You’re not forgiven, Flame!” I narrow my eyes at her use of my road name, and she just smirks at the little minx and says, “You fucked up big time. You have eleven years to make up for, plus nine months of pregnancy that I had to go through on my own as well as having our son on my own. You had no right to take my choices away from me like that. I’m not some damsel in distress; I have my own mind, and I wanted you, and you blew it big time.”

I nod because she’s right. I went to the hospital where she gave birth, and she had no birthing partner. She gave birth to our son all on her own, but the way she’s talking, it’s like we won’t end up together, and she’s fucking wrong. “I’m not giving up on us, Star. You will be my old lady; you will be my wife, and you will have more of my children.”

She shakes her head. “I wouldn’t expect you to, Zayne, but don’t think I’m going to make this easy for you. It’s like I told Leah, You are the love of my life, but right now, I hate you, and I don’t think I’ll ever be able to forget what you put me through.

What I went through because of you and the club, I may be able to forgive at some point, but never forget.”

I nod because she’s right, and I also know she’s only standing here because of the love she feels for me—love she wishes she didn’t feel.

“I’ll fight, baby, because I’m not living without you again.”

She sighs and says, “Let’s turn the car around,” before heading to the driver’s side, and I growl, grabbing her hand and pulling her to me, “What part of I’m not letting you go again did you not realize, Star, it’s time to go fucking home where I can chain you to my fucking bed until you forgive me?”

She tilts her head and raises her brow at me, and I curse. I wasn’t supposed to say all of that out loud.

“Call Axel.”

I looked at her in confusion, scrunching my brows up because I was certain I was going to have to hide my junk from her again. She nods to my cut pocket, where my phone is, and sighs, doing as she asked for a reason I don't even know why. I'm fucking whipped where she's concerned. I bring up Axel's number before pressing the call button and putting it on speaker. He answers on the fourth ring, putting himself in a really big fucking hole.

"Flame, Slicer tells me you've drugged and kidnapped Starfish. It's about time, brother; waiting two months was ridiculous; you should have done it straight away."

I wince while Star crosses her arms over her chest. "You're a jackass, Logan!"

I snort at her using his legal name while Axel curses, "Fuck sake, Flame, you could have given me a heads up that I was on speaker; she has a mean fucking right hook!"

I chuckle. "Sorry, Pres." He growls while Star smiles a little. "Star asked me to call you. I'm trying to convince her to get her ass back in the car so we can go home, but she wants to go back to Illinois. She told me to call you for a reason I don't even fucking know, and I..."

Star butts in, "Axel, I need you to go into my dad's room."

I look at her in shock because no one is allowed in there except for her. I mean, fuck, she banned her sister from stepping a foot near the fucking door, and well, I can understand why now because her sister is a fucking bitch who only looks out for herself, but still.

Axel clears his throat, "Star I don't think..." Star butts in again: "I need you to go into my dad's room and turn on my computer; I'll instruct you from there; maybe grab Dagger on your way, but don't tell anyone else what you're doing or why; you have a traitor in your club."

I stand up straight and ask, "What the fuck are you talking about, Firefly?"

She gives me a small smile as rustling can be heard over the phone. "Dagger with me," Axel says, while Star ignores my

question but doesn't break eye contact until our boy makes a noise. She quickly checks on him, and I smile. Fuck, she's a good mother, the fucking best, and I'm one lucky fucker to have her as our son's mother.

Now to try and put another one in her. I smile, a plan forming, making her narrow her eyes at me, and I clear my throat as Axel speaks up.

"Alright, Starfish, we're both here; no one knows where we've gone, and the computer is on now. Please explain how you know we have a fucking traitor in our club."

She takes a deep breath, ignoring his question: "On the desktop, you'll find a folder called Hairy." My eyes widen while Dagger clears his throat. "Uh, Star, I thought it was over a year ago he did what he did?"

"It was," is all she says when Axel clears his throat, "then why are there files dating back eleven years?"

She doesn't break eye contact with me as she shocks all three of us with her next words: "Because Hairy is the one who shot at me and my dad when he was only seventeen; he's the one who ran us off the road; he's also the one who dragged me a mile away from the crash site, attempting to kidnap me."

My breathing picks up while Axel mutters, "What the fuck?"

She clears her throat: "When I flew off the bike and hit my head, when I was blacking out, I was telling the truth about hearing Daddy scream my name. When Hairy dragged my unconscious body, attempting to take me, my father, who he thought was dead, attacked him. My eyes widened some more. "You'll find the footage in the first folder. It was hard to get it back, but I did thanks to the skills Tank and you, Zayne, had taught me.

Hairy took my father, who is still very much alive, into an abandoned house in Illinois and held him hostage. I have all the footage as proof in those folders; that's why I chose Illinois. I'm not in art school or anything like that; I work at a crappy café all while watching him fully aware that

he's become obsessed with me since he raped me because of who he has in his basement."

Fuck me.

We can hear Dagger and Axel playing the footage. Bones' voice echoes through the phone, making Star flinch.

"STARRY..."

Axel's voice echoes through my speakers: "There's hundreds of footage here, Star."

She nods.

"That's because I've been watching him for years. Axel, I need you to somehow get the council brothers, including the old timers except for Doc, to Illinois as soon as possible. Zayne can ping you at our location. You need to arrive in the dead of night. Hairy has an obsession with me now, so he can't know you will all be here. Don't let anyone know you are leaving the clubhouse; make up an excuse. Inform Doc, but keep him from coming. He was best friends with my dad, so we can't risk him going crazy. I'd say to try and convince your dad to stay back too, but I somehow doubt he would."

I bite my lip, feeling so fucking confused as Dagger speaks, "I have so many questions, Star. Is this why he went after you?"

She tilts her head a little, and I can see she wants to lie to help ease our guilt, and I shake my head at her. She needs to say it as it is, so she sighs, "No, it was a coincidence that I turned out to be who I was. He knew I asked about him, but he thought it was because I had remembered him and I was going to rat him out. He came for me because I was Zayne's girl."

I butted in, "You are still my girl, Firefly."

She sighs and shakes her head. "Get everyone to my flat Axel then I'll tell you everything, and I mean everything."

He sighs. "Alright, we'll be there tomorrow afternoon." He's quiet for a few moments before he speaks again: "We missed you, Starfish." Axel hangs up while Star smiles a little before looking at me, and I shake my head.

"I guess it's your turn for some truths, huh, Firefly."

She smiles again and nods. “Yep, and now you have to drive eight hours back to my flat because my head is pounding from your sedatives, which I plan to now sleep off.”

I curse while she laughs, getting back into the car. Shaking my head, I follow her lead before heading back to her flat, ready to hear some of her home truths, not knowing how I’ll handle them.

Chapter 18

Star

It took us ten hours instead of eight to get to my flat, thanks to our boy wanting to get out and play. I quickly bathed and fed him before putting on Charlie and the numbers for him. He loves the songs and adorably claps to them.

I quickly have a shower, still stinking of café food, before getting into my signature leggings and Zayne's top, a new one that I stole out of his bag before heading to my small bathroom. I go into my bland living room, which I haven't even decorated, to see Zayne sitting on the floor with our son.

“Dadadada.”

He grins wide upon hearing him say dada while I shake my head. “All the months I carried him, the hours I pushed him out, and he says dada first?”

Zayne chuckles before he looks at me; his eyes darken when he sees I took another shirt off his, but I ignore the look as we hear the rumbles of several bikes, and I swallow hard while Zayne smiles. We wait in silence before my buzzer goes off, and I let them in before we hear several boots coming up the stairs. I unlock my door, opening it before going over to Theo, knowing his grandfather is about to meet him for the first time. I pick him up, making him squeal and grin at me while Zayne stands behind me, his hand going to my hip. An electric current shocks through me at his touch.

This would be so much easier if I could feel nothing for him and just switch my feelings off.

Axel was the first one to walk in all geared up in his biker gear, followed by Dagger, Dead Shot, Stormy, Ink, Hawk, Gunner, Butch, Brick, and Slicer. They all come to a halt, seeing the baby in my arms, their mouths hanging open before Tank enters the room, and lastly, closing the front door and locking it. His eyes go wide seeing his sons double in my

arms, and my eyes well up with tears while Zayne squeezes my hip. “Dad,” he says, getting his father’s attention, “I’d like you to meet your grandson, Theodore Mathew Silver’s, Theo for short.”

He lets out a gasp for breath, completely in shock, before I walk over to him while the brothers’ mouths drop further open in shock. I gently pass Tank, his grandson, who goes to him willingly. It helps that he looks exactly like his daddy.

He gasps again, tears filling his eyes as Theo grips his cut, grinning his two teeth at him, and I smile before stepping back a little bit and looking at all the brothers. I’m aware that from what Zayne’s told me, only Gunner, Dead Shot, Axel, Dagger, and Slicer know about what happened to me, so I guess I’ll start at the beginning, but first,

I clear my throat. “Axel, call Snake, please.” He furrows his brows in confusion but nods his head. Snake answers on the second ring,

“Axel?”

I clear my throat. “Snake, this is Star. I’m not sure if you know who I am...” He butts in, “Yeah, darling, I do, and I’m so fucking sorry.” I flinch while the brothers who don’t know look at me in confusion as Zayne grips my hip, and I swallow hard. “Okay, well, I have a story for you and all the council brothers here. Are you okay with staying on the line? You need to hear this.”

He clears his throat. “Yeah, darling.”

Zayne growls, and I roll my eyes while Snake chuckles at him as the brother’s smirk which soon vanishes with my next words. “Okay, I need you all to stay quiet until I’ve finished, not one word, even if you all want to say something and kick off, and Tank is to keep a hold of his grandson because I know he’ll keep him calm.”

Everyone nods and murmurs in agreement, including Snake, and I take a deep breath.

“Eleven years ago, Hairy ran my dad and me off the road. I know this because I got a good look at him when he tried

shooting at us, hitting my leg in the process.” The brothers all look at me in shock, but I continue, “My father WAS still alive, and he did scream for me.” Some of the old timers look at me with pity, but they’ll soon change their tune.

“Hairy tried to grab a hold of me, to kidnap me, but my dad stopped him, and Hairy ended up taking my father instead.” The brother’s eyes widened in shock. “For the past eleven years, I have been watching Hairy. Zayne and Tank taught me everything I needed to know about computers and hacking, and I became good at it, maybe even better than them, because I managed to find the footage that was lost, which showed Hairy’s attack, and it showed my father very much alive when a van picked them both up. Killer, Hairy’s cousin, who Zayne had killed for selling laced cocaine at Untamed Girls, was driving it.”

I take a deep breath and wring my hands together. “I always knew my father was alive; it’s why I never gave up. Then, over a year ago, when Hairy screwed up, he moved my withered-away-looking father from a location in DC to Illinois. He’s holding him up in an abandoned house one street away from here. I’ve spent my time here watching his every move, trying to locate where he was keeping my father. Two weeks ago, I finally confirmed that my father was there. Hairy fluffed up, and a street camera had shown my father being dragged down into a basement where he hadn’t covered the window.”

Their eyes are wide with shock, and I nod, carrying on as Snake curses, “It took me a while to figure out why Hairy attacked us that day until last year when I finally uncovered his mother’s diary. You see, she was insane, but it was never clinically discovered. She was obsessed with the then Pres. Snake’s dad, but he was and still is to this day very much in love with his old lady. Hairy’s mom wasn’t happy about that, so she drugged him, knowing he wouldn’t go to her willingly, slipped way too much GBH into his drink, and gently guided him into his room at their clubhouse, where she proceeded to rape the then-passed-out Pres, which was all recorded.” Axel’s eyes widen in shock while Snake’s breathing picks up. “She obviously used way too much because he never

recalled what happened, and that angered her. She wrote how hurt she felt when he couldn't even get it up but still thought she could be pregnant despite him not ejaculating, so she bought a pregnancy test."

Snake Butts in, "Hairy's father couldn't have any more kids."

I nod, "Correct, he realized she'd been cheating when he found the tests, and at the time when it all came about, my father was doing business for the club with Snakes, and she pointed my father out as the man she slept with because she thought the man she saw as her 'lover' would be killed. Hairy's father didn't believe her."

Axel butts in this time, "Because your father was head of heels for your mother,"

I nod again, "exactly, but Hairy didn't see it that way, and when his father killed his mother a few days later after it was confirmed she was indeed not pregnant, he blamed my father; he fell for his mother's lies before her death, and he attacked. Since that day, he's been trying to create a war between the clubs to bring ours down."

I take a deep breath again before looking at Zayne, who nods in encouragement, knowing what I need to say, and I look at all the men and say, "Last year, Hairy, he-he anally raped me behind Untamed Fire in front of the camera." The men all look at me in shock, but I carry on, "He didn't seek me out because of who I was; that was just a coincidence. He did it because I was Zayne's girl," Zayne butts in, "still are." I ignore him, "he wanted revenge for his cousin Killer, who Zayne had burned alive; I was the collateral, but as soon as he realized who I was, he became obsessed with me, not realizing I knew he was watching me, making it easier for me to follow him and finally find my dad."

Tank steps forward, trying to stay in control while Theo is asleep in his arms. "Why didn't anyone come forward? I mean, when you were, I, fuck."

I give him a smile. "Razor was on door duty, and I already knew he was a traitor. He was my 'in' to find Hairy for a

while.” I look at Gunner and say, “If I had known what he did to Leah, I would have said something sooner.” He nods his head, understanding that, because of what I had gone through, I wouldn’t have wanted the same for anyone else. Zayne continues the next part, fessing up for his wrongdoings, making my heart jump in my chest. He didn’t need to tell them this part: “I was with her for about half an hour. It was the day Annie lost the baby and was in the hospital. I could feel myself wanting to comfort her and give in to my feelings but didn’t want to take advantage, so when Ginger sauntered over to me, I made out like I was going home to get laid when really I just went home. I went home and went to bed all while Star was being assaulted.”

Everyone’s eyes widen while Tank curses, “That night you two slept together on her father’s birthday; that was a goodbye for you, wasn’t it, Star?”

I nod my head. “I just didn’t expect that little surprise.” I nod towards my boy and smile while Tank looks ready to fall apart.

Snake clears his throat. “What else do we not know, Star?” He has so many emotions in his voice, from pain to anger to rage.

I swallow hard. “Two brothers in your club named Hammer and Robber are working for Hairy; they handle the finances at your strip club; they’ve been taking money out each month, doctoring the books; you’ll find it in the off-shore accounts that I sent you in a cryptic email before everyone arrived.”

He curses up a storm before I look at the brothers here and I swallow hard. “Ginger is the traitor in our club,” Zayne stumbles back while the brothers suck in a breath. “I got into her phone.” I swallowed hard before looking at Slicer. “She’s the one who tipped off Meghan’s parents about where she was after she overheard your conversation in church.” I look towards Axel, and he shakes his head, but I still say it. “She’s also the one who told Annie’s father where she’s staying, and when she would be back at the bakery, he offered her a million for the information,” he curses before I look towards Zayne, and his eyes start tearing up.

“Please, Firefly, d-don’t tell me, please.” His eyes shine with pure pain, knowing what I’m about to admit to him.

My tears fall before I rasp, “She’s the one who made the plans with Hairy to rape me. She went into the bar deliberately to distract you so he could grab me.”

He looks at our son and knows he can’t kick off, so he links his fingers behind his head, trying to breathe, and I swallow hard. “The reason why I never told you about our son was because she was the club’s traitor, and I couldn’t have her figure out where I was. She’s obsessed with you and would have done anything to our son in order to get you. She would have told Hairy, and I would have lost my father completely. At the moment, he’s enjoying torturing him because he believes my father’s the reason for his mother’s death, but if he finds out we all know where he is and that we know my dad is alive, then he’ll kill him, and I’m sorry, Zayne, but I didn’t spend all this time trying to find him only to lose him now, only for our son to lose his second grandfather.” I look around the room and say, “Everything I have said I have documented as proof in the files Axel has seen.”

The men all shake their heads, pain etching their features, and I take another breath. “Now, who’s going to help me rescue my father?”

Chapter 19

Flame

Tears fall down my face, and I shake my head before leaving the room while Axel speaks to Snake, who wants in on capturing Hairy. I leave them to it; I need a fucking minute, and I know Theo is with my dad while Star talks to some brothers. I go into her room before sitting on her bed, trying to fucking breathe through my pain. I notice a picture of me and her on the bedside table with the shirt she took the night we made our son, and my tears fall as I let out a sob, placing my head in my hands.

I've caused her so much pain and missed out on watching my son grow in her stomach and come into this world. I missed the first five months of his life.

What the fuck have I done?

I don't know how long I sit here for when the door opens. I don't look up. Even as someone shuffles over to Theo's crib, another sob comes out, my mind tearing through all the hurt. I did this to her. I caused her so much pain, thinking I knew what was best. I fucked a traitor to the club over and over, shoveling it in her face. I left with the traitor who helped cause her rape.

Fuck, fuck, fuck.

My body shakes as my pain releases before gentle hands glide on my shoulders, causing me to look up, dropping my hands before my eyes connect with her caramel ones as more tears fall down my cheeks. Her eyes show pain, so much pain, and another sob comes out before she climbs on me, straddling my lap, her arms going around my shoulders to the back of my neck, gripping the base of my hair while my face goes straight into the crook of her neck before I hold her tight to me, crying my fucking eyes out for what I did to her, the guilt tearing me apart, and although I don't deserve it, she lets me have my

time to mourn for everything I did to her, the pain I caused her while she comforts me, holding me tightly.

She runs her fingers through my hair as I place a gentle kiss on her neck before I rasp, “One truth, baby; I got your name tattooed above my dick after you turned eighteen.”

She pulls back, her eyes widening in shock while I chuckle, gently running my fingers through her dark blonde hair, loving that it is down. “And I bought you an engagement ring just before you turned seventeen because I knew you’d always be mine, even if I thought you deserved better than me.”

Tears well up in her eyes before she whispers, “That was two truths.”

I nod. “I’ll give you them all if it means I can earn your love and trust back, and I’ll try. Fuck me, will I try every damn day for the rest of our lives? I just don’t know how you could after what I caused.”

She sighs, resting her forehead against mine, whispering again, “My love never faded, Zayne; it’s always been there. It started out as friendship, then turned into all-consuming. You are my one and only. The trust isn’t going to be easy, and when I think about you with other women, throwing them in my face, including my sister, then with Ginger, I don’t know if you can earn it back. I have days where I want you to earn my trust back, but then I have days where I don’t think you deserve to have it back.”

I nod, gently kissing her lips before I rasp, “I’m going to do everything in my power to earn it back Firefly. I know I should let you go and find someone worthy of you, but no one ever will be, and I can’t live without you anymore.”

She nods before placing her head in the crook of my neck, and I hold her tighter to me. I know we don’t have long before Snake gets here; he’s flying in, which is only two hours, then he will travel back in the van from the little bits of information I caught when I left the room, so I’m going to take this moment, just me and my girl, who I have fucking missed holding like this.

We stay like this for about an hour, me just holding her before Star speaks again, “What’s up with Hawk? He seems detached.”

I sigh. “He caught Daisy cheating on him seven months ago.”

She leans back and furrows her brows. “Daisy? As in Daisy Harris, sweet Daisy Harris, who has held out for Hawk since she was a teenage Daisy?”

I wince and nod my head because, yeah, I told him something didn’t seem right, but he was adamant, “He won’t listen to reason, Firefly; he said he saw it himself.”

She growls, “Fucking MC men!”

