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KAILIN GOW

**THE
BISHOP**

SAINTS OF SAN ANGELO U. #2

BISHOP

Saints of San Angelo University Series #2

Kailin Gow

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AUTHORS' NOTE



Thank you for picking up *Bishop*, the second book in the Saints of San Angelo Series.

This series is a New Adult Enemies to Lover College Romance appropriate for age 18 and up. Please note this is not a clean romance, but will have adult scenes.

Prologue

Brook



“Rector” Rhode Union stood with his arms crossed over his chest. His jaw was tight, and his eyes narrowed as he looked down the road that led to the campus’ frat houses.

His luggage was stacked up beside him, one expensive Louis Vuitton after another.

“This sucks,” he spat under his breath as he paced the width of the front porch of the magnificent mansion. He briefly looked up at the sign beside the door. “House of Saints,” he read as he looked at me. “Yeah. This is *my* House of Saints. I built this frat house.”

“I know,” I said quietly.

“This sucks,” he said again.

“I do hate that things are ending like this,” I said, hoping to diminish his anger and frustration.

There was something so surreal about the opulence that surrounded us. The mansions, the expensive cars, the high fashion, all set up against the sense of injustice that was splashed across Rector’s face.

“It’s killing me to see what they’re doing to you,” I said, trying so hard to show him just how hurt I was.

“Don’t underestimate me, Brook,” he said with a crooked grin. “I’m not out of the game yet.”

“You’ve been expelled, Rector,” I said. “You might be the president and leader of this college fraternity, but that’s not going to change anything. You’re still expelled, and you have to leave, and it’s killing me.”

He grasped my shoulders, his fingers digging into my flesh with hunger and passion, but with bitterness as well. “I promise you, I will be back.”

He pulled me in and kissed me, his lips hard and demanding. His fingers dug into my shoulders even more and I felt his desperation. When he pulled back, I could still feel the bite of his teeth against my lips.

With a snicker, he looked at me, the frustration in his hard hazel eyes replaced with determination. "I'll admit that being expelled is a dent to my ego, not to mention a wrench in my plans," he said. "But when you get right down to it, my father practically owns this university. Do you think the dimwits here are going to forget that? No. No one here is going to forget that; not the dean, not the administrators, not the professors."

"How long do you think it'll be before you return?" I said.

For all his anger, he looked so damned good. His hazel eyes, usually so bright were now dark and smoldering. The tightening of his jaw only accentuated the strong line of his chin. I reached up to push the thick strand of black hair that insisted on falling over his eyes.

He instantly turned to kiss the palm of my hand, then held my hand over his cheek. "I'm going to make sure that I'm back here as soon as possible. First, though, I'll have to convince my father to overlook this silly, little incident here at SAU. I'll have to explain to him the part my fraternity played in all this and get him to see things my way."

I smiled. I knew just how convincing he could be. His dreamy eyes pierced right through me, and the sensual curve of his lips drew me in. As hard and uncompromising as he could be, he had that charm about him. That damned charm.

Then again, that was hardly what would charm his father.

"I'll work for my father for a while," Rector went on. "I'm sure he'll be happy to see me putting in some time at the family business. That'll soften him up. Then, when he realizes that I really need to earn my degree, he'll do everything he can to make sure that I'm allowed back here." He leaned in to kiss me, nibbling on my bottom lip before sucking it in and dropping a quick kiss. "And I