My eyes widen while she looks at our son quickly to make sure she didn’t disturb him before hopping off my lap and saying, “Wha...Firefly?” I question: I was finally holding her; she needs to get back where she belongs, on my fucking lap. She shakes her head before storming into her living room with me hot on her heels, making all the men look at her in shock as she points at Hawk and says, “You mother, fucking idiot!”

I swear, I’ve never heard Star curse so much in my life!

Hawk holds his hands up, “what-what did I do?” He’s in shock, and I don’t blame him because a cursing Star is a fucking scary Star.

“What exactly did you see?”

I want to fucking laugh at the shocked look on my brother’s face right now, but I also don’t want Star’s wrath, so instead I smirk and lean against the wall while the brothers make themselves comfortable, happy for Star to take charge with this one. We’ve all known Daisy since childhood; her sister was close to Ink and Hawk. We all know Daisy had always wanted Hawk, but she tried to date after her sister told her that she and Hawk were an item. You see, Hawk was her scapegoat, unfortunately, from her dad. Her sister referred women, and their father is old-school and would have disowned her for it. She, unfortunately, saw how Daisy looked at Hawk and vice versa, panicking because she’d already told her dad she and Hawk were together when she thought Hawk

wouldn't make his move with her sister, so she lied to her sister, only thinking about herself and the money her father put in her account monthly, then apologized to Hawk, who had no choice but to go along with it, and then Rose was unfortunately killed in a car accident.

Hawk had finally managed to convince Daisy last year to give them a shot, but unfortunately for the idiot, he also asked to keep in on the down low because of his mother, and then he walked in on her, apparently kissing some other dude, which does not sound like our sweet Daisy Masie.

Hawk clears his throat. "Star, this isn't really..." She butts in; she's good at that, and I grin at her fiery side. "This has everything to do with me when you MC men keep fucking things up!" She grits out while the men start to complain, and I, like a good boy, keep my fucking mouth shut as she glares at each man who snap their mouths shut.

She points at Axel, "refused to give up easy pussy until Annie came around but decided to do it right in front of her," he winces before she shoots Dagger lasers, and he slinks back a bit, muttering 'fuck', "Actually, fucking cheated on Mel like a toss pot and should feel grateful she even gave another chance," then she looks at Ink, who instantly puts his hands up, but she doesn't let him off. "called Sophie a whore not willing to listen to her about her relationship with GAY Todd," she then looks towards Gunner, who nods his head. He knows what he did; "like the idiot he is, he decided not to look at a situation that was right in front of him properly; his girl was assaulted horrifically, then he shoved a bitch in her face over and over again." She then looks at Slicer, and he tilts his head, smiling at her, before she smiles back, shaking her head. "He struggled tremendously and didn't think he'd find Meghan, so I'll let him off." He chuckles while the brothers scowl at him before she looks at me, and I hold my arms out.

"I pushed you away, causing your rape, and broke your heart over and over, thinking you deserved better than this life instead of letting you decide for yourself."

Her eyes soften toward me before she nods, looking back at Hawk. “So this has everything to do with me, you idiot, because men in this MC screw up and Daisy is the sweetest person I have ever met despite her sister taking the man she’d been in love with for probably the same amount of time I have loved Zayne because she didn’t want to lose her daddy’s money like the spoilt bitch she was, so I’ll ask again, What did you see, Leo?”

He swallows hard, knowing Daisy’s sister was spoiled and loved the easy life, so he can’t even defend her, and neither does Ink, who looks down and says, “She was kissing another man.”

Star nods, raises a brow, and tilts her head, her eyes narrowing. “And her body language?”

Oh shit.

I drop my chin to my chest before looking back at Hawk, who furrows his brows. “Her hands were fisted onto the guy’s chest while he kept a hold of her head.” Realization hits him while Star shakes her head.

“FUCK!” he screams, grabbing the back of his neck and only just remembering that his blonde hair is in a bun. He shakes his head while Star rasps, “What did you say to her?”

He winces, “I told her, fuck, I said her sister was a better fuck knowing I took her virginity and I wished it was her still alive. The next morning I woke to Ginger and Clitter in bed with me. I checked the camera I had Flame install a few years ago, and nothing happened. They just decided to see if they could get away with it, but I never said anything because,” he sighs, shaking his head, “fuck, because Daisy was in the doorway. I wanted her to hurt like I did for cheating.”

We all wince, and Star growls, “And had you screwed her sister before she passed?” Hawk shakes his head before she rushes over to him, smacking his head hard and making him grunt as her living room door opens. Snake enters, raising a brow at the situation, while Axel chuckles, “Just another brother fucking up and misreading a situation with his woman,

who he treated like crap and now has a fight on his hands, but after wishing her sister alive instead of her was probably a really stupid fucking thing to do as well as letting her think he fucked two sweet butts, one who happens to be a traitor and the other, well, she's only just been allowed to enter club grounds again."

Snakes nods before dropping his bag, then claps his hands. "It sounds about right for us MC men; my new VP is currently trying to win his woman round." He claps his hands, then rubs them together. "Let's go capture a fucker, then shall we so he can try to fix his mess?"

We all chuckle while Star kisses Snake on his cheek, making me growl, and she rolls her eyes.

Axel clears his throat, trying to contain his laughter. "Alright, we move out in an hour once we get our bearings on the property. Get your weapons ready. Star you'll be staying here with Theo."

Star nods, and we all furrow our brows at her because even I thought she'd snap, but instead, she shrugs, "Theo needs me." The men all nod, but I still look at her with suspicion, making her smile a sweet smile at me before we all get ready to capture a rodent.

Hmmm.

An hour later, we're all surrounding the old, dark house. Axel speaks up in the earpieces that Dagger brought us. "Alright brothers, myself, Flame, and Dagger will go in the front with Snake. Ink, idiot Hawk, and Tank are in the back while the rest scatter around the house to ensure he doesn't escape. Tasers only brothers; we want these men alive. From Star's intelligence, she learned that only Hammer and Hairy are inside with our brother, who should be in the basement. Hammer will go back to Snake Clubhouse to face judgment; Hairy will be coming to ours." The brothers all say copy while chuckling at his description of Hawk, who curses before Tank speaks up.

"What about your dad and Hairy's Snake?"

Snake speaks next to me, “Both agree your club deserves to kill more. He raped your club princess, tried starting wars, and kept your brother, a prisoner, for over ten years as revenge for something he didn’t do. You get the mother fucker; just make it hurt.”

We all nod before Dagger counts down his seal days, kicking in, “All descend in 3... 2... 1... GO.”

We all run towards the house. I boot the door down and see Hammer, who instantly jumps up from the ratty couch, trying to pull his fucking jeans up while the TV moans out. I roll my eyes. Seriously, fucking tossing off to porn, fucking gay porn at that?

Snake tasers him, his dick going limp before he pisses himself and passes out, and I shake my head with a chuckle while Snake curses, not wanting to touch that. Axel and I grin before rushing towards the stairs to the basement near the kitchen door.

Thank you, Star, for the blueprints. I must admit, it’s hot knowing my girl is good at tech like me.

I kick the door down, and Hairy points his gun at me, shooting. It hits my left shoulder, and I grunt before tasing him, causing him to fall to the ground. I taser him again, ensuring he’s out before Axel goes in, and tie him up before giving him the injection Doc gave us while I grunt, my shoulder fucking hurting, I can feel the blood pouring down my arm, and I stumble a little, feeling dizzy. Dagger’s eyes widen as he rushes in. “Fuck, you’ve been hit!” he gasps, stating the fucking obvious as Axel looks at me, his eyes wide in shock, and I shake my head, putting my whole weight against the wall, when someone tiny rushes past me, making me groan because I fucking knew she wouldn’t listen.

For fuck’s sake, I’m going to spank her ass!

“Daddy!” she gasps.

Yep, definitely going to fucking spank her ass.

Chapter 20

Star

“Daddy!”

I gasp, rushing past Zayne and ignoring everyone before I kneel in front of my father. I cup his cheeks, making him look at me, and he gasps, his caramel eyes just like my own tear up. “Starry?” I let out a sob and nod before hugging him, and he sobs in my neck, “Y-your real? Y-your really-really here and-and alive.”

I pull back and nod my head. “I’m here, Daddy; I’ve finally found you.”

He sobs again, and I hug him, vaguely hearing the brothers in the background.

“Exit wound?” I hear Axel,

“Fuck!” A few seconds later, I hear Dagger curse, and I pull back from my dad, cupping his cheeks.

“We’re going to get you out of here, OK?”

He nods with his droopy eyes before I turn around and look at Axel. “Have we got any bolt cutters? He’s chained.”

Axel swallows hard as he walks over to me, and I furrow my brows in confusion. He looks worried. Why does he look worried?

I look around the room, and Dagger comes into my view, also looking concerned, as he stands in front of someone. A puddle of blood near his foot on the concrete stairs becomes noticeable, and instantly my panic sets in.

Where’s Zayne?

I shove Axel out of the way, going around Dagger, who tries to grab a hold of me, only for me to come to a sudden halt to see Zayne sitting on the steps, his back against the wall, as his dad tries to control the blood pouring down his shoulder. I gasped, bending a little and not being able to breathe.

Please, please, please, no.

He makes eye contact with me, his face pale, and my tears well up while he gasps for breath, “I-I’m going to spank you—your ass, Fire-Firefly, you—you should be with our son.”

My tears fall as a sob crawls out of my throat. Our son is with his sitter, whom I normally use, so I know he’s safe, but right now, I feel like I’m dying. I shake my head, my legs starting to give out, and I see his eyes droop. Please, please, no. I ignore my jelly legs and rush over to him, kneeling in front of him in his blood, cupping his cheeks as my tears fall. “You need to stay awake for me, okay?”

He gasps, “Why-why a-are you h-here baby?”

I let out a sob and shake my head, placing my forehead against his, not being able to answer him as he gripped my hip before Tank speak up, “There’s no exit wound; we need to remove the bullet now or he’ll bleed out.” I sob against his forehead while he grips me harder before someone places their hand on my shoulder. I turn my head to see Snake. “Come on, darling, step back; the brothers are going to need to hold him down.” My tears fall some more before I look back at Zayne, who nods his head, his eyes full of pain. I lean forward and gently kiss his lips.

I can’t lose him; I can’t.

He kisses me back slowly before I move away, Snake holding me to him while I stay on the stairs, knowing I won’t leave, as Dagger grips a hold of Zayne’s other shoulder. Ink and Hawk come in quickly; they both hold on to Zayne with Dagger as Axel grips the bad shoulder before Tank takes a deep breath. He shakes out his hands before Axel pulls Zayne’s cut out of the way, pulling his top down, showing the wound that’s pouring out blood. My heart jumps, panic shooting through me as I grip Snake’s arm before Tank starts digging his finger and thumb into his son’s shoulder, trying to find the bullet.

Zayne screams out as the men all hold him down when he thrashes against them, and I sob, my knees feeling weak, making Snake grip me tighter. Tank tries to rush, moving his

fingers to find the bullet, while my tears fall down my cheeks. It feels like hours when in reality it was only a few minutes when Tank shouts, "I GOT IT," and he pulls the metal out and then presses a rag tight to the wound before Zayne slumps down, breathing hard while his brothers sigh in relief. I rush over to him and instantly throw myself at him, his right arm holding me tightly to him as I place my face into his neck. His hand fists my white top at the back, holding me tightly to him. "I'm ok, baby, I-I'm ok."

I let out a sob and gripped the hair at the nape of his neck, not wanting to let him go even when Axel speaks, "Right, Hawk and Ink grab the fucker and chuck him in the van with the other one; wait for the others before heading back to Stars Flat, and we'll head home from there in an hour once we fill the trailer that has Zayne's bike in. We need to grab Theo too. Snake, can you grab Bones with Butch and put him in Star's car? We'll ring Doc so we can discuss his injuries and ensure he can travel back by car without urgent medical assistance, as well as Flame. Dagger, Tank, and I will grab Flame with Star; Tank can drive Star's car and take us back with her father; she can sit on my lap while the rest of you get in the back of the van."

The men all nodded before getting into action. They all squeezed into the van, so Hairy didn't hear them come. I let out a sob when Zayne's grip loosens on me, and I look to see he's passed out. Panic hits me, and I look towards Tank, who instantly checks his pulse before sighing. He nods, "It's ok, it's strong."

We all sigh in relief before getting up. Tank and Dagger lift Zayne up before I look down and notice all the blood. My whole body trembles and my legs start to give out before Axel lifts me up bridal style, taking me out to my car. We all squeeze in, and I rest my head on Axel's shoulder, my eyes never leaving Zayne as Axel runs his fingers through my hair before he whispers, "How your feeling right now, Starfish; Hold on to it, hold on to the fear, because then maybe, just maybe, you'll be able to forgive him."

The men all nod in agreement as my tears fall.

I could have lost him.

An hour later, my car was full with a trailer behind it that has Zayne's bike, whose still passed out in the back. Doc confirmed both my dad and he can travel but only stop for about four hours for sleep before getting on the move again to get them home. Tank had ridden up in the van with Butch, so he'll be driving my car with my dad in the passenger seat, still weak, while I sit in the back in between Zayne and Theo. Snake gets into the van with the two prisoners—let's call them—and Axel takes front formation, leading us away from my flat that I won't be returning to. The brothers packed up my belongings and placed them in the trailer with Zayne's bike; there wasn't much, thankfully. When we get back to Parkerville, I'll have to decide what I'm going to do now that my father is safe, but the thought of leaving Zayne after nearly losing him makes breathing hard.

We stop halfway through, with Zayne becoming semi-conscious, we stop at the motel where I stayed for Dagger's wedding, and my father slowly gaining his strength before we get to Parkville the next evening. Axel had apparently called through to Doc, who should be waiting. Apparently, he also called my mother, whom I do not want to see, she's left enough nasty voicemails to last me a lifetime.

The prospect opens the gate when he sees us coming. A few of Snakes men are waiting near the front of the clubhouse with their own van for Hammer. Tank pulls my car near the side of the clubhouse, and he unhooks the trailer for me. I smile in thanks as I get out, climbing over Theo's car seat, not wanting to hurt Zayne. I go around, leaving Theo asleep in the car seat, not willing to get him out here and open my dad's door. He smiles a tired smile at me as I help him out while Axel comes over, helping Zayne out before Doc rushes over to see my dad. He gasps, tears well up in his eyes as he cups my cheek. "Well done, sweet girl."

I nod before he kisses my forehead and allow him to take my dad as Ella, Zayne" momma,rushes out of the clubhouse.

“ZAYNE!” she screams, seeing her son injured as my mother and sister rush out.

“MATTHEW.”

“DADDY.”

They both scream at the same time, and I swallow hard, watching as everyone hugs my mother and sister, holding them back while trying to comfort them as they cry while Doc tries to help my father, and I shake my head. It’s hard to feel anything for them when they’ve treated me like dirt for years, blaming me for what happened to my father, stealing from me, and making my life hell.

Ginger rushes out next, and I struggle to breathe as I watch her rush towards Zayne, but Mel intercepts her and knocks her out in one punch after seeing the pain in my eyes, and I nod in gratitude.

About damn time, although I wanted to do it myself.

Sighing, I turn around and head to the trailer, opening it up. I grab the few bags of possession I actually own and all of Theo’s toys and pureed food and put them in my car, filling the back seat up after transferring my boy to the front, ensuring the airbag is turned off. I shut the door to the trailer when Zayne shouts my name, making everyone look at me in shock, not realizing I was here.

Shocker.

My mother furrows her brows, looking between me and my father in confusion, while my sister sneers at me.

Yeah, I need to leave before I hit her.

“FIREFLY?”

His voice sounds raspy and in pain, and I just give him a small smile because I need some time to think about everything. I head to the driver’s side of my car, causing Hawk to rush over to me, gently grabbing my arm.

“Starfish, please don’t go; he needs you; they need you; remember that feeling of nearly losing him, please.”

I give him a gentle smile and kiss his cheek. “He has his parents, and my father has ‘them. ‘ I can’t stay here, Leo, after everything everyone has done, and I just - I need time to think.”

He takes a deep breath, looking at a distraught-looking Zayne. “You’ve had time, Star, over a year of time, and where would you go? Your family, Star.”

I know he thinks I’m selfish, but he needs to understand. I grip his hand. “I was raped because of this club, Leo,” he flinches. “My mother emotionally abused me for years, selling all of my possessions, stealing from me, accusing me of ‘killing’ my father when I was only ten years old, all while my sister bullied me and hit me over and over when she couldn’t get into my locked draws, and Zayne, he-he threw women in my face day after day, including my own sister, for years, then pretended to be screwing around for the last three making decisions for me, hurting me intentionally to the point where I didn’t think I could come to him about the knowledge of my father, to the point I gave birth on my own. I need time to digest what has happened and what I want to do with my life now that my only purpose for the past eleven years is finally home safe.

Annie has that account for me, so maybe I’ll throw a dart at a map. Who knows? Zayne’s always welcome to see his son; I’ll never stop that, but the people here stopped being my family when I was raped; my mother stopped being family when I was lying in a hospital bed having skin grafts alone, needing her all while she blamed me when in reality it was always going to happen because Hairy was like his mother, insane.”

He squeezes his eyes shut before taking me into his arms. I hug him tightly as he rasps, “You’ll always be our family, and Flame will never give up on you or allow you to leave. Just take a few days before taking action, please, Starfish.”

I nod before stepping back, and I point at him and say, “Go grovel, Leo.”

He smiles and nods his head before I climb into my car and spin it around in the clubhouse car park. My tears that have welled up fall when I hear Zayne as I leave club grounds, seeing Axel and Dagger holding him back, but I don't stop; I need to think away from them to figure out what's best for me and my son.

“STAR!”

Chapter 21

Flame

Two days, two fucking days, I have been stuck in this bed, laid up with my shoulder bandaged up. I've called Star several times, but she never picks up, and I'm starting to worry. I know she won't take our son from me, but the longer I'm away from her, the more her mind will come to the conclusion that we shouldn't be together. I need to get to her before that happens. Taking a deep breath, I pick up my phone. A picture of Star and our son pops up, and I smile. No one in the club except for the council brothers knows about Theo; they've all agreed to keep their mouths shut.

My mother is going to be pissed.

I get Star's number up, pressing call, and her voicemail hits after it rings several times. I sigh. *"Hey, this is Star; I can't get to the phone right now, probably hanging with Flame, but leave me a message and I'll get back to you."*

I wait for the beep. "One truth, baby; the love heart you drew on your workbook when you were eighteen, I had Ink tattoo it on my ring finger, not sure how you haven't noticed it yet.

I miss you, Firefly, and I miss our son. Please call me back, please.

I love you."

Sighing again, I shake my head as I hang up. I can't do this anymore; I need to see her, and I need to see her now. I gingerly climb out of my bed at the clubhouse and slowly put my t-shirt on after removing the sling and then my cut before putting some joggers on. I slide my feet into my biker boots, grunting in pain but ignoring it, heading to the door, ensuring my sling is back on, knowing Doc will be pissed otherwise.

I lock my door before slowly making my way to the common room, my fucking body aching. It seems to be full when I enter the room, and I notice Slicer with Meg, and we make eye contact. I nod my head to the door, and

he smiles, nodding his head back, knowing what I want before getting up, kissing Meg on the lips as their daughter grins at them. Fuck, I want that with my Star, but the question is, will she be willing to try because I know there's a lot for her to try and forgive!

I make my way over to the door where Slicer is waiting when I hear my mother's voice say, "And where do you think you're going?" Everyone quietens down, and I sigh before turning and raising a brow at her, but she shakes her head and says, "No, I'm sorry, son. As much as I love Star, she's shown her true colors leaving after you got back; it's bad enough she left for so long with no explanation, leaving her family; her mother worried sick but you were shot; her father was found; and she doesn't stick around; no, just no."

I shake my head at my mother. I know she's upset, but she's out of order. I go to open my mouth when Bones growls out, "What is that supposed to mean exactly, Ella?" making my father stand up and put his hands up, backing a still weak Bones because he knows the truth: "Alright enough. Ella, sit down and leave our son alone!" My mother narrows her eyes, and I sigh. Here we go. "Are you seriously going to stand in between us instead of standing up for your son? She left him Theo, left him. She comes back, bringing his bike, then fucks off again without a word and not one to her mother, not even an apology. Her father was found alive, and she left him, leaving our injured son. NO." She shouts the last bit, and I grind my teeth, trying not to snap at my own mother.

I see Emma in the corner of my eyes grinning while Shayla nods her head in agreement with my mother, and my anger takes hold. Slicer grips my arm and says, "Think about it before you explode, brother; this is her story to tell."

I nod. "I am thinking about it, but I'm fucking fed up with people thinking Star is some spoilt selfish bitch who abandoned her family when in reality we all abandoned her, and it's not just her story; it's mine too. I won't mention Theo or what her family did, but everything else is coming out on the table." He nods and makes a loud whistle, gaining

everyone's attention. I make eye contact with Axel, who nods his head, anger in his eyes, before I clear my throat, making eye contact with my mother.

"I have a story to tell you all, and it's not fucking pretty. It's ugly, and it's painful. Do you want to hear it?"

Everyone keeps their attention on me while my mother narrows her eyes, and I nod, fucking hating that I have to do this to Star. I swallow hard as Slicer grips my good shoulder in support.

"Eleven years ago, Hairy was the one who ran Bones and Star off the road." The brothers all stand up in anger as Meghan and Lilah make their way over to Slicer, standing by him and by me in support. "We know this because Star got a good look at him when he tried shooting at them." Bones growls, "Star was adamant Bones was still alive; he told us all that he screamed for her."

Bones cuts in, "I fucking did; the bastard was dragging my nearly unconscious, injured ten-year-old daughter away from the crash site before I attacked him, and before I knew it, I was knocked out."

I nod my head while Shayla gasps. I ignore her and continue, "For the past eleven years, with the knowledge both myself and my dad taught her, Star has been hacking every system going, trying to find her father. She became good at it, so good that she had managed to find the footage that was lost, which showed Hairy's attack, and it showed Bones very much alive when a van picked them both up; Killer, Hairy's cousin, who I had killed for selling laced cocaine at Untamed Girls, was driving it."

Everyone's mouth hung open, "she never gave up. She watched Hairy for years, his every movement, and a year ago when he fucked up, he moved a withered-away-looking Bones from a location in DC to Illinois. He was holding him up in an abandoned house one street away from where Star had decided to take up residence. She spent her whole time there watching Hairy for any movement of her father, and then two weeks ago she finally got a hit and

confirmed Bones was there. Hairy fucked up, and a street camera had shown Bones being dragged down into a basement where he hadn't covered the window, which is where we came in. After I discovered Star had indeed shown up for Dagger's wedding, I managed to follow her all the way back to her apartment, a fourteen-fucking-hour drive. I spent two months trying to convince her to come home, but she refused until, finally, she told me everything after I drugged her and tried basically kidnapping her. It was the same day she was going to tell me and ask me for help to get her dad back. I called Axel, and he, along with the council brothers, then went to Illinois with Snake, and we captured Hairy while also rescuing Bones, all thanks to Star."

Some brothers stand in shock while I look at Bones. Star said it took a while, but she'd finally found out the reason why you were targeted by Hairy. To begin with, she finally managed to decode Hairy's mother's diary. She was insane, but it was never clinically discovered. She was obsessed with the then president, but he was and still is to this day very much in love with his old lady. Hairy's mom wasn't happy about that, so she drugged him, knowing he wouldn't go to her willingly, slipped too much GBH into his drink, and gently guided him into his room at their clubhouse, where she proceeded to rape the then passed-out Pres." The women's mouths dropped open in shock. "She used too much; he never recalled what happened; she wrote how hurt she felt when he couldn't even get it up but still thought she could be pregnant despite him not ejaculating; she was that insane."

I shake my head.

"She bought a pregnancy test, but Hairy's father was infertile; he couldn't have any more kids, and he realized she'd been cheating when he found the tests, and at the time when it all came about, Bones was there doing business for the club with Snakes, so she decided to lay claim she was fucking Bones because she thought the man she saw as her 'lover' would be killed. Hairy's father didn't believe her."

Shayla butts in, "Because he loves me more than life itself."

I nod as Bones tilts his head at her. “Yep, but Hairy didn’t see it that way, and when his father killed his mother a few days later, after it was confirmed she was not pregnant, he blamed Bones; he blamed this club; he fell for his mother’s lies, and he attacked. Since that day, he’s been trying to create a war between the clubs to bring ours down.”

I squeeze my eyes shut, not wanting to tell this part, but I know I need to: “Last year, Hairy, fuck, Hairy anally raped Star behind Untamed Fire.” The men all look at me in shock as Shayla cries out while the women start to sob, shaking their heads in denial, but I carry on, “He didn’t seek her out because of who she was; that was just a coincidence; he did it because she’s my girl; he wanted revenge for his cousin Killer, who I’d burned alive for trying to kill our women at the club. Star was the collateral, but as soon as he realized who she was and who her father was, he became obsessed with her, not realizing she knew he was watching her, making it easier for her to follow him and finally find Bones.”

I take a deep breath. “Razor was on door duty that night, and Star had already figured out he was a traitor, but she needed him to keep tabs on Hairy, which is why no one knew what had happened at the time.” I look at Leah, who has tears running down her face. “If she had known what Razor was capable of, she would have told someone so you wouldn’t have had to see his face day in and day out,” she nods, wiping her tears as Gunner takes her in his arms, and I continue, taking a deep breath, “that night I was with her for about half an hour. It was the day Annie was in the hospital.” I run my hand through my hair. “I could feel myself wanting to comfort her and give in to my feelings but didn’t want to take advantage of her vulnerable state, so when Ginger sauntered over to me, I made out like I was going home to get laid when really I just went home. I went home and went to bed all while Star was being assaulted.”

Bones growls, but I put my hand up.

“Two weeks after that, after she was assaulted, after I spent years pushing her away, throwing other women in her face,

including her own sister, who treated her like shit for years, blaming her daily for her father's 'death,' thinking she deserved better than this life, better than me,"

Bones butts in, "She was born in this life, you jackass; she was born to love you; we all fucking knew it, and so did her fucking sister, who's always been jealous of her."

I nod my head as Emma and Shayla gasp. "I know, and two weeks after that, we finally came home together because that's what it was—coming home. I finally thought, 'This is it; we're going to have our happy ever after; I'm no longer going to hold back; I'm going to fucking get my girl,'" the women openly sob as my eyes burned with unshed tears, "until the next morning when I was woken up by Axel banging on my door, telling me my girl had left me, that she was raped."

Bones winces. "She was saying goodbye?"

I nodded. "She was saying goodbye. "Sighing, I continue, "She had found out two brothers in Snakes Club called Hammer and Robber was working for Hairy; they handled the finances at his strip club and had been taking money out each month, doctoring the books; she actually sent him the information he needed for the offshore accounts so he could get the money back. That's how good she is. She had then told us Ginger, the woman I threw in her face day in and day fucking out is the traitor in our club," the men all cursed.

"Star got into her phone; she had found out that Ginger was the one who tipped off Meghan's parents about where she was after she overheard our conversations in church," Meghan growls. "She's also the one who told Annie's father where she was staying and when she would be back at the bakery." I hear Annie curse under her breath as the brothers tense with each word coming out of my mouth, and my tears fall, showing my brothers my pain. "She's also the one who made the plans with Hairy to rape Star.

She went into the bar deliberately to distract me so he could grab her." The men start cursing up a storm while Shayla openly cries out. Emma frowns, not believing a word I'm saying, but I continue ignoring her. "Star said she's

obsessed with me and would have done anything in order to get me. She would have told Hairy that if Star had informed us of what was going on, she would have lost her father completely, and Hairy would have killed him and disappeared.”

The women openly sob when Emma steps forward. “And how do we know she’s telling the truth?”

She has an evil gleam in her eyes, and the men growl while I put my hand up as Axel steps forward. “Probably because I saw all the proof Star had left in Bones’ room here at the clubhouse, it’s why she never let anyone in there. Emma, the whole room is a shrine of evidence in order to find her father. She made it her life’s mission. And myself, my father, and Flame have also seen the footage of her rape.” Emma’s eyes widen and now start to tear up, but too little, too fucking late.

Bones lets out a sob before looking at me. He points, “Go fucking win my daughter round.”

I nod, rasping, “I plan to,” before turning around and patting Slicer’s shoulder, who nods, and we head out. He’ll drive me to my girl, whom I’ll hopefully win around because I need her so fucking much.

I climb into the passenger seat, hoping she won’t be pissed. I told everyone her story, despite it being mine too. I kept my mouth shut about our son. I’ll let her decide if she wants everyone to know about him, but everything else needed to be said.

I look out the window as Slicer puts his Jeep into drive, his daughter and old lady climbing in the back for support, and I smile.

I’m coming, Star. I’m coming.

Chapter 22

Star

“One truth, baby: the love heart you drew on your workbook when you were eighteen, I had Ink tattoo it on my ring finger, not sure how you haven’t noticed it yet.

I miss you, Firefly, and I miss our son. Please call me back, please.

I love you.”

I shake my head at the message. Staying away from him is becoming harder and harder as time goes on. He’s not playing fair, but I guess MC men don’t. Sighing, I get up and pick my boy up, flying him in the air and making him giggle before he screeches, “DADADA,” and I chuckle out, “Traitor,” before tickling him a little and making him giggle some more before I put him back down again just as someone knocks on my door, and I sigh knowing Zayne is on the other side. I can feel him like always, and I swear to God that if he hasn’t got a sling on, I’ll kill him. Doc’s kept me up to date with both him and my father, who hasn’t been resting, so he’ll get an earful too when I see him.

I walk over to the door before opening it only to be pushed aside by Meghan and her little girl Lilah, “out of the way, favorite auntie coming through.” I laugh as Lilah shouts, “I’m going to be his favorite cousin,” while Slicer shakes his head at them before he grabs me into his arms, hugging me tightly. “You have some explaining to do, Missy.” I pull back and raise a brow at him. “When I explained my sister from another mister Star had a baby with my brother from another mother,” I chuckled, “she started cursing up a storm because you never rang her to tell her, which then obviously made me confused until I realized...”

I give him a little smile and say, “She was the one who helped me that night alongside Mel.”

He nods before hugging me again as my boy giggles in the background, making me smile as Slicer pulls away before rubbing his hands together. “Right, time for me to become his favorite uncle.” I laugh as he rushes in, taking my son from Meghan, making her pout, and chasing him around the living room with Lilah behind her, trying to get him back, all while my boy giggles loudly.

I stand near the door smiling when an arm wraps around my waist and Zayne’s mouth comes to my ear before he rasps, “One truth, baby; the necklace you always wear wasn’t from your mother, it was from me. I just didn’t want you to be upset thinking she forgot your 16th birthday, even though she did. She didn’t deserve you as a daughter then, and she doesn’t now.”

I nod as tears form in my eyes. “That’s two truths today.”

He chuckles before placing his face into the crook of my neck, kissing it lightly before he murmurs, “I know.” I hum, leaning back a little, ensuring not to hurt him. My heart pounds, remembering all the blood, and my tears fall, hitting his bare arm and making him squeeze me tighter.

“I could have lost you,” I rasp.

He shakes his head. “I’d never leave you; you are my Firefly, my shooting Star. Always have been, always will be.”

I nod my head before turning around in his arms. I look him in the eyes, his bright blue ones showing longing and pain as well as love—deep, deep love—and I break the connection, feeling myself wanting to give in but not stupid enough to do so. I lightly take hold of his left hand that’s up in the sling, and there it is the heart I drew with our initials inside. I nod as he leans forward, placing his nose on the top of my head, breathing me in, and he sighs, “You still don’t smell like your paints. Annalise only has a couple left to sell, you know.”

I hum, gripping his t-shirt. Painting hasn’t come to mind since moving. I’ve been more focused on Theo and finding my father, plus I realized my paintings centered around my love for Zayne, and without him, my passion was gone.

I lean forward and rest my head on his chest, my ear going over his heart, making sure it's still pumping. The blood is still fully in my mind, and he holds me tighter. "I'm okay, Firefly."

I nod. "But you're not resting."

He hums, our son's giggles echoing through the room, "Because I needed to see you. I knew you wouldn't want to come to the clubhouse, so I had to come here."

I sigh and close my eyes, just enjoying this for one moment, and silently groan when he speaks.

"How about some revenge, baby?"

I pull back and look at him, and he smiles. I look towards Slicer, who grins while Meghan looks almost giddy, making me raise a brow at her, but she just shrugs. "I may have taken vows as a doctor, but this bitch needs to pay. Annie lost her baby; my daughter was traumatized, and you, well yeah, she needs to pay."

I slowly smile and nod my head while the men chuckle. Zayne goes over to our son, picking him up with one hand, making me and Meghan scold him because of his arm, but he ignores us as Theo nuzzles into his father's neck, making my eyes water. Meghan gives me a sad smile before helping me get Theo's things ready. She takes him from a scowling Zayne and puts him in his car seat before taking him out to her Jeep while I lock up with Zayne hovering near me. I climb in next to Theo, Zayne sits in the front while Meghan and Lilah sit behind me, and we head to the clubhouse.

My hands sweat with thoughts of seeing everyone again when Zayne clears his throat. "Everyone knows everything." My eyes snap to him and widen. "Well, they don't know about Theo, and they don't know about what your mother and sister did, but they know the rest." He turns to look at me. "I couldn't have them thinking you're some selfish bitch baby, because you're not; being around the club is hard for you."

I nod my head in understanding, and the rest of the ride is quiet except for Lilah talking to Theo, who giggles at his new

best friend.

We arrive back at the clubhouse within ten minutes, and I swallow hard as we come to a stop before we all get out. I unclick my boy, who instantly nuzzles into my neck while Zayne wraps his good arm around my waist, leading me inside. Slicer goes in first with his girls before we follow.

Everyone is here.

Shit.

Cammy sees us first and says, “Oh my god, Starfish.” She gasps, making everyone quiet before they look at me and then at Theo. Everyone except the council brothers freezes in shock, seeing Zayne’s double as he looks at his daddy.

“Dadadada.” He murmurs grumpily, holding his arms out for him, making Zayne smile while I mumble, “Traitor,” with a smile. He takes off his sling, making me scowl at him, but he just shrugs, taking hold of Theo, grunting a little, making me growl about to rip him a new one until he speaks.

“Firefly,” he warns, narrowing his eyes, and I sigh because no one, not even me, can stop him where his son is concerned. I shake my head before looking at everyone, wincing because I forgot they were staring, and I clear my throat.

“Uh everyone, I uh guess I’d like you to meet our son, Theodore Matthew Silvers.”

My father grins at hearing his name in my son’s while Tank puffs his chest with pride, making me chuckle at them. Everyone stays silent, looking at my son in shock, while my mother looks ready to bawl, but I ignore her. I gently run my fingers through my son’s hair when Ella, Zayne’s momma, comes out of her shocked state and says, “You kept my grandson away from us, away from your own mother, my son’s child away from him?”

I look at her, and I can see she’s angry, but in hindsight, she has no right. I was protecting my child. “I kept my son away from the club that had a traitor.”

Her eyes flash with fury before she shouts, “THEN YOU SHOULD HAVE TOLD THEM ABOUT HER!” causing my son to cry, and I narrow my eyes. I love Ella; I do. She’s more of a mother to me than my own, but I will not have her upset my child. I point at her while Tank stands up, “You will not raise your voice around my child!”

She takes a step forward, and Tank stands in front of her, making her lean around him to point at me angrily, “THEN YOU SHOULDN’T HAVE KEPT HIM FROM US, HIS FAMILY, HIS FATHER.”

Theo cries some more, and Zayne growls, but I step forward, pissed off. I don’t know how I manage it, but I do. I keep my voice calm but hard. “Then I wouldn’t have found my father alive!” That shuts her up, and she swallows hard. “For eleven years, I have been trying to find my dad while all of you were telling me I was crazy and that he was dead.

If I had come forward and said I knew who the traitors were, then Hairy would have killed my father. If I had come forward and said I was pregnant with Zayne’s baby, then Ginger would have killed my baby any way she could, so don’t you dare stand there and act like I’m the bad person here when I had to go through pregnancy ALONE,” she flinches. “I had to go through labor ALONE. And that was after I’d spent years watching the man I was deeply in love with screw anything with a skirt, including my own backstabbing of a bitch sister, because he thought he knew what was best for me.”

She winces, but I’m not done.

“All that was before I was RAPED ANALLY because of this club,” the men flinch while tears fall from Ella’s eyes. “All that was before my own SISTER bullied me for years, blaming me for my father’s ‘death’; all that Ella before my own MOTHER stole my inheritance on my eighteenth birthday, telling me I owed a holiday to her and my sister because I killed my father, the same mother who pulled me out of art school because art doesn’t pay HER bills,” my father’s eyes widen while my mother’s face pales. “Since I was ten years

old, I've had to listen to my mother blame me for my father's death.

Physically call me names; ignore the bullying I suffered at school; the sexual assaults because of who I was affiliated with and who my sister was all while working my ass off because the bills were now my responsibility because I killed my father." Her eyes widened. "I was even selling my paintings at Annie's bakery because she took all of my wages, and I had nothing left to live on because I wasn't even allowed to eat the food I paid for, only for her and my sister to grab that as well. If it weren't for Annie's quick thinking while I was away making an account in Zayne's name for me, then for every painting sold, the money would have gone to her considering she's been demanding it since I left, and that is over \$57,000 dollars."

I look around the room, everyone looking at my mother and sister, pissed off, who have gone white as a sheet, before looking back at the woman I saw as a mother. "Why in the hell would I want my son here after all that? Please, Ella, please tell me what you would have done if the roles were reversed. If you had your father's life on the line, your son's safety, your sanity, and your heart, what would you have done differently to me?"

She let out a sob. "Nothing, absolutely nothing."

I nod before looking at Zayne, who is struggling with his emotions, and he gives me a nod, knowing what I want, so he passes Meghan, my boy, and I look at her and say, "He does not go near my mother or sister." She nods, determination in her eyes, before she grabs her daughter's hand and all three of them with Leah trailing, her boy in her arms heading out the back, going to the houses that are built. I noticed Mel slink off too with Annie and her daughter, making me smirk all while my mother looked on with guilt, wanting to argue with my decision as Ella apologized over and over to Tank, begging her to let her meet her grandson, who wouldn't let her follow them. He stands tall, going against his old lady for his grandson, and I absolutely respect him for that.

I look at Slicer, then Zayne, and they both nod, knowing what I want.

Revenge.

This bitch had me raped.

Zayne holds his hand out to me, and I take it willingly while scowling at his shoulder, making him smirk as he guides me to the basement. The council brothers follow as Tank instructs Trigger not to let his old lady or my mother out of his sight; they are not to follow his grandson, making them cry.

But I ignore them because it's time to put half of my demons to rest.

Chapter 23

Flame

We make our way into the basement, my hand firmly in Star's. Hairy is hanging by his arms from the ceiling in chains in only his boxers, his eyes blindfolded and his mouth gagged, while Ginger is chained to the chair on the floor.

"Flame baby."

She gasps, trying to move in the chair. Hope shines in her eyes. "What's going on? Why am I here, baby? They won't tell me, and after everything I've done for them over the years," The brothers chuckle, and I shake my head before Star comes into her view, and she instantly freezes before she sneers, "What's the bitch doing back?"

I growl, but Star squeezes my hand before moving around me, and she grins, "Didn't you hear Ginger? I brought mine and Zayne's son home; he's seven months old now."

Ginger's eyes widen while I grin. She shakes her head, looking at me, hoping she's bullshitting, only for my grin to go wider before she starts to struggle some more. "NO, NO, I'LL KILL THE BASTARD, YOUR MINE FLAME, YOUR FUCKING MINE!"

The brothers all tense while Star looks at me with an 'I told you so' look, making me sigh, hating she was right about this because she made the right decision overall. She saved her dad and kept our son safe.

I go to take a step forward, but Star beats me to it, grabbing some gas we have down here and throws it over Ginger's head, who chuckles, seemingly forgetting us brothers are in the room. "Is that the best you've got, putting gas over my head? Your pathetic, and when I get out of here, I'll ensure your son gets the same treatment as you before I kill him all while I fuck MY man. Do you hear my bitch? He's mine. It was my cunt; he was fucking not yours."

My anger spikes, but I don't get to do anything because Star walks over to me. She smiles sweetly before putting a hand in my cut pocket, making me raise a brow at her, but she just smiles. I can see the pain in her eyes, but she's trying to hide it as she turns around and walks back to Ginger, and it's then that I notice my lighter missing. "Oh shit," Gunner mutters as Ginger's eyes widen, seeing Star light the lighter. She starts to scream and fight against her restraints, while Hairy, who can hear everything, starts to struggle himself, shouting over the gag in his mouth, scared, making the brothers chuckle.

Star bends down and gets in Ginger's face. "You, my dear, have fucked up." It's all she says before setting Ginger's hair alight and making the brothers jump back in shock, all while I grin.

Oh yeah, we were made for each other.

I look at my dad, who is chuckling while Dead Shot is grinning madly, before Star throws a bucket of water over Ginger's head. She's crying and screaming, apologizing over and over, but Star's having none of it when she grabs a knife. I step forward, not willing for her to dirty her conscious, but she just smiles at me before stabbing the knife into Ginger's leg, who screams out.

Star gets in her face, "You weren't so sorry when I was being raped, though were you, or when a four-year-old was being traumatized, or when Annie was losing her baby? Or how about when you decided to convince the other weets to poke holes in all the condoms?"

All of our brothers' eyes widen in shock. Fuck me, she was behind everything.

Ginger sobs, shaking her head as Star removes the knife and then stabs her other leg, causing Ginger to scream out again and again. When she's decided she's had enough, when she can feel herself dipping too far, Star removes the knife and then holds it out to Slicer, who looks at her with furrowed brows, making my girl rasp.

"Because of this bitch, your beautiful little girl was traumatized; a small four-year-old was assaulted."

He smirks and nods, grateful to dish out the execution, when Axel nods in agreement. Now normally we don't harm women, so I know he won't torture Ginger, but he will kill her for her sins. Ginger cries as he stalks over to her, "P-please, I-I'm sorry so-so sorry, please, I-I just w-wanted Flame, p-please."

He just shakes his head at her before slicing her throat, and we all stand back, watching her choke on her own blood, the light in her eyes dimming before she takes her last choked breath. Hairy struggles even more, panicking that he's next, which he is, just not with my girl in here. Ginger got off lightly; he won't, and I refuse to subject my girl to that.

Axel pulls his phone out, messaging a couple of prospects to take Ginger to the morgue in the underground tunnel we have that connects with the building. We paid them handsomely and basically kept them in business. Ginger will be burned and then dumped in the Hudson River, where she fucking belongs.

I walk up behind Star, who is looking at Ginger's dead body, wrapping my arms around her from behind. "Come on, Firefly, let's get you cleaned up so we can go get our boy." I rasp in her ear, and she nods, allowing me to guide her out of the basement. I miss the common room going down the hall for only council members and then into my room. I get a pair of leggings she left here and one of my T-shirts, which I know she'll claim before handing them to her. She gives me a slight smile; exhaustion etches her features before she turns and heads into my shower. I take a seat on my bed and wait for her as I hear the shower being turned on.

I don't know how long I sit here before I look at the time to see she's been a lot longer than normal, and I get up and quietly open the door, only to stop dead in my tracks. Star stands in front of me, looking in the mirror, still in her white tank top and jeans that are covered in blood. She's in a trance, and terror shines on her features as her eyes go vacant to cope with what she did.

Fuck.

I walk up behind her and gently grab the bottom of her tank. She allows me to take it off her, then her bra, and I try my fucking hardest to ignore my rock-hard cock as I grip the button on her jeans, undoing them, then gently pulling them along with her lace panties down. All of her clothes will be burned later.

I remove my cut and t-shirt before removing my boots and pants then I gently guide her into the already running shower. I gently place her under the spray; her eyes are still vacant. I knew she needed closure with Ginger, but this part fucking sucks.

I grab my hair wash and gently wash her hair, then her body, running my fingers all over her lush new curves from our boy while trying to ignore my cock between us that's standing in attention. I cupped her cheeks. She blinks, then blinks again, before finally coming back to me. Her eyes fill with tears that instantly fall down her cheeks, a sob working its way out of her throat, and I wrap my arms around her, lifting her up as her face goes into the crook of my neck. I hold her close to me. "I've got you, my Firefly; I've got you," I rasp over and over before I turn the water off and step out of the shower. I lay a towel on the counter while she clings to me before sitting her on it, and she gingerly lets me go so I can wrap a towel around my waist. I get a larger one out of the cupboard and start to dry her.

She lets me look after her, as I put my black shirt over her head. I kneel down and put her legs into her black leggings before helping her stand and pulling them over her lush ass. I gently dry her hair with a towel before brushing it and placing it in a ponytail before she places the palm of her hand over my bandage and more tears fall. I cupped her cheek while placing my hand over hers, ignoring the pain shooting through my arm. "I'm okay, Firefly." She nods, her tears still falling.

I grip her hand and go to kiss her palm when something catches my attention on her ring finger, making my heart pound. I turn her hand over to see a flame symbol tattooed with my initials under it. My throat clogs up, emotions running

through me as I gently stroke my thumb over it before looking at my girl when she rasps, “I had Hawk tattoo it when I was sixteen. He promised to keep quiet about it.”

My brows shoot to my hairline in shock, but I nod, kissing her finger gently. I guess she has some truths too. I quickly grab my pants, putting them on along with my socks and boots, and go to grab my top next to her, but she grabs it first, helping me put it on along with my cut, making me smile at her. I kiss her forehead before I pick her up again, making sure not to use my right arm. “Let’s go get our boy, Firefly.”

She nods before placing her head in the crook of my neck, holding onto me with her legs wrapped around my waist and her arms around my neck as I walk out of the bathroom, then into my room, where I quickly lock the door. We still have several sweet butts wanting a patched brother, so I’m not willing to risk it. I then walk into the common room, where all the brothers are, minus some old ladies who are probably with my son. Axel tilts his head along with Dagger, both looking concerned at my girl, and I give them a nod in reassurance, making them relax a little. Emma looks at her sister in my arms and scowls about to walk over here, but Bones stops her with a lethal look, making her sit down, gulping as Shayla watches my every movement, her eyes solely focused on the daughter she treated like crap.

I walk past my emotional mother and I tilt my head at her while her tears fall. My father wraps his arms around her, and he nods his head before I walk out the back door once Buzz opens it for me. I nodded in thanks before walking back to my house. It doesn’t take me more than five minutes before I place my girl on my dark gray sofa, gently cupping her face. More tears fall, breaking my heart, which shatters with her next words.

“How am I supposed to forgive you for everything you’ve done?”

I can hear the pain in her rasp. She’s conflicted; she loves me, but I’ve hurt her more and more over the years, so the trust is broken and so is her heart.

I lean forward and gently kiss her forehead before I rasp, “I don’t know, baby, but I’m not letting you go, so we’ll figure it out together. I’m going to go get our son, ok? I’ll be right back.”

She nods before I kiss her forehead one more time, then get up and head to the door before I rasp, “One truth, Firefly; I built this home to your exact liking, intending for you to live here; the whole basement is an art studio just for you.” With that, I walk out, hearing her sob, making my heart pound. I can’t live without her; I just can’t. She has to forgive me.

Twenty minutes later I’m walking back into my home with my sleeping son. The women were refusing to let him go. I shake my head, menacing all of them. I shut the front door and walked out of the entryway to see Star asleep on the sofa, and I smiled a little. I quickly take my boy to his room; I haven’t decorated it yet, but Star can do that with her creative skills. I have put up a motorcycle cot bed for him. I gently lay him down, then remove his shoes before putting his blanket over him, gently kissing his head before turning his nightlight on. Then I go downstairs to my woman.

I watch her for a few minutes, her chest gently rising and falling before sighing. I kiss her forehead, then lift her carefully in my arms, bridal style, trying to ignore the pain in my shoulder. I grunt but manage to lift her without waking her. She cuddles into me, making me smile as I walk up the stairs heading to the master room.

The dark purple wall that I had Star painted comes into view, the three paintings of the night sky next to each other in dark oak frames standing out. The rest of the walls are white and bare. I also had her pick out the furniture: two chests of drawers, a king-sized bed, and two nightstands that are all dark oak while the bedding is black. I pull the covers and gently lie her on her side of the bed. A picture of us from her seventeenth sits on her nightstand. I quickly cover her up when I hear the doorbell ring and kiss her lips gently before slowly closing the bedroom door. I rush down the stairs as the door opens and Bones walks in. He gives me a smile, and I nod my head to the gray and white kitchen that Star was

not in mind for when I built it. She couldn't cook for shit until she met Annie before we all did, and now, well, she purees Theo's food herself, so if she wants to redecorate, she can, because, like fuck, is this not going to be her home.

I go to the stainless-steel fridge and get two beers out before handing one to Bones, then walk out the back sliding door with Bones following me. We take a seat on the chairs I have out here on the patio near my BBQ, and I look at the gazebo I had built for Star to paint in, the fairy lights shining in the darkness, and the pond that I'm now going to have to fence in sparkles in the moonlight. I'll have to get a swing set and slide for my boy too, I think.

Bones sighs. "How is she?"

I shrug, taking a sip of my beer. "Struggling, but I don't think it's the act itself that she did that she's struggling with."

Bones nods, taking a sip of his own beer. "It's the fact she's no longer got her purpose in life."

I nod with a sigh.

Chapter 24

Flame

I look at Bones before looking at the sky. “Her purpose was finding you and bringing the fuckers down. She’s done both and now doesn’t know what to do with herself despite being a mom.”

Bones sighs, “She’s no longer painting.”

I let out a sad chuckle. “I kind of figured out her painting centered around me, and when she left me, the club, well,” I shrug, taking a sip of my beer, and he nods, “she left her painting and passion too.”

I nod back, “I’m trying Bones; I really am. I give her a truth a day, sometimes two. I make her my priority, yet she still doesn’t want to give me the time of day.”

He sighs, “Your dad filled me in before I came round here, and to be honest, you deserve a fucking punch for what you put her through.” He looks at me, keeping eye contact, and says, “I understand you didn’t want her a part of this life, son. I get it; believe me, I do. Your dad explained everything. I was gunned down for being in the wrong place at the wrong time, and she was affected by it. Annie lost her baby; Meg’s daughter was taken; and Slicer missed an extra year of his daughter’s life, all because of jealous sweet butts. I know Mel was shot because of a nurse Dag had semi-fucked, and I get that Ink’s mother went fucking crazy wanting to get rid of his brother. I understand, son, I do, but this life...”

I butt in shaking my head, “No Bones you don’t get it. I have watched sweet butt after sweet butt treat old ladies like shit growing up, trying to trap the men in any way possible. I had to watch fucking Stormy send his old lady away from club property instead of killing her then and there for abusing and molesting his own son because he couldn’t kill her out of guilt for not loving her like he loved Dagger’s

mother, despite it being Leslie's fault why Dagger was conceived in the first place.

I mean, fuck, who does that shit to their own son? Instead of getting revenge for his son, knowing he's the only one who could kill her because of our fucking laws, he let her fucking go out of respect for his youngest son, who, don't get me wrong, I love dearly but was a spoilt fucking brat that got away with everything—the same son who wanted his mother dead for what she did. He pushed Dagger's trauma and Ink's feelings aside for his feelings and his guilt, and now he has a strained relationship with them both. Ink was fucking stabbed because Stormy couldn't man up, and it was Ink's old lady she was fucking after, and all she fucking got was a bullet to the head while he got nothing; he had no punishment.

I have loved your daughter from afar for years, and I didn't want this life for her; she had greatness in her to travel the world and paint. I didn't want to keep her here where jealous women would come between us day in and day fucking out or rivals trying to fucking harm her and our family." I shake my head and look back at the gazebo. "She was raped because of me; because of the club, I mean, her own fucking mother mentally abused her alongside her sister, the same sister I decided to fuck just to ensure Star kept her distance from me." I shake my head, my eyes tearing up, while Bone sighs again, leaning forward. He links his fingers over his bottle.

"Things are always going to happen in life, son; whether it's in club life or civilian life, things always happen. Star has her own mind, and I always knew you two would end up together, always. Did I like it? Fuck no," I snort while he chuckles, "but I knew you would protect her with your life; I knew you would love her like she was supposed to be loved." I butt in again, "And yet all I did was smash her heart." He nods, "trying to protect her. Was it right? No, it wasn't, but you did it because you loved her fiercely. Yes, you fucked up, son, but now is your time to try and make things right."

I shake my head and stand up before looking at him, "How? How in the fuck can I make what I did

right? I fucked her sister. I fucked the woman who set up her rape; fuck, she was raped, Bones!”

He gets up, determination in his eyes. “When was the last time you touched another woman?”

I shake my head, but he squeezes my arm, and I look at him and say, “When I got blacked out drunk on Star’s 18th birthday because she kissed me and I fucking fell apart because I was adamant she needed out of Parkerville, so I went to confront her, but instead.”

He nods. “Emma.” I nod back before shaking my head. “That was three years ago, son. Don’t fucking give up now.”

I look him in the eyes and say, “I haven’t given up Bones. I spent the past year trying to fucking find her, then the last two months trying to convince her to come home.”

“Then fucking fight harder.”

I drop my chin to my chest and ask, “What do I do then because right now nothing is working, Bones, I can feel her slipping from my fingers.”

He grips my good shoulder and says, “You get your ass to the clubhouse and finish her demons off before coming back here and showing her your garden. I know this was her spot with you near that fucking pond when she was little, so tell her another truth, and then one more: you want to spend forever with her. That’s what you’re going to do. Now fucking go. I’ll stay here until you get back. Just fucking make him hurt for what he did, yeah?”

I look into his eyes, eyes just like my girls, and I nod, determination filling me, and I pat his back before rushing out my gate, jogging to the backdoor of the clubhouse. I go into the common room, make eye contact with my dad, and nod to the basement. He nods, then messages the council brothers for me as I make my way to the stairs before Shayla and Emma intercept me, making me growl.

“Where’s my husband, Flame? He walked out, saying he had to speak to you.” Her eyes are worried, but I don’t really give

a shit, and I look down on her and say, “None of your business, Shayla; he’ll speak to you when he’s ready.”

Tears fill her eyes, “I just want to explain...” I butted in, “Explain what exactly? How you stole from your daughter, forced her to be your keeper, or how you mentally abused her since she was ten years fucking old, blaming her for her father’s supposed death that was always going to fucking happen because he was in the wrong place at the wrong fucking time?”

Her tears fall as Emma touches my arm. “Flame baby, calm...” I yank my arm from her and say, “Don’t fucking touch me again.”

She swallows hard before I brush past them, going down the stairs. I can hear several boots following me, and I grin a wicked grin.

Time to avenge my girl and slay her demons.

I walk into the basement, taking off my cut and hanging it on the wall, while Hairy, whose eyes are no longer blindfolded, sees my predatory grin. The hard-ass biker is well and truly gone as he pisses himself, making the brothers chuckle. “I guess you know who I am.” He nods, his nose flaring. “You fucked up, Hairy.”

He struggles with the restraints as he growls, “No, I fucking didn’t. I avenged my mother!”

I nodded before getting my phone out. I found the footage I needed before showing it to him. He furrows his brows before his eyes widen, seeing what’s on the screen. “Well, to me, it seems she got exactly what she deserved, you know, for raping your president’s father, then passed it off as an affair to one of my club brothers, who you then proceeded to run off the road, nearly kill his then ten-year-old daughter and kidnap him, torture him for years, try to cause wars between the clubs then,” I get in his face, my anger showing, “and then proceed to rape my girl!”

He swallows hard, looking at the screen again. “But-but she said...” Axel cuts him off: “She fucking lied; she thought, as

her diary stated, that your father would kill her ‘lover’.”

Hairy furrows his brows. “But he was unconscious; how could he be her lover?”

I tilt my head at him, “because she was obsessed with him and wanted the Pres’ patch.”

He winces and regrets etching his features, but it’s too fucking late. I grab my flame torch off the table, and he starts to struggle: “Wait-wait, p-please ok, I’m sorry, I’ll make things right, please.”

I look him in the eyes as the council brothers except for Bones, who is watching over my family leans against the walls, allowing me to get revenge and slay my girl’s demons. “And how exactly do you plan to make raping my girl anally right?”

His body starts to shake, the realization of his fucked-up revenge hitting home as I place the flame at his boxer cover cock. He screams, shaking, trying to move away from the flames, but I keep it there as the fabric melts into his flaccid dick.

He shakes, his body sweating as he passes out from the pain, but I keep the flame there, ensuring to burn his dick right through for raping my girl and hurting her. Once I know the rotten thing is completely burned, I turn the flame off and step back for Gunner to throw a bucket of salt water at him. He wakes up screaming in agony as I hold my hand out before Slicer places his favorite knife in my hand, and I walk back up to Hairy as he pleads, “P-please.” I just shake my head at him before stabbing the knife in his burnt dick, making him scream.

The image of Star going numb during her assault hits me before I pull the knife out and stab it into his gut. I stab him over and over, covering myself in his blood, but I don’t give a shit. I only stop when he starts to cough, blood splattering from his mouth. “P-p-please, h-h-have m-mercy, y-you k-killed m-my cousin.”

I sneer at him, “Your cousin, who nearly killed three of our dancers! Where was Stars mercy when you shot at her at only

ten years old, knocking her off the bike, when you dragged her a mile away from the crash site wanting to take her, when you took her father, WHEN YOU FUCKING RAPED HER?”

The room is silent, my rage taking over before I grab the sledgehammer off the table. I grip it tightly, ignoring the pain in my shoulder. I can see Hawk holding his dad back, worried about my shoulder, but he knows I have to do this for my woman, to slay her demons. I swing the hammer back, smashing it against his kneecaps, and he screams, coughing more blood, before I hit him again and again and again before one final blow to his head. I look at him; his eyes are open, terror shining in them as they dim.

“See you in hell, mother fucker.” I mutter before turning around. Axel hands me a wet cloth, and I wipe my hands before grabbing my cut and then walking up the stairs, but this time I don’t go to the back staircase like I did with my girl. I think it’s about time everyone, including the sweet butts and Stars’ fucking sister, sees what I’m capable of for my girl.

My brothers follow at my back before we enter the common room. Thankfully, all the kids are in bed at this late hour as Slicer whistles, getting everyone’s attention. The women gasp as the men stand up straighter, and I hold my arms out with the council brothers at my back, my eyes connecting with Emma’s, who is standing with her mouth hung open and her eyes wide.

“THIS IS WHAT I’M CAPABLE OF FOR THE WOMAN I LOVE. LET IT BE FUCKING KNOWN; NO ONE MESSES WITH STAR, MY FUCKING WOMAN!”

The brothers cheer while Emma looks ready to be sick as Shayla goes pale and the sweet butts shake.

Good, they got the fucking message.

I walk towards the back door, the brothers praising me on my way while the sweet butts, Shayla, and Emma, stand out of my way, and I head home. Bones is standing on the porch when I make my way over, and he nods his head, coming down the steps. He pats my back. “Well done, my boy,” he says as he makes his way over to the cottage on the other side of the

clubhouse that Shayla never knew he had built while I go inside. He went into his room at the clubhouse and had to turn away from it after seeing his daughter's ruthless attempts at finding him for ten years. He said he'll go through it with her one day when they're both ready, but for now, he's staying in the house because he needed some peace and quiet from his high-maintenance old lady.

I walk up the stairs, ensuring not to touch anything before going into the master bedroom.

Star is cuddled up with my pillow, and I smile a little. "Firefly," I say loudly, causing her to jump up and look around the room before her eyes connect with mine.

Shock-etches her features.

Chapter 25

Star

I shoot up hearing Zayne call for me before looking around the room I decorated many moons ago for him that he clearly carried me to.

I turn to look towards the door before I gasp. Zayne's standing there, looking tall and full of blood. It's all over his clothes and face.

Panic enters me before I scramble to get up out of bed, nearly falling on my ass as I run up to Zayne, who quickly stands back, and I shake my head at him. "What are you doing? I need to see where your bleeding is from!" I go to grab him, but he just smiles, holding his clean hands up.

"Firefly, it's not my blood."

That stops me in my tracks. I'm not scared of him; I just don't want to touch whose blood that belongs to. I raise a brow at him, and he swallows hard. "Your demons are slayed, baby." My eyes widen in shock before I look him over again.

Hairy's blood. He's covered in my rapist's blood.

I try to struggle as he drags me out of the exit near the camera out the back, where I'm shoved to the floor, holding my face against the graveled concrete.

I squeeze my eyes shut, the memories hitting me hard.

No, no, no. I start to panic as a hand reaches around me and pinches my nipple.

My tears start to form.

He brings his hands to the bottom of my skirt, lifting it up, and my fight-or-flight instincts kick in. Now the shock of him evaporates, and I start to fight to get away from him all while laying my legs flat, not allowing him to gain access while screaming loudly.

“I screamed so loud.” Zayne freezes at my words. I never spoke about it, not the details or how I felt.

I start to struggle harder; my screams go louder when Hairy grips my panties, ripping them off my body, and I start screaming louder, thrashing around.

“The music was too loud in the bar, so Leah couldn’t hear me; Razor was on watch for Hairy.” Zayne’s breathing picks up.

I hear rustling and try to get away from him before I feel him near my back entrance.

I let out a sob, causing Zayne to come closer to me but not be able to touch me because of the blood. “I remember the pain, so much pain.” He flinches.

I start screaming louder and louder before he shoves into me really hard, making my whole body jolt forward as pain shoots through me, I feel like being torn in two, and I sob, screaming for help. He thrusts harder and harder, and I feel like I want to die; this can’t be happening. I feel the blood dripping down my legs as my tears fall harder while his thrusts go faster as he grunts with pleasure.

“He found so much pleasure in hurting me.” I look into Zayne’s eyes, which are filled with unshed tears. “I couldn’t fight him off, so I went numb instead. I wanted to d-die.”

Wetness splashes over my bum while he chuckles before some more rustling hits my ears, but I don’t move; my whole body is numb. I hear his feet shuffle near me before he spits on my face and leaves me in the alleyway, whistling as he goes while I wish and pray to die.

“I felt dirty, so-so dirty.”

Zayne’s tears fall as he steps even closer, his hand cupping my cheek. “You’re not dirty; do you hear me?”

I let out another sob, making his hand that’s cupping my cheek squeeze tighter as he presses his lips to my forehead. “I can’t make your feelings disappear, but I sure as fuck can make it easy for you to breathe. He’s gone, baby; he’s gone, and he’ll never hurt you again.”

I nod as he presses a kiss on my forehead before pulling away, “Get some shoes on Firefly; I have something to show you.”

I look into his eyes and see nervousness there, so I nod, and he gives me a small smile before heading into the bathroom. I swallow hard before grabbing my old ballet flats I left in his room at the clubhouse a few years ago and putting them on before walking out of his bedroom, needing to check on Theo, who will most likely be in one of his five spare bedrooms. I go to the first one next to the master and instantly smile, seeing my boy in a motorcycle bed. I slowly walk in and bend down, kissing his head before straightening again, and watching him sleep soundlessly. He looks so peaceful and so much like his father.

I don't know how long I stand here before an arm goes around my waist. Zayne's spiced cologne reaches my senses, making me lean back in his hold, feeling at home, which sucks really because he is my home and yet he hurt me in more ways than one.

How do I forgive that?

How can we jump over that kind of hurdle?

He presses his nose on the top of my head, inhaling before sighing, making me smile because I know he hates not smelling the paint. I haven't really had the urge to pick up a paintbrush, although I really want to decorate this room for our boy.

“How is it that I carried him for eight months because he decided he wanted to be born early and then pushed him out only for him to look exactly like you when all you did was get pleasure?”

His body shakes with laughter. “I'm pretty sure you got the pleasure too Firefly,” he rasps in my ear, and I shake my head with a smile. “Wait? He was born early.”

I hum, “It seems our boy decided his momma shouldn't spend her birthday alone.”

He leans over a little to look at me, and he raises a brow. “Are you telling me you share a birthday with our boy? You had him on your 21st?”

I nod with a smile before looking back at Theo. The urge to kiss Zayne is too much, and I just don’t think we could make things work after everything. “One hell of a birthday present, huh?”

He chuckles before holding me tighter, placing his chin on my shoulder as we watch our son turn in his sleep, sighing and making me smile. Zayne places a light kiss on my neck and says, “Come on, Firefly.” I nod and let him lead me away, gently shutting Theo’s door before I notice Zayne carrying a baby monitor, making me smile a little. He seems to think of everything. He guides me down the curved staircase, through his living area, past the kitchen, and through the backdoor. I come to a halt on the patio, seeing our pond, before I look at Zayne in shock.

He never allowed me to see his garden before, and now I understand why. He smiles, dragging me down the steps and then onto the gazebo with fairy lights. I instantly go to the edge to look at our pond, the large rock with our names carved into it still there, making my eyes swell with tears before I turn to look at my best friend, the guy I’ve been in love with for years.

He takes a deep breath. “Two truths now, baby.” I swallow hard, not sure I’m ready. “The first one, I had OUR house built on OUR spot, so it would always be ours, although we need to fence in the pond now with Theo and possibly build a little play area for him.” I let out a little sob. “Second truth, my shooting Star; I need you. I need you so fucking much, and I can’t live without you anymore,” he walks over to me, cupping my cheek while holding his hand out, my gold bracelet sitting in his palm, making my tears fall hard, “I want to be forever with you, Star. I know I’ve fucked up a lot, but the thought of anyone hurting you killed me; the thought of women purposely trying to make you jealous hurt me; the thought of anyone trying to tear you away from me because of what my patch held; what our club dealt with made it so

fucking hard to breathe,” he leans his forehead against mine as a sob climbs out of my throat. “You’re my universe Star, and I stupidly thought if I just had you as my best friend, I could deal, but I couldn’t. I told myself I was fucking around to keep you away from me, to burn your feelings for me, when in reality, I was trying to keep myself away from you, from tainting you with a world you were born into.” He slowly clips my bracelet back on before looking into my eyes. “I know there’s a lot to try and forgive, a lot for me to make up for, but all I’m asking is for one chance, just one Firefly.”

Another sob comes out before I shake my head, making him grip my hips. “How can I, Zayne?”

“By trying with me, you love me, Star.”

I nod. “I know I do, Zayne; you’re my person, but so much has happened.”

He butts in, “And I’m not going to brush all of that under the rug. I know you’ll most likely throw what I did over the years back in my face if we get into an argument. I know this will be the hardest thing we do to try and fix what I broke. I know this, but I’m still willing to try because you are all I want. Please baby, just one chance.”

I grip his white t-shirt, my head and heart telling me two different things: “My head is telling me to run, to not give you the chance because you don’t deserve it,” he butts in with a rasp, “and your heart?” I snifle, “is telling me to hold on so tight and to never let you go.”

He nods before his mouth crashes down onto mine, his arms holding me tightly to him as his tongue massages against mine.

The next morning I’m sitting in the clubhouse with Leah and her gorgeous little boy Alexander while Cammy has stolen mine, making me chuckle before Ella walks over to me, wringing her fingers together. Tank is right behind me. He looks at me and gives me a smile. “I’m going to go steal my grandson from the bulldog.” I grin while Ella wipes away a tear, making my eyes soften. I understand her anger, I do which is why I won’t hold it against her. “I’d run before he

gets him first, Ella. Tanks a bit of a hog.” Her eyes widen, tears filling them again before she leans down and kisses my forehead. “I’m sorry, and I have missed you, my sweet girl,” she rasps, making me nod before she rushes past her husband, who scowls as she gets her grandson, making every chuckle, Leah nudges me, “That was nice.”

I give her a smile and a nod. “I think she was more hurt because she was never told about him while Tank knew.” Leah nods as we watch her fuss over Theo as Tank tries to grab him, making everyone laugh. I look at the bar and smile, seeing my dad laugh with his brothers. “I never thought I’d see this again.” Leah looks towards my dad before placing her head on my shoulder, comforting me.

I did that; I brought him home.

Zayne walks out of church, and he smiles when he sees me with Leah, walking over to us as Leah sits up again, smiling at Gunner, who comes out behind him, stealing their boy from her. Zayne grabs my hand and pulls me up, making me furrow my brows until he takes my seat, then pulls me onto his lap, where I instantly curl up on him, my face going into his neck as the whole clubhouse cheers while my father shouts, “ABOUT FUCKING TIME,” making Zayne chuckle before he kisses my head.

“I love you,” he rasps against my head, and I melt into him, gripping his t-shirt. I agreed to give him a chance. I don’t know if that makes me stupid, probably, but I know I’ll regret it if I don’t.

I don’t return the words; he knows I love him, but I’m just not ready to say them out loud and probably won’t be for a while. I close my eyes as his fingers run through my hair, finally feeling at peace.

“Matthew?”

I look up to see my mother standing in front of my father, and I swallow hard at the hardness and betrayal shining in his eyes. “It’s bones, Shayla.” I suck in a breath as the clubhouse quietened while Zayne squeezed me against him. My mother

did me wrong, badly, but I know how much my father loved her. I don't want to see them separated. "After what you did to our daughter and what you allowed our eldest to do to her, I no longer see you as my old lady. You are denounced; where that leaves our marriage, I just don't know right now."

My mother cries openly, "P-please, I-I was hurting, a-and-and.." My father doesn't let her finish. "AND NOTHING, SHE WAS TEN YEARS OLD, SUFFERING FROM ROAD BURNS AND A BULLET WOUND; SHE NEEDED YOU!" He shouts in her face, making her sob, while Emma glares at me.

"Are you happy now? Not only have you stolen a man I said I was trying to win over, but now you've split our parents up with your selfishness!"

Zayne tenses underneath me, and I grip him harder, hoping he doesn't fling me off his lap to kill my sister as he growls. "Watch it, Emma," making her flinch at his tone. Axel stands and nods to two prospects who grab a hold of Emma, making her eyes widen. "Flame was never yours; he always belonged to your sister and vice versa, and that's what your problem has always been: jealousy. Jealous that your father showed her any attention, jealous that she had our brother's love, and jealous that she had amazing talent. You hated that you were no longer the club's main princess, and your attention was halved; you were spoilt and selfish." Emma's tears fall. "You and your mother treated her like shit for years. Bones has denounced your mother as his old lady. She's still his wife, but that's how far it will now go regarding the club, which means she's no longer allowed on club property unless Bones changes his mind, and as far as myself and the brothers are concerned, you are no longer welcome either."

My mother goes to take my father's hand, but he moves away from her. "Leave now and take Emma with you."

My mother lets out another sob before gripping my sister's hand. They both walk past us, my mother looking at me with guilt. "I'm sorry," she rasps, but I turn my head back into Zayne's neck, who holds me tighter while the prospects escort them out before I look at my father with my own guilt.

“Don’t look at me like that Starry girl. I can’t be with someone who used our youngest daughter as a cash cow, mentally bullied her, and allowed our eldest to abuse her. This isn’t your fault, do you understand? It’s hers.”

I nod, my tears falling, hoping he doesn’t resent me for his decision.

Chapter 26

Flame – Two Months Later

I chuckle as my son crawls past me with Bones hot on his heels. At nine months old, he's a little chubby firecracker and already tried to take his first steps last night.

Sighing, I look around the room. The walls are light with the right amount of lighting, while on the back wall, large, scripted letters fill it.

'Firefly's Art'

I smile wide. I really fucking hope she likes it.

Bones walks up next to me, my boy in his arms, his face in his neck. "You did good, son."

I nod. "I'm just hoping this gives her the motivation to paint again. These paintings are her last eight that Annie had left in storage."

He nods, looking at the large, painted motorcycle—the one they were knocked off of—and he sighs, "She's still holding onto her pain."

"She is. I'm trying every day, and every day she's becoming less tense."

He hums, "At least she's willing to give things away."

I nod, looking at the piece she did of our pond by memory, "It's not easy. I can see moments when she won't let me hug her because she's had a flashback. Emma's not helping either."

Emma's become a pain, but I can't exactly kill her sister now, can I? Can I?

No, nope I can't.

I sigh. "She cornered her last week, again blaming her for her mother's emotional state."

Bones shakes his head. "Whatever happens between myself and Shayla is not Star's fault, and I told Emma that straight

yesterday. She showed up at Untamed Girls, mouthing off how her sister was exaggerating before shutting up when I told her I'd seen the proof." He shakes his head. "I love my wife; I do. For ten years, it was her and our girls that got me through my terror, and yet my youngest daughter rescues me, and I come home to find out she was blamed for what happened. I do love Shayla, but I just don't know how I can forgive her for what she put my little girl through."

"By maybe trying marriage counseling."

We both turn to Star's voice, and I smile at her, walking over to the vision that she has. Her hair is down, and she's wearing an off-white summer dress that hugs her perfect fucking tits nicely while it flares just above her knees. She looks like a fucking goddess, and my cock likes what he's seeing as it starts to harden.

Fuck.

I haven't had sex in months. The last time was when we made our boy, so I can't really fucking control him right now. I wrap my arm around her waist, hugging her to me as my other hand cups her cheek, my thumb gently stroking her jaw. "Your early Firefly." She nods before looking around. Her eyes instantly welled up with tears seeing her work on the walls. The shop is only two doors down from Annie's bakery.

"Zayne, what-what is this?"

She asks as she moves out of my hold, taking our boy into her arms as he squeezes his hands in her direction, mumbling, "Mama-mama," making me smile while Bones grins.

"This my shooting Star is your shop," she gasps. "I think it's time you started painting again Firefly, show the world your amazing talent. Your studio at HOME," I make a point of saying home because it is her home, "is all set up waiting for you. We have church, then I have to go to the shop, so little man will be with my mother, and you will be painting again."

She shakes her head, looking around again. "I have been painting again, Zayne."

I shake my head at her. “Doing our son’s room does not count, and you know it even if it does look fucking awesome.”

And I’m not fucking lying either. She’s painted the clubhouse on his back wall with every brother’s bike in front of it, his name above. Now all the old ladies have requested something similar for their kids. She’s already done Lilah’s and Alexander’s.

She wipes the tears that have fallen before she rasps, “This is amazing,” and I grin as I walk over to her, taking my family into my arms while Bones grins as she lays her head on my chest, her eyes going around her art gallery.

About an hour later, Theo’s with my very happy mother. Star is in the basement at home, in her art studio, where she’s hopefully painting, and myself and my dad are in church. We’re going over the businesses; mine and Buzz’s construction are last.

“Flame, how’s the garage?”

I give him a nod. “Extremely busy. Cal has become an amazing mechanic and has requested to stay on even if he doesn’t make it as a brother.”

The brothers chuckle because he’s already been voted in; his cut should arrive in the next few days, and then there will be a celebration. Axel looks at Slicer. “And the construction company?”

Slicer nods. “Buzz passed over the paperwork to me this morning, and it all looks really good. Business is up by 35% this month despite being new.”

The brothers bang on the table before Axel looks at a depressed-looking Hawk, and I wince.

Yeah, been there, still doing that.

“How’s Daisy Hawk?”

He shrugs, “still unwilling to give us a second chance.”

I tilt my head. “You giving up?”

He smirks, “Fuck no, the buy went through; we’re now the proud owners of Daisy’s and Rose’s flower shop. It turns out her dad wants her happy, and he seems to think it’s me, especially after our heart-to-heart about his eldest.”

The brothers chuckle, and I grin wide. “She’s going to be pissed,” I warn, and he nods before we hear a bang and the church door slams open. A very pissed-off Daisy stands in the doorway with a worried prospect standing behind her.

Her green eyes are glaring at Hawk, who leans back in his chair and crosses his arms over his chest as she points at him and says, “You!”

Oh boy, she’s definitely pissed.

“Yeah, Diamond.”

Her nose flares as she shouts, “I AM NOT YOUR DIAMOND. I STOPPED BEING YOUR DIAMOND WHEN YOU TURNED INTO A JACKASS!” The brothers try to hold in their chuckles while Hawk shrugs, “Still my diamond.”

She growls; little Daisy Maisy growls.

“If you think you can try and manipulate me into spending time with you because you bought my shop, then you have another thing coming. I’ll just find another building to rent.”

Hawk shrugs again. “Then I’ll just buy that shop. I’m sure the club can come up with different businesses; I mean, we haven’t got diner yet.” The brothers nod because to be honest, that sounds like a good idea. Slicer looks down at the books, and you can see he’s looking into it making me grin.

“What is the point in all this? Hawk, we’re over; move on!”

I wince. Uh, oh, wrong thing to say.

The brothers all scoot back in their chairs, ready for a blowout as Hawk slams both his hands on the table while standing up and knocking his chair over, but Daisy isn’t backing down as she glares at him, not liking the finger he points at her.

“I’m your Leo, and you fucking know it, and we’re not over; we just had some miscommunications.”

He freezes, realizing his words, and silently curses himself because, yep, he just fucked. I look towards Daisy, whose face has gone red, but her voice comes out deadly calm, and I scoot my chair back along with the brothers as Hawk's mouths, "Assholes," to us, making us smirk.

"Miscommunication? Miscommunication when someone forces themselves on me and you automatically think bad of me despite knowing I gave you my virginity, even though you basically kept us a secret for months." Oh shit, Hawk visibly gulps, "You told me that my sister was a better fuck and wished it was her still alive instead of me," the brothers wince while Hawk flinches, "and when I came to the clubhouse to try and sort things out with you when let's face it, HAWK," he growls, "you didn't deserve that because of your hateful words, I find you in bed with not one but TWO women."

He butts in while we brothers look at them like a ping pong ball. "I told you nothing happened," she sneers. "AND YET YOU PURPOSLY LEAD ME TO BELIEVE SOMETHING DID." He flinches again before she points at him. "You can buy all the buildings you want, but you and I are done; we were done seven months ago when you thought I was capable of cheating. Stay away from me," then she looks at Axel, ignoring a red-faced Hawk who can't seem to understand why she won't just talk. I mean, fuck, I slept with Star's sister not once but twice, and she's willing to try, so why can't Daisy, who's just as sweet as my woman, unless something happened that none of us, including Hawk, knew about? You'd be stupid not to open a diner; the town would love it, especially if it sold Annie's baked goodies."

Axel nods his eyes wide before she sneers at Hawk again, then turns around, storming out of church with Hawk muttering 'fuck' before sitting down with his head in his hands.

"Brother?" I question. I need to know he's okay.

He shakes his head. "You brothers have all done several things fucking more worse than me, so why in the fuck won't she hear me out and try?"

I sigh, “I don’t know, but some things not adding up with her hatred right now, although wishing it was her sister here instead was a low blow.”

He winces and nods before knocking on the table twice and getting up. “About time I figured it out, huh?”

We nod as he leaves, and Doc shakes his head. “He was so busy trying not to upset his mother that he basically broke that girl’s heart. Don’t get me wrong, Ava loves Daisy, but she thought Rose was a better match despite her being for the fairer sex; she thinks Daisy is using our son because her shop is apparently failing, or, well, that’s what a mutual friend has said.”

Axel sighs and shakes his head, looking at me as Doc sits back down, shaking his head. “How’d it go with the shop?”

I smile alongside Bones, “Good, well, as good as I could have hoped. She’s at home now, and I’m hoping she’s painting to fill the gallery up.”

The brothers all nod before Axel dismisses church, and I pat my dad’s back, heading for the door.

I’ve got a shitload of paperwork to get on at the garage.

Chapter 27

Star

I look around the room. There are several easels in the light pink room and thousands of dollars worth of paint. The club logo I painted for Zayne years ago hangs on the wall.

I start to pace. He thinks it's just that easy for me to pick up a paintbrush and just start mixing my watercolors together to create a masterpiece, and normally it would be, but I've felt no desire to paint since I left him and left the club.

My family.

My heart.

He hurt me so much, and I said I'd give things a go, and I have. My heart beats widely every time he's near, but there's always a small part of me concerned that he'll break me again and that the pain he caused will never fade. How do you move forward with a relationship after so much heartache and pain have torn through you?

I think about what Leah asked me yesterday.

“How would you feel if you lost him? If he found someone else and they got married and had a couple of kids, he would make her his old lady.”

My heart beats frantically again in my chest at the thought, just like it did yesterday. I honestly thought I was going to be physically sick.

Can I watch him move on with someone new? Fall in love and start a family?

My heart races while my hands start to sweat.

I shake my head because the answers are clear. Yes, a lot of pain has been torn through us, but the thought of him with someone else makes me feel like I'm dying a thousand deaths.

And that's the answer that makes things seem so clear as I look at the easel again. Red and orange flames stand out in my mind, and it suddenly hits me:

I want to paint.

My muse in Zayne is coming back tenfold, making my stomach flutter. I walk over to the canvas after grabbing what I need before putting the paintbrush on the blank canvas. I paint the whole thing black before mixing the colors red and orange, creating a glow at the top of the canvas, like the sky's on fire. I start to make a half-moon in the corner, little stars lighting it up, glowing in the reddish-orange background, before creating whiteish mountains that look like they're going on for miles, a small road going through them, a midnight black river on either side, disappearing under the mountains. I stand back and look at my work, and my body instantly lights up. The passion that's been so lost is finally lighting a fire in me before I start on the next canvas.

The woods, with a moonlight sky, and a jaguar hunting its prey.

Then I do another: a circle of black trees with a white, glowing moon in the middle, and glowing stars surrounding it on a fading blue skylight.

And another: a life-size painting of my son, his smile wide and light blue eyes shining.

And another: my parents smiling lovingly at each other before the crash.

And another: Parkerville town, with a dusty sky surrounding it.

And another: the Hudson Bridge, with a sunset in the background.

And then another: Zayne's bike with flames behind it on a gray background, making it stand out, and I grin, taking a step back. I want to show him what I've created for him.

My tears well up in my eyes before falling down my cheeks as my emotions catch up with me, and

a sob echoes through the silent room before my father's voice comes out.

“Starry?”

I turn to look at him, and he sighs, seeing my tears, before walking over to me, taking me into his arms as he looks at my work.

“This, my darling girl, is fucking amazing!”

I nod, laying my head on his chest and looking at my work, not caring that my white dress is full of paint. I'll just dye it later.

“I got my muse back, Daddy.” I rasp, and my father nods.
“Your trust in Zayne?”

I nod back. “It's not going to be easy; I'll probably throw his misgivings in his face a few times a month when he's upset me, but the thought of losing him, whether in death or to someone else, someone who would take his heart and hold onto it tightly, makes me feel like I'm dying over and over.”

“And that my daughter is what true love is all about.”

I nod and sniffle before squeezing his waist. He lets me go and walks over to the canvas with the flames over the mountain, and he grins, pointing at it. “I want to buy this one.”

I just chuckle and shake my head. “It's yours; no charge for my daddy.”

He grins and gently picks it up, looking at it before looking around. “You've been in here for three hours,” my eyes instantly widen, panic rushing through me, Theo!

My dad's eyes soften. “Theo is happy with his other grandparents being spoilt; Ella actually told me you are not allowed him back tonight; she wants at least eight paintings done, and by the looks of things, you've done her justice.”

I smile before looking at the painting of Theo, and I nod towards it, “Do you think you can take her that for me? It's hers to have, and I can guarantee I'll take Theo back with me if I go.”

My dad grins, “On one condition.” I chuckle. “Yes, Dad, I’ll paint one for you now. I need Zayne’s one to dry before I take it to his office at the garage.” My dad grins wide and nods before seeing one of him and my mother, and he sighs.

“I don’t know what to do, Star.”

I give him a smile. “Do you miss her?”

He nods, “every day. I’d planned on showing her the cottage I had built. It was my safe haven when all three of you had your monthly together,” I chuckle because we were terrible all under the same house. “When I finally got out, I was going to show her. I was going to give the house to Emma because I knew you’d move in with Flame, and I was going to spend the rest of my days in that cottage with my wife spoiling our grandchildren,” he says, looking at me with sad eyes. “That was my plan, Starry.”

I nod. “Then you’d found out what she did and what Emma did.”

He nods, “How can I forgive that sweetheart?”

I sigh before walking over to him, laying my head on his shoulder, “by talking it out.”

He shakes his head, wrapping his arm around me, “but every time I see her, I want to fucking strangle her.”

I cut him off. “But you also want to kiss her because you were forced away from your love for ten years.” He sighs and nods while I smile. “Try marriage counseling, dad. I may not want a relationship with her, and I probably never will, but there’s nothing stopping you from having it. She never moved on from you, Dad; she mourned you every day, and I’m not sticking up for her because, as I said, I want nothing to do with her, but your marriage has nothing to do with me, so take me out of the equation.”

He nods. “I’ll think about it.” I nod. “You’ll never want a relationship with her or with your sister.”

I pull out of his arms and give him a smile as I set up the canvas. “I’m all for you trying with Momma, Daddy, but for me, I can’t. Trying to forgive Zayne has been hard—so damn

hard, his misgivings constantly running through my head kills me every day, but trying to forgive momma,” I shake my head. “I needed her more than I needed anyone. I saw my father taken, I was shot at, I was assaulted constantly at school, and then I was—well, you know, and she wasn’t there for me. I want you to try because she’s your soulmate, your other half, but I just can’t. I needed her dad, and as for Emma, she’s been a selfish bitch before you were even taken.”

He nods and walks over to me, hugging me tightly. “I understand, my darling girl, and I’ll stand by whatever decision you make. I love you.”

I smile and squeeze him tight. “I love you too.”

He kisses my forehead and says, “Right, make my painting and bring it to the clubhouse later tonight, alright? I’ll take these two with me now.”

I nod as he picks up Ella’s and his paintings before leaving the art room. I get my paints ready again, doing a different style of Theo for my dad because I hate doing replicas, before doing an at-night beach-style canvas. Then I clean up my paint before washing my hands and grinning as the colors swirl down the white sink. I turn the lights off after I grab Zayne’s painting before rushing to the Jeep that Zayne bought back for me and kept. It was one of his truths, and I bawled when he showed me because swapping it for that Ford nearly killed me.

I place the painting carefully on the back seat before getting into the driver’s seat. I look towards Zayne’s parent’s house and grin, seeing my boy in the little paddling pool as Tank admires my painting with pride before driving off, Cal opening the gates for me. I wave as I head towards Fire’s garage.

It only takes me roughly five minutes before I’m pulling into a spot, and I quickly grab the painting before walking inside. Hallie, the receptionist, smiles a weak smile at me before her eyes catch my painting and they widen, her hands going for it, but I pull it away, making her pout, then sigh as she wrings her hands together. “Uh, Star, your uh, sister went in there five minutes ago.”

Of course. That explains the weak smile. I give her a nod and head to Zayne's office. Normally I'd get that horrible feeling when I know he's been with her, but this time I'm not getting anything, and that's when I know.

I do trust him.

Damn.

I'm officially that stupid girl in the book who forgives the idiotic hero. I chuckle to myself a little before rounding the corner. His office door is open, and his eyes burn with rage as he stands in front of his desk, his arms crossed.

"Flame baby, come on, you know we are meant to be, not you and her," she spits out, making me smirk before I quietly place the painting on the chair on the inside of his door.

Wow, my sister has ego problems.

"I mean, I doubt the brat is even yours."

She goes to touch him, and he shoves her hand away, making her gasp while I chuckle. Zayne's face instantly pales, his eyes coming to me, and yeah, I get it; he probably thinks I'll take this situation wrong, but I haven't. Emma sneers at me and says, "Do you mind? I'm trying to talk to my man."

I just smirked and walked up to her. "That's funny because I'm pretty sure he's been declaring to be my man for months now, and even before he was screwing up, he was still declaring to be mine. Now I have news for you, sister dear, Zayne is the only man I've ever been with; heck, he's the only man I've ever kissed, my RAPE," she flinches, "not included because, as far as I'm concerned, that never happened. "Now call my son a brat again, and then we're going to have problems."

Her eyes flared. "HE WAS MINE FIRST. THAT SHOULD HAVE BEEN MY BABY NOT YOURS. I POKED HOLES IN THE CONDOMS; HE SHOULD HAVE BEEN MINE!" She screams in my face, going to attack me, but I just pull my fist back and swing it forward, pushing my weight into it. I connect with her nose, which crunches, and she screams out in terror before I grab a hold of her barely there shirt, getting in

her face. “Last time I checked, he’s been my best friend since I was born, so he was always mine, and the fact you thought to trap him is disgusting, and clearly he didn’t use YOUR condoms when he stupidly fucked you, and he’s clearly lucky. Now fuck off!”

Her eyes widen at my language as I shove her near the door. Hallie is standing there, grinning widely, with Trigger standing next to her, looking like a proud uncle. He grabs my sister, dragging her out, while Hallie goes to grab my painting, and I point at her. “No!” she pouts before shutting the door behind her, making me chuckle before I look at Zayne, who is still pale.

Chapter 28

Flame

My heart is in my throat.

Fuck, please, please, please.

She's going to misread the situation and then leave my ass permanently. I just fucking know it, especially after that nice revelation from her fucking sister. Her ass is banned from the club for that for good; I'll make sure of it.

"Star, Firefly, what you saw wasn't; I didn't..."

I don't finish my rambling when she shakes her head and then walks over to me. My heart pounds as she grips my shirt before going on her tiptoes and kissing me, and I instantly melt into the kiss, my arms wrapping around her as I lift her up, her legs wrapping around my waist at the same time my tongue enters her mouth, and I moan at her taste.

Home! I'm finally fucking home.

I break the kiss first when a familiar smell hits my senses, and I pull back, looking over her, before I fucking grin and say, "You painted?"

She smiles and nods. "I got my muse back." My heart pounds. "Oh yeah?"

She nods again, "My trust in the man I'm deeply madly in love with."

Tears instantly fill my eyes before I kiss her again, this time more fiercely.

Finally, fucking finally.

I quickly turn around and swipe my desk, not giving a shit about the mess before I lay her down on top of it, my body covering hers, not once breaking the kiss. Her hands grip my cheeks as I lift her dress up before tearing her panties. Our kiss intensifies as I undo my jeans and quickly pull out my rock-

hard cock, placing it at her entrance. Her heat instantly touches me before I thrust all the way forward, filling her to the brim.

She moves her lips from mine and throws her head back in a gasp as my lips go to her neck while I groan, "Fuck Firefly, your tight." I gently suck her neck as I slowly pull out of her before thrusting forward hard, making her moan as I grab a hold of her left leg, lifting it higher before I start pounding into my girl hard and fast, making her grip my arms. "Fuck firefly," I gasp against her neck. "I promise I'll make love to you later, but right now I fucking need you." I tilt my hips, moving them faster while ensuring to hit her magic spot before my lips search for hers again.

She moans against my mouth before I move my right hand between our bodies. I find her engorged clit and rub circles around it. I can feel my spine start to tingle, my body humming with pleasure at having my girl again, but like fuck will I cum before her. I rub her clit faster, making her pussy start to flutter and squeezing my dick tighter. "That's it, Firefly, fucking cum for me; give me what I've missed." I pinch her clit and she throws her head back, my lips going to her generous tit, sucking her nipple through the fabric before biting it, making her gasp out, "Zayne" in a moan as wetness coats my pelvic bone, my girl fucking squirting on my cock.

I groan, my cum squirting from my tip, coating her walls. I push my cock in as far as it will go, hoping to plant my seed deep inside her as I gently bite her neck, making her gasp.

"Fuck Firefly," I rasp.

She hums, wrapping her arms around my neck before our lips touch again. I keep my cock seated deep inside her as I kiss her slowly, my tongue massaging with hers, before pulling away and placing my face into her neck again, not willing to move as she plays with my hair. I'm basically squishing her, but I don't fucking care, and neither does she.

I gently kiss her neck again before I rasp, "You're moving in," making her laugh even though I'm deadly serious. I groan, and she gasps as her pussy tightens around my cock, causing it to

harden again. I grin as I slowly move out of her before pushing back in hard.

“Zayne,” she gasps, making me chuckle before sitting up a little and looking into her gorgeous caramel eyes. “I love you, my shooting Star.”

She smiles wide, her eyes tearing up. “Not as much as I love you.”

I chuckled before kissing her gently. “We’ll agree to disagree on that, baby.”

She grins as I slowly pull out and put my cock away before getting some tissues off my desk, gently wiping my girl up before helping her stand. I run my fingers through her hair, then place another kiss against her lips as I rasp, “You’ve got paint on your dress. Another dye job?”

She smiles against my lips and hums, “It was worth it though.” She kisses me again, and fuck, I could get used to this. “Turn around,” she whispers against my lips, and I smile, doing as she says before my eyes widen.

“Holy fucking shit, Star, is that my bike?”

She grins and nods her head before I go over to the painting. The background is gray, with my bike at the center and flames coming out from behind it. Fuck me, is that awesome. I look back at my girl and grin, shaking my head. “Welcome back, baby.” She smiles wide and shrugs. “Help me put it up above my desk.”

She nods as we hang it up together before she decides she has to clean up all the papers on the floor, making me shake my head at her with a smile because she then has to put them in order and in the correct piles that I did not have them in to begin with because my system sucks. I raise a brow at her once she’s finished. “Now what would you do if I put you back on my desk?”

She chuckles and shakes her head before walking over to me, gliding her hands up my arms and around my neck, going on her tiptoes. Our lips touch as I hold her tighter before she rasps

against my mouth, “And here I thought you’d want to christen the rooms at home?”

I pull back to look into her eyes, and mine tear up. “You’re not going to fight me on this?”

She shakes her head. “I think it’s time we tried properly. Now I’m not saying it’s going to be easy, because it won’t; it will be so hard that we will argue, but I’m willing to try if you are.”

My tears fall as I place my forehead against hers before I whisper, “I love you,” making her smile before kissing me and then rasping back, “I love you too.”

We spend the next twenty minutes making out like teenagers before we leave my office. Hallie eyes my door, making me furrow my brows until laughter bursts free at Star’s words, and understanding hits me: “His doors locked, Hallie; you are not having that painting; I’ll make one for you tomorrow.”

Hallie is practically giddy as we leave the shop, making me chuckle before I drag my girl over to my bike. She freezes instantly, and I know why. I understand her fear. She hasn’t stepped foot on a bike since her dad was taken, and she was nearly killed. I gently frame her face and say, “Come on, my Firefly, you’ve got this. I want my girl on the back of my bike, the only girl on the back of my bike.” She looks into my eyes with shock. I know she thinks Ginger went on it, but she never did.

Her tears fall before she nods slightly, making me kiss her lips.

Fuck, I can’t get enough of her.

I grab her helmet, which I bought years ago, and place it on her head. Then I climb on and offer her a hand, helping her on, before she squeezes my waist tightly as I start the bike. Trigger stands in the doorway, and he takes a picture showing the brothers she’s actually doing it, facing her fears, making me grin.

I decide to go for a little ride before heading to the clubhouse, and she loosens up, enjoying the ride. By the time we get to the club, she’s only holding my sides, making me so fucking proud. As we go through the gates, I intend to park up where

all the brothers are cheering for her, but she taps my leg, pointing to the house, and I nod. She probably wants to check on our boy. Once I've parked, she pulls the helmet off, getting off the bike with ease and a big grin, and I lean forward, kissing her and saying, "I'm proud of you, baby."

Her eyes soften and tear a little, making me cup her cheek before she nuzzles my hand, and I kiss her again, making her smile, "Can you go check on Theo? Because if I do, then I'm going to take him." I nod, kissing her again because I can't get enough of her lips before going to my parent's house, which is one row down from mine. I go into their backyard, and Theo sees me instantly before he crawls over to me. I grin as I pick him up.

"Dadadada," he murmurs before kissing my lips, making my grin go wider.

"How's daddy's little man, huh?"

My mother smiles. "He's an angel, and you're not taking him back."

I chuckle. "It's why I've come to check on him instead of Star because we both know she'll walk out with him."

My mother chuckles before wiping a tear at the mention of Star, making me furrow my brows, but she just shakes her head before nodding to the patio door where a painting of our boy sits, making me grin again. "It turns out, momma, I'm her muse." My mother smiles and says, "Of course you are my boy. You're her heart."

I smile again and spend a few minutes with Theo before reluctantly giving him back to my mother. I tell her we'll pick him up in the morning, making her pout before I head to my girl again. I see her standing near my bike with a painting, and I raise a brow before she turns it. Another painting of Theo, but this time he's in her momma's arms, and I give her a smile and say, "They'll love it, baby."

She nods, "It's mainly for my dad. I'm not ready for her to be near Theo, and I don't want a

relationship with her right now, if ever, but I don't want my dad lonely."

I nod, absolutely loving my girl's heart, before wrapping my arm around her waist, and then I guide her to the clubhouse after kissing her head.

Fuck I love this feeling of having her in my arms again.

Chapter 29

Star

We walk into the clubhouse to cheer, and I smile wide. I guess going on the back of a bike was a big accomplishment. I look at my dad, who has tears in his eyes, and my mom is standing next to him, hoping for a little bit of attention.

He must have asked her to come; otherwise, she wouldn't be in the clubhouse.

I give my dad a smile before I lift the painting, and he grins as Zayne whistles, the brothers quieting. "Alright brothers, it looks like my girl has her muse back." He looks at me, pride shining in his eyes. "Show them, baby."

I grin before turning the painting. The women all gasp as Axel shouts out. "Holy shit, Starfish, can you do one of Annie and Annabel for me?"

I grin at him and say, "Of course. I'll do it tomorrow after I've done Hallie's. She tried taking Zayne's three times this afternoon."

The brothers all laugh as my dad walks towards me, taking the painting, and he nods his head. "Is this your way of telling me to do the counseling?"

I give him a smile as my mother gasps, "She's your soulmate."

He nods. "But it's also been ten years, my darling girl. The woman I knew would have never treated our daughter the way she did.

I hear my mother sob in the quiet clubhouse, "True, but you'll never know unless you try. This is my way of telling you that I'm not standing in your way, Daddy."

He nods before kissing my head. "Okay, I'll try." My mother sobs again. "But I'm guessing it's a no for you two and her and Theo."

I give him a small smile and say, “I needed her dad, and she wasn’t there for me; instead, she blamed me for something that wasn’t my fault; I can’t forgive, and I don’t know if I ever will.” He nods again as my mother continues to openly sob while Cammy comforts her, trying to explain that I’m going to need time; she’s caused a lot of hurt, and I send her a thankful smile as she blows me a kiss while Zayne wraps my arm around my waist.

“I had a visitor at the garage today.” The brothers all look at him with furrowed brows while my mother tries to calm her sobs. His next word, though, caused her eyes to harden: “Emma decided I belonged to her and came to make her case.”

The brother’s all tense as my mother steps forward. My father shakes his head at her, but she doesn’t listen. “What exactly did she say?”

She sounds angry, but I don’t know if it’s my sister or my man.
My man.

Yep, that feels good; it feels right.

Damn, I really am the girl in the book.

“She exclaimed that we belonged together and that I was always hers,” Leah butts in. “That’s bullshit; even I knew you were always Stars, and you were just an idiot pushing her away at that point.”

I chuckle while Zayne shakes his head with a smile. “True,” he agrees, making the men smile. “She tried telling me Theo wasn’t mine,” the women snort while I chuckled.

My boy is his dad’s double, which again is not fair in my book; I didn’t see him have heartburn for eight months or need to pee every five seconds. “She then admitted to poking holes in condoms, hoping to trap me.”

The brothers all tense, anger etching their features, which soon intensified with Zayne’s next words, “And then she proceeded to attack my woman. My old lady.”

I turn my head to him in shock while he just smiles at me.

“Who has one hell of a right hook still?”

My mother turns to Axel and says, “Call Emma on your phone now!”

He raises his brows at her, but she doesn’t budge all while I keep my eyes on Zayne. “Old lady?”

He just grins as his dad hands him a box. He opens it, pulling out a cut. He shows me the back, and my tears fall.

‘Property of Flame’

I wipe my tears as he holds it up, making the decision mine.

He knows we could argue daily, and he knows I could throw his misgivings in his face and have issues where other women are involved, yet he still wants me anyway; he still wants this.

I wipe the tears again before putting my right arm in first, spinning to put my left in before his arms come around me from behind as the brothers cheer and the women sob in happiness for us as we finally have our happy beginning because that is what this is—us starting over.

I lean back in his arms as he places his face into the crook of my neck. “I love you, my shooting Star.”

I smile, about to reply, when my sister’s voice comes through the speakers, Annie’s face turning red.

“Hey Axel, baby, are you ready for round two?”

My brows hit my hairline, my mouth hanging open as he winces before mumbling, “Shit,” then stating, “That was five years ago, Emma.”

I turn to look at Zayne, who is trying his hardest not to laugh, while I mouth, “What the hell?”

I look towards Annie, who crosses her arms over her chest, while the brothers try not to laugh. She raises a brow at Axel, who drops his chin to his chest with realization while I vocalize it.

“Dude is on the couch tonight,” I mumble, making Zayne snort.

“I know, baby, but I thought you’d had enough of the baker and wanted the model.”

My mother's face goes red, my father's trying not to laugh out loud, and my mouth just drops in absolute shock. I can feel Zayne's body shake behind me, and I elbow him, making his laughter come out. The brothers follow as Annie points at her man, "Enjoy the couch for a few days, 'baby'," while I reach my arm up and shout, "CALLED IT," making the brothers laugh louder as Axel looks at me, dropping his head to the side slightly, his eyes telling me, 'not cool' making me wince because I definitely was only supposed to celebrate that in my mind. I mean, it was an honest mistake, but Annie's smirking, so I guess it's kind of a win for me.

"Axey, baby, what's going on?"

I raise a brow looking at Annie, mouthing, 'Axey?' and she snorts, making Axel send her the 'not cool' look, and I smirk before he shakes his head, his voice getting serious.

"What's going on, Emma, is you trying to trap a brother?"

She sucks in a breath. "A-Axel, look, I-I was just saying it to p-piss off Star; you know I love a-a good joke."

He hums, "And yet that's quite a serious one and against our by-laws."

She sucks in another breath when my mother sneers, anger in her voice. "For years, I've put you first, Emma," she butts in. "Momma, please I..." My mother talks over her, "No! I tried to give you more attention than your sister because of your jealousy tendencies; why do you think your father spent more time with her? I put you first, leaving her without a proper role model." I turn in Zayne's arms, not wanting to hear anymore, as I put my head on his chest, his arms wrapping around my body and holding me tightly.

"We spent her whole inheritance for fucks sake, Emma!"

I squeeze my eyes shut as my dad growls in anger, my sister stuttering, "S-she took m-my father from me." Zayne butts in this time, his chest rumbling against my head, soothing me: "Your father was always going to be attacked, Emma, you know this. You're a selfish, spoilt little bitch who doesn't

deserve Star as a sister; she was ten years fucking old.” She lets out a sob, but my mother’s having none of it.

“I don’t want you at the house when I get home; you have a flat; use it. You either change your attitude or find yourself family-less.”

Emma gasps, “You can’t do that; I’m your daughter!”

Zayne holds me tighter with her next words: “Yes, you are, and I love you dearly, which is the only reason why I’m giving you the opportunity to change.”

At this moment, I know I can’t forgive my mother. She’s showing Emma so much leniency, and yet she pushed me aside for something I didn’t even do. And I know Zayne feels the same way when I feel Zayne shake his head before Cammy speaks up. “Flame, she’s still her daughter,” he nods, “and so was Star when she neglected, bullied her, and ensured she had to go through fucking skin grafts alone. She fucking stole from her; they both did,” my dad butts in next, “they actually committed fraud. I’ve seen the documents; Emma acted as Star when our usual attorney was on holiday; his stand-in didn’t know who was who.”

I shake my head while Emma gasps, “She’s not reporting me; is she? I’m her sister.”

Zayne snorts, “You didn’t see her as a sister when you wanted to take everything she ever had. Hang up, Axel. I can’t hear her voice anymore; if Shayla wants contact, that’s up to her, but I’m putting it in motion with all the brothers now. Emma is banned from all clubbed-owned properties, which includes Bones’ residence off club property indefinitely.”

I hear my mother and Emma gasp as, one by one, every brother says, “Aye.” I open my eyes and look at my father. His is the only vote left; if he agrees, she’s banned for life; if he declines, then the votes don’t count. I watch my mother grip his checkered shirt and say, “Baby, please, she’s our daughter!”

And here’s my mother, still standing by her daughter, leaving me out in the cold.

He looks at her and nods his head. “And yet you stood back and allowed her to treat our youngest like shit. I love Emma; I do; she’s mine, but so is Star, who has suffered abuse after abuse all while you tagged along for the ride, and right now you’re trying to stick up for Emma when Star was the one who convinced me to try marriage counseling.” I squeeze my eyes shut, holding Zayne tighter when he growls.

“Bones, what’s it to be? I want to get my girl home.”

Home.

I like the sound of that.

“AYE!”

My father booms, making me jump as Emma cries out, “Daddy, I’m sorry, please...” Axel cuts her off: “Emma, you are hereby banned from any club property and events. You have signed an NDA; you break that you end up inside, we won’t go down our usual route because your Bones’ family.” The phone cuts off when she tries to plead as kisses are laid on my head, my family showing me their support, and my emotions go sky high. I feel the last one linger, and I mumble, my eyes starting to get tired from painting all day and the stress.

“I love you, daddy.”

“I love you too, my darling girl.”

I feel Zayne bend down before he picks me up as Cammy murmurs, her voice seeming distant, “Get her to bed, Flame.” I feel him nod as the cold air hits my face. Winter is well and truly starting to come in before we get home, where Zayne proceeds to undress me, places the shirt he was wearing over my head, and then lifts me into his bed—no, our bed. He joins within a few minutes, and I instantly curl up next to him, my head going into the crook of his neck and my leg going over his as his arms wrap around me.

“Make love to me, Zayne,” I whisper into the darkness.

He gently lifts my face to his, using two fingers under my chin, before his lips gently meet mine. He uses his body to

push mine onto my back before he spends the rest of the night showing me how much I mean to him over and over again.

Chapter 30

Flame – One Month Later

I grin as Firefly's Art fills with more and more people. She's managed to fill the walls, and already thirteen paintings have sold, and I cannot fucking express how proud I am of my girl.

My mother grins, Theo in her arms, loving the attention of the old ladies as they surround him near a painting of Parkerville's town hall in the night sky that has a sold sticker on it. Today is Stars art exhibition. It took a lot to convince her to do this after she missed the one I'd arranged before she left and was worried no one would show, but the place is packed, and now I'm just waiting for my girl to arrive with Leah, and I can't wait to see her face when she sees her place full.

Axel pats my back, and I grin at him. "Annie, let you get back in bed yet?"

He scowls and says, "No, and it was before her time, so I don't fucking get it." I chuckle, shaking my head, because he does get it; she's hormonal. He looks around and says, "She's done amazing, brother." I nod and look around too, because she has; she's done fucking brilliantly. There's even a painting that Theo did with his hands, which my dad instantly bought, making Bones scowl at him until he said he was hanging it up in church.

"Are you ready for this, brother?"

I smile at his question as I pat my cut: "Have you been ready, brother?" He grins back before patting my back as Hawk walks over to us with a scowl, and I raise a brow before he tilts his head to where Daisy stands in a long black dress that hugs her figure. She's smiling at Todd, and I snort, "He's gay; remember, brother and married last time I checked."

He sneers, "I don't give a flying fuck. She won't give me the time of day, and I don't fucking understand why." I raise a brow at him as Axel snorts, and he throws his hands up.

“Okay, fine, I do understand why. I fucked up. I showed her the footage so she knows I didn’t cheat on her, and all she did was get fucking angry that I lied to her.”

My girl’s voice comes from beside me in her rasp: “Well, what did you expect Hawk? A big hug and say everything’s fine?” making me grin before looking at her. Her hair is in a high ponytail, a gold bangle with gold leaves holding it up; she’s got more makeup on than normal, heavy eye shadow looking smoky with brown and grey, and the mascara she has on makes her beautiful caramel eyes pop. My eyes travel down her body. She’s wearing a white, fitted gown that shines. It’s strapless, and she looks gorgeous; fuck me, my dick hardens.

She looks up at me and smiles, making my heart melt, before I bend forward, kissing her lips gently. “Hi, beautiful,” I rasp against her lips, making her smile wide. She looks around the room, and her eyes tear up seeing all the sales signs as she wraps her arm around my waist while I hold her tighter to me, whispering in her ear, “You did it, Firefly.”

She snuffles and nods before looking back at Hawk, whose eyes have softened towards my girl, seeing her reaction to the room. “She loves you, Hawk, but something else has happened. I don’t know what, but something big. She’s detached, and there’s a coldness in her eyes I’ve never seen before.”

He swallows hard and looks back towards Daisy. “Her laughter’s not reaching her eyes,” he summarizes, and my girl nods. “She’s closed her heart off. I tried talking to her last week, but she wouldn’t speak to me; she just said she’d see me today.”

He murmurs “fuck” before kissing my girl’s head. “I’m proud of you, Starfish,” she grins, leaning into my side as he turns around. We watch him grip Daisy’s arm and pull her towards Star’s office. We all wince, seeing the cold look she gives him, ripping her arm from his, then moving towards the door.

“What the fuck happened to our sweet, shy Daisy Maisy?”

I shake my head at Axel's question because it's a good one. I look around the room again and smile, seeing all the happy faces before my momma gets my attention. She nods to my girl, and I nod my head, making her grin before she nudges my dad, saying something to him. He grins and then whistles, getting everyone's attention. My girl furrows her brows but stays in my arms.

"Everyone, I'd like to thank you all for being here on behalf of my daughter-in-law. She has worked her ass off, and her paintings show it."

Everyone claps and cheers as my girl burrows herself into me some more while Axel grins at her. "Now, I'd like to give the floor to my son." My dad points at me, and I grin before pulling away from my girl, who smiles at me as I kiss her head.

"Well, as you all know, my girl is my world," Star smiles at me, her cheeks heating with a blush, while the townspeople nod. "She's been my friend for as long as I can remember. Where she was, I was." She smiles at me. "And then, as we grew older, our friendship grew into love, and I'd admit I messed up thinking she deserved better than me and tried to push her away."

"Like an idiot," Cammy butts in, and I grin and nod while everyone laughs. Star's mother smiles slightly, upset that she can't be a part of this moment. Her dad's been going to counseling with her mother a few times a week but still hasn't moved home. Star still can't find the strength to try a relationship with her again at the moment, and I honestly don't think she ever will.

"Yep, like an idiot," I repeat as Star smiles at me, "but this amazing woman took me back and told me I was her muse who created all these amazing paintings." I spread my arm out before pointing at my happy little man. "She also gave me this beautiful little boy who's basically my double. She's given me the world—well, nearly the world."

She furrows her brows while my brothers all grin, and my mother is practically giddy as I walk up to her, placing my

hand in my pocket. “There’s only one more thing that I want from my shooting Star, and I’ve been given a lot from her already.” She tilts her head, looking up at me before her eyes tear up as I get down on one knee, getting her rose gold diamond twisted ring out. “You took my cut and became my old lady; you gave me a son and your heart; you’ve given me the world, Firefly, and now I want to give you my last name; I want to tie you to me in every way possible.” She lets out a sob, her hand covering her mouth. “Marry me, baby; spend the rest of your life being one hundred percent mine; be my wife.”

She nods her head frantically making me grin while the whole room cheers. I place the ring on the finger before picking her up, kissing her passionately as her fingers run through my hair. I rub my nose against hers and say, “I love you, my Firefly.”

She grins at me, her eyes shining. “I love you two.”

We spent another two hours at the gallery, which ended up being sold out before I took my family home. We put our boy to bed, smiling wide at his content sigh. Fuck, he’s perfect. I give Star a kiss on the head before going to lock up, making sure everything’s shut off before going into the master room after checking Theo one more time. I grin seeing my girl slowly take her dress off, and I lean against the door frame, crossing my arms over my chest as I watch her, admiring her. She’s taken off her makeup, and her hair is now down. She’s standing in front of me in only a white thong, and fuck me, does she look amazing.

I bite my bottom lip as she turns around and smiles at me before I shove off the door frame. I remove my cut first, hanging it up before pulling my top off and making my way over to her.

I glide my hands over her hips when I’m close before dipping my head and taking a pebbled nipple into my mouth and sucking it, making her gasp and arch her back. I glide my hands around her hips to her peachy ass and lift her, not once removing my mouth from her perfect tit as her legs wrap around my waist. I move us over to the bed, laying her down as I kiss down her chest and her flat stomach, gently running

my tongue over her pelvic bone and nudging her clit through the fabric before going lower, gliding my hands down, and taking her thong off.

I stand undoing my jeans as I look at the goddess on our bed.

Fuck me, I'm a lucky fucker.

I quickly remove my jeans before bending over her, gliding my hands up between her legs, spreading them as my tongue makes contact with her clit making her gasp, "Zayne." I suck the bundle of nerves into my mouth over and over until I feel it pulse, then quickly climb up her body, placing the head of my cock at her entrance, then thrust forward, entering her in one full thrust as my lips meet hers, making her taste herself.

She moans into my mouth, her legs wrapping around my waist as I thrust in and out in long, hard thrusts, making love to her. I slowly glide my hands up her arms, linking our fingers together, my hips never stopping while my tongue tangles with hers. I can feel her pussy flutter around my cock as my pubic bone brushes against her enlarged clit while I tilt my hips and make sure to hit her g-spot. I pick up my tempo, my spine tingling as I rasp against her lips, "Give it to me, my Firefly, cum all over my cock baby."

Her cunt squeezes me tightly, choking my cock before I feel myself pulse and spurt my seed deep inside her groaning, "Fuck Firefly," as she gasps, "Zayne," over and over. I ensure to keep myself deep inside her as my lips meet hers, kissing her passionately while my fingers squeeze hers.

My heart pounds hard in my chest. I love this woman so fucking much, and every fucking day I feel like I'm dreaming.

I slow the kiss before resting my forehead against hers and grin, making her smile back at me as she removes her hands from mine, wrapping them around my neck to play with my hair, love shining through her eyes.

"How'd you feel about a little ceremony near the pond in a few weeks, just the brothers and their women?"

I furrow my brows, rubbing my nose against hers. "You don't want a big wedding, Firefly?"

She shakes her head. "I'd rather be married before our next kid arrives."

I snort out a laugh. "Don't worry, baby, I'll make sure I have my ring on your finger before that. If you want a big wedding, we'll have one."

She smiles and says, "I don't want a big wedding, Zayne; I just want you." I smile and kiss her before she rasps against my lips, "Plus, I really don't want to be eight months pregnant on our wedding day, and knowing this baby, they'll be just like their brother and come early."

I chuckle before her words finally hit home, and I pull back a bit, my eyes looking between her watery ones. "You're pregnant?"

She nods, her tears falling, and I fucking grin wide before kissing the shit out of her, my hand caressing her flat stomach.

"I love you, my shooting Star, so fucking much."

She grins against my lips and rasps, "Not as much as I love you," before kissing me again.

Fuck me, I have the best life.

Epilogue

Star – Five Years Later

I smile at the customer, handing her the lake painting before she leaves. That's the fifth painting I've sold today.

My gallery is booming with business, and it's all thanks to Zayne and his love for me. Don't get me wrong, things haven't been easy, and I'd be the first to admit I have thrown his misgivings in his face when he's angered me or upset me, but he took it on the chin. Every time I mentioned something he'd done, he would just walk up to me, and despite being in the middle of an argument, he'd kiss me like his life depended on it, and one way or another we'd end up in bed together, or on his desk, or up against the wall.

I smile and shake my head, flipping the sign to close. Theo's now six years old and in full-time school, but his sister Eliza, who is four and actually looks like me right down to the caramel eyes, is still only in nursery with their little brother Matty, who is two. Zayne said he wants a house full of kids. I think he's insane, but he's determined; the test I did this morning only confirmed it.

I turn the lights off when my phone rings, and I quickly grab it and sigh a little.

“Hey daddy.”

I can hear the smile in his voice. “Hey, my darling girl, I thought I'd pick the kids up today and keep them tonight. Is that alright?”

He sounds hesitant, which is understandable. He and my mother are still working on their marriage even after five years; she's not making things easy. She moved into the cottage on the club's land, but our relationship is still nonexistent. I'm polite, but I just don't think I'm capable of forgiving everything she did. I needed her, and she let me down and, when upset, has threw back in my face that I forgave Zayne, which obviously upsets Zayne. In his mind,

she was messing with his marriage. She wasn't invited to the ceremony when we got married because I didn't want her there, and it's just created even more bad blood between us. She also doesn't have a relationship with her grandkids, despite my father trying, and her daughter is still banned from club properties, which just pisses her off.

"Dad.."

He butts in, "It's been five years, darling, please."

I nod. "I know, and only last week she told Theo I was bitter after she cornered him in the clubhouse when he told her he wasn't allowed to be on his own with her upsetting him. I get that you two are working things out and have been for a while, but I won't have her near my kids with her negative energy after what she put me through. It took everything in me to give Zayne another chance; I haven't got it in me with my mother, especially with the crap she keeps pulling." Like last month when Emma, who was in town for the first time in months, swore I was kissing someone who wasn't my husband, and my mother stood by her. "She tried to ruin my marriage with lies, helping my so-called sister, and has now come between us, which you have allowed."

My dad sighs, "Someone's got to start somewhere, sweetheart. I can't keep doing this back and forth anymore; she's my wife, and I promised I'd try."

"Which I encourage you to do, remember, dDadad? And I'm your daughter, yet I haven't once put you in the middle. I'm not telling you to choose. I'll just make things easy for everyone; instead, you try to heal your marriage, Dad." I look at the time, and I know Zayne will go home soon, but I want to see him at work; he's going on a run tomorrow, so I know Axel will grab his attention at the clubhouse. "I've got to go; Ella's picking the kids up, you can see them without my mother, and that's final; I'll speak to you later, Dad."

I hang up, not willing to hear him drone on again about healing and forgiveness. My phone rings again, but I ignore it.

Five years later, instead of trying to heal us, my mother broke us apart some more because I wasn't willing to let her near my

kids. Then Emma started traveling on my dad's dime, which he allowed after she exclaimed to be a new person, only for her to try to kiss my husband that very same day she exclaimed to be a new person. I think I just checked out after that, and to be honest, the more my mother got upset, the more my father pulled back a little from me, and I've allowed it because, like I've said before, my mother's his soul mate, and I won't come between that; he just seems to forget the traumatization she put me through. Instead of holding me close, she pushed me far away and treated me like cow cash.

Sighing, I lock up the gallery before getting in my new SUV that Zayne bought me.

Am I being petty by not giving her a chance?

I shake my head before starting my car and head out of the parking lot for my gallery towards Fire's garage.

It doesn't take me long before I pull up and get out, making sure the test is in my bag and head inside. I give Hallie a smile and she grins wide at me before I go to Zayne's office; he's on the phone when I walk in.

"Bones, I don't know what you expect me to do."

I wince. Great.

Shaking my head, I shut his door before walking over to him. I place my bag on his desk as he scoots back in his chair before letting me climb on him, which I happily do, straddling him, my face going into his neck, inhaling his spicy cologne, and I instantly relax as his arm moves around my waist, holding me tight.

God, I love this man.

My father's voice comes into the room: "I just want her to give her mother a chance. I feel like I'm having to choose between my wife and daughter; it's been five years, Flame."

Zayne tightens his arm around me. "She's tried bones, and you know she has, and you calling me is only making things worse for yourself." I squeeze my eyes shut. "You've pulled back from her because of the things your wife keeps crying to you about. She accused Star of cheating on me when, at the time,

she was with me, and you got in my girl's face about it, believing every word spewed. You're lucky she hasn't stopped you from seeing our kids. I won't have this conversation with you again. You're a brother, and you are my father-in-law, but my wife comes first, and you need to rain your wife's actions in before I do. She's hurting my family emotionally, which she has done for five years because her high-maintenance ego can't take it. I won't be having this conversation with you again because next time, it'll be in church."

"Flame."

"No bones, I've had to deal with my wife crying after her mother's comments over and over. I've had to deal with my six-year-old in tears because she's cornered him in the clubhouse. Star saved you, Bones, and she also encouraged you to save your marriage. Remember that, yeah, because without my wife, you wouldn't be here and Shayla wouldn't have your wallet, and I don't give a shit how harsh that sounds to you; us brothers have all kept our mouths shut, but no more." He hangs up as I flinch at his words before he runs his fingers through my hair, kissing my hair and sighing.

"And to what do I owe this amazing pleasure?"

I smile gently before pulling back, and he sighs, seeing the pain in my eyes. "I'm going to kick your dad's ass." I chuckle and shake my head before gently kissing his lips, loving having him in my corner. In a perfect world, I'd forgiven my mother, and we would have moved forward, but she didn't like the length of time I was taking, which, by the way, was only two months after Zayne and I got engaged. She hated that I was pregnant again and wasn't willing to accept her support yet, only Ella's, and she really hated that Zayne and I got married without her there. It was the first time my father went against me while he was trying to fix his marriage.

He told me if my mother couldn't be there, then he couldn't, so I nodded my head and said, "Okay." I wasn't willing to come between them, so Tank walked me down the small aisle in our backyard, and things with my father just started drifting away after that. I think a small part of me resents him not being there for my wedding day after I

made it my life's mission to find him and bring him home before I encouraged him to forgive his wife.

Zayne gently moves my dress up, making me smile against his lips as our kiss heightens and he moves my panties to one side, checking to see if I'm wet, and of course I am. He groans, quickly undoing his jeans. He pulls his member out, placing the head at my entrance, before slowly pulling me down, making us both groan.

“Fuck Firefly, I missed you.”

I chuckled with a gasp. “You had me this morning.”

He hums as he kisses my lips, then rasps, “And that was hours ago,” before lifting me slightly, his hands cupping my ass, and I slam back down, making him groan. He lets me do it at my pace, to my pleasure, using him every time I slam down on him, swiveling my hips. I can feel my stomach tighten as he bites through my dress on my sensitive nipple, making me moan and gasp.

“That's it, baby; use me; make yourself cum on my cock.”

I do as he says and cum, moaning as his lips take mine, our tongues tangling, before he thrusts up into me four more times until he cums, groaning into my mouth. We make out for a few minutes before I break the kiss, slowly removing his member from inside me as I lift, and he groans, making me smile as I right my panties before he puts himself away. I rearrange myself and curl up in his lap, making him smile and holding me to him.

“So, where are our kids?”

I smile, “with your parents tonight.”

He hums, his fingers gently running through my hair, and I close my eyes. “Am I being selfish by not forgiving her when I forgave you?”

He sighs, “It's different with me, baby. Did I screw up? Yeah, I did, badly, but you needed your mother. You needed her after the attack, through high school, through your pregnancy, and she wasn't there for you, only for your sister. She stole from you, belittled you,” I nod, “and instead of understanding the

neglect and traumatization she caused you, she tried to pressure you over the last five years and tried to corner our children; that's why she's no longer allowed on club property without your father." He kisses my head and says, "You're not being selfish, baby; you're protecting yourself and our kids, and if your father can't see what's going on because he wants to keep his marriage, then that's on him."

I nod and nuzzle into his neck when my phone dings, and I sigh, grabbing it. Zayne looks down too when I open the screen, and I suck in a breath, seeing who it's from.

Daddy – I'm sorry, my darling girl. I promise I'll do better.

I close the screen and just shrug, not believing it because, like Zayne said, my mother's high maintenance and expects to get her own way. I look into the eyes of the man I adore, who smiles gently at me, kissing my forehead. "One day at a time, baby."

I nod and close my eyes, enjoying being in his arms. I want to try with my mother; I do, and I want my relationship with my father to be stronger again, but she's making it harder and harder as the years go on while he accepts it because he wants his marriage to work. I just needed time, and she wouldn't allow that, and neither would he, even after he was on my side for the first month after the engagement.

Zayne runs his fingers through my hair, kissing my head before he rasps, "How about we go home and practice making baby number four?"

I snorted before leaning back to look at him. He waggles his brows with a grin, making me shake my head at him before I lean forward to grab my bag off his desk, and he grins, thinking I like that idea. Don't get me wrong, I do, but baby number four is already on its way.

I search through my bag before finding the stick and I pass it to him. He furrows his brows before happiness shines through his eyes while I chuckle, "Too late," making him grin wide before he kisses me. His left-hand cups my cheek as our tongues tangle together while he keeps a hold

of the test in his other hand before he slowly breaks the kiss, rubbing his nose against mine.

“Thank you, Firefly; thank you for giving me another chance; thank you for forgiving me; and thank you for giving me all the love in the world.”

My eyes tear up before my lips find his.

Things may be hard at times; I may not have found forgiveness with my mother and my sister, and things may be difficult with my father, but my love for this man strengthens every day.

He’s my home, my everything, and I am so glad I decided to try with him, even if it did make me the idiot heroine in a story. This man owns me, my heart, and my soul, and when you find that kind of love, you hold onto it tightly.

“I love you,” I rasp against his lips, making him smile. “Not as much as I love you, my shooting Star.”

I grin back before kissing him again, showing him how much he means to me and how our family will always come first.

I’ve finally got my happily ever after.

Dear reader

Thank you so much for reading the sixth book of my second series! I hope you consider leaving a review to let others know what you thought of this book. I thoroughly enjoyed every second of writing it, creating Flame's story and his struggles with trying to let Star have a normal life. This story is based on fictional places.

Book 7 Hawks story next.

If you haven't yet, please check out my first series, Bound Mafia Series which is made up of three books that can be read individually but better reading altogether.

About the author

C L McGinlay is a full-time mum to two boys, but also a full-time carer for her youngest who was born with a medical condition and requires more care than the average child and had to leave her job in order to care for him.

Writing is something that she's always wanted to do but never had the courage to pull through with it, she loves to read and creating stories is a passion. With much self-doubt she didn't think she could do it but with the support and encouragement from her husband and her family she decided to try and write to see what she can come up with, and the bound series was born and before long more stories flowed out. When she's not taking care of her family or spending quality time with them then she's reading, then writing in the evenings, hopeful a career might be born with her stories and people can fall in love with the characters and laugh and cry with them just like she does when she reads books.

Books In This Series

An Untamed Hell Fire's MC Series

[Axel](#)

Axel

I'm the president of our club, making my father proud every day.

I love my life of freedom, booze, girls, brothers, and family. Nothing else mattered to me.

But then she walks into my world.

She takes my breath away and she's all I see.

But she's in danger and I'll do anything to save her.

Even take a life if I have too.

Because she's mine. And I protect what is mine.

Annalise

I haven't had an easy start to life.

But with help of the people who love me, I managed to get to where I want to be.

I live for baking and had opened my own bakery.

I didn't want a relationship or the hassle of heartbreak I'd rather just settle.

I didn't count on him though or how he makes me feel.

I fall for him without realizing.

He's all I want; all I think about.

But then I'm in danger and I can't let him get hurt because of me.

I try to push him away, but it doesn't work.

Because he's mine as much as I'm his.

This can be read as a standalone, it is book 1 of 7 of Untamed Hell's fire MC series, with a HEA. Due to mature content and themes this book is recommended for readers aged 18+, this novel may contain triggers.

[Dagger](#)

Dagger

Growing up in a clubhouse is supposed to be fun and I guess
with my friends it has been,

But with my family, not so much.

My father's been basically absent while there for my blood
brother.

And his wife has made my life hell.

I made sure to grow strong to stop the abuse, I made sure to
grow in the club as a screw you and succeeded,

I'm now the Vice President,

I'm stronger than I was when I was a kid,

And I refuse to be vulnerable again,

Until I meet HER.

She makes me want to be vulnerable and show her a different
side to me,

She makes me feel period.

But I messed up and she doesn't want to know,

She thinks I'm a player, not knowing my demons.

But she has some demons of her own,

And come heaven or hell,

I'll make sure we face them together.

Melanie

I can't remember the last time I felt happy,

Maybe before my father left when I was only four,

Or maybe when my momma overdosed, and I had to stay
somewhere else for a few months until she was better?

Life hasn't been nice to me growing up and I've been living
through the motions,

Concentrating on school,

I refuse to be vulnerable to anyone,

People always disappoint, people always leave,

And I prefer being alone dealing with the shadows,

Until I meet HIM.

He's a player but I can see the same pain in his eyes that I have
in my own,

I want to help him, but I don't want to get hurt,

He'll be the end of me, I just know it,

But he's persistent despite my turning him away over and
over,

He wants to fight our demons together, to burn them,
But how do I let myself fall into the flames with him when
I've been burning inside from the memories of my past?

This can be read as a standalone, it is book 2 of 7 of Untamed Hell's fire MC series, with a HEA. Due to mature content and themes this book is recommended for readers aged 18+, this novel may contain triggers.

Ink

Ink

I grew up spoiled,
Always got what I wanted,
I was arrogant, cocky,
And I didn't give a damn about anyone but myself,
Until I met her,
She blinded me with the pain in her eyes,
I wanted to tear the world apart to rid her of her demons,
She became my everything,
Until I screwed up,
Until I realised the pain my brother was put through while I
lived it up.
I took it out on her and she pushed me away not realising I
was still holding on tightly,
Because I wasn't giving up, never letting her go,
She was mine as I was hers,
It's just a shame I was blinded by those closest to me,
Blinded by someone who wanted to tear us apart.
But the question is, would they succeed or would our love pull
through?

Sophie

My family was my world,
They put me first, made me follow my dreams,
Life was perfect,
Until it wasn't,
I lost my way when I lost part of my family,
Living day by day trying to survive,
Then he came along,

He made me feel, made me alive,
He became my new world, my new family,
But someone wasn't happy about it,
Someone wanted to tear us apart,
And the question is,
Can we get through it, fighting together and come out on the
other side?
Or are we done before we even got started?

This can be read as a standalone, it is book 3 of 7 of Untamed Hell fire's MC series, with a HEA. Due to mature content and themes this book is recommended for readers aged 18+, this novel may contain triggers.

Gunner

Gunner

I wanted her as soon as I saw her,
But she was taken at the time,
By someone who's worked for us for years then became a
brother,
He's family,
And I couldn't handle it,
So I started sleeping around, but by the time they broke up,
We were already friends, I couldn't ruin that for us,
And I couldn't ruin my oath to my brother,
Until I had found out nothing was as it seemed, that she had
always loved me,
Had always been mine,
But now she doesn't want anything to do with me,
Won't even let me touch her,
But I'm nothing but determined,
She will be mine, especially when I realize there's more than
our hearts involved now.
And I will kill anyone who will get in my way,
Because they don't call me Gunner for kicks.

Leah

The first day I made eye contact with him I knew he was the
one,

He was supposed to be mine and I his,
But he was seeing someone else,
Throwing their relationship in my face every day,
All while I went through a trauma right under his nose,
But I don't have time to fall apart,
I'm working full time trying to get myself through school,
To make my family proud,
But then we finally end up in bed together,
Only he doesn't remember and goes back to his girl,
He breaks me,
Then I find out I'm pregnant and suddenly he wants to be
involved, he wants me,
But I can't go there, not anymore, not knowing he'll always go
back to her.
I just didn't count for his determination,
Or for the pain his lover tries to cause me.
Can I give him a chance or will his past bury us?

This can be read as a standalone but is better if books are read
in order to get an understanding of other characters. This is
book 4 of 7 of Untamed Hell fire's MC series, with a HEA.
Due to mature content and themes this book is recommended
for readers aged 18+, this novel may contain triggers.

[Slicer](#)

Slicer

I loved playing the field, never wanted to settle down,
Until I met her.

It was supposed to be a onetime thing,
I just didn't expect the connection we shared and I wanted
more.

I wanted her.

But she was gone the next morning.

So, I turned back to my player ways all while trying to search
for her,

Needing her like I needed air to breathe,
Keeping a hold of the only memory I had left of her,
Her gold bracelet.

Until she moved to my town, with something of mine in tow,

She doesn't want me anymore though,
She's seen my player side and she doesn't like it,
But what she doesn't realise,
Is that she's mine, always has been and I'm playing for keeps
this time.

Meghan

He showed up in my life when I least expected it,
My parents were pressuring me to settle down,
Marry the man they wanted me too,
Then he walked in on my shift,
I wanted to finally rebel, finally have something for me,
All while trying to put myself through med school and leave
this dead-end town behind.
I just didn't expect the spark that shone between us,
But he doesn't do relationships, he doesn't do commitment,
So I left him the next morning, not expecting to see him again
when he leaves town.
Only he left something of his behind.
I searched for him for years, until finally, there he is,
Wrapped around another woman.
I decide to put my feelings behind me and concentrate on my
residency,
But he has other ideas, he wants me.
And whether I'm ready or not,
He's taking me.

This can be read as a standalone but is better if books are read
in order to get an understanding of other characters. This is
book 5 of 7 of Untamed Hell fire's MC series, with a HEA.
Due to mature content and themes this book is recommended
for readers aged 18+, this novel may contain triggers.

Books By This Author

Bound To You

Sofia

I met him when I was eight years old.
I thought he was my best friend.
I thought he loved me, it is why I agreed to marry him.
He was my everything.
Until he was not
It was all a lie, an agreement between his family and mine
I cannot stay.
I must save myself and our unborn child whom he doesn't
know about from my fate.
Leaving him was the only option.
But what happens when he finds me again?

Damian

It was all an arrangement from when I was twelve.
One I did not want.
I had to woo her, make her fall for me.
She was more than I realise.
I fell for her without realising soon enough.
I lost her.
She left me on our wedding day.
I hurt her, lied to her but I need her.
I am trying to find her.
But what do I do now that I have found her.
She is not alone.
I must fight for her, but she doesn't trust me.
I can't let her go a second time.
It is not just about us this time.

This can be read as a standalone, it is book 1 of 3, bound mafia series, with a HEA. Due to mature content and themes this book is recommended for readers aged 18+, this novel may contain triggers.

Bound By You

Phoebe

I had always been quiet and shy.

Until I wasn't, I had to hide my true self behind a shield.

Doing what my family requests without complaint even if I didn't want too.

He was supposed to be an arrangement.

Married in name only.

An alliance between the Greek Mafia and the Bratva

I was not meant to fall in love with him.

But I did and he didn't feel the same.

He's having a child with someone else.

He broke the terms of our contract.

It is now void.

And I do the only thing that makes sense to heal my broken heart and get away from my father.

Run and finally become the person I was always meant to be.

Alexandr

It was an arranged marriage.

To strengthen our Bratva.

I had no problem filling the terms of the contract.

For Family and my younger brother who got stuck as a leader when it was supposed to be my job.

It was the least I could do.

But I wasn't expecting my bride to be the most beautiful woman I have ever seen.

She made my cold heart beat.

I thought we had a connection.

I wasn't expecting her to disappear.

I wanted to find her to punish her.

But then I realised it was all my fault, now I want forgiveness, to have my love back.

When in the end getting forgiveness is no easy feat when I am the one being punished for my sins.

This can be read as a standalone, it is book 2 of 3, bound mafia series, with a HEA. Due to mature content and themes this

book is recommended for readers aged 18+, this novel may contain triggers.

Bound For You

Avery

I don't have any family.

Everyone who was supposed to love me left.

Until he walked in on my shift.

He made my heart race, my body tingle.

I fell hard for him, and he became my world.

I was bound for him, but he wasn't bound for me.

He grew distant, then I found out he isn't who he said he was, his whole demeanor changed instantly.

He's a killer, an underboss for the Bratva Pakhan that I didn't even know existed outside of movies.

He didn't give me a chance to come to terms with it, instead he threw me away, just like everyone else.

He broke me after I spent years putting myself back together.

I try to move on from him, concentrate on my upcoming residency.

But then I find out I'm pregnant with his child.

Sergi

She was the most beautiful woman I'd ever seen.

She was pure, not from our world, had suffered a lot from life.

But I was selfish, my whole body tingled just being near her, she was mine.

Then I lose myself, I push her away, and she finds out who I really am.

She runs without looking back, destroying me.

I make mistakes I can't take back and hurt her even more.

She gives up on us, on me.

But I can't let her go, I can't give up.

I will win her back, whether she likes it or not.

She's bound for me.

This can be read as a standalone, it is book 3 of 3, bound mafia series, with a HEA. Due to mature content and themes this

book is recommended for readers aged 18+, this novel may contain triggers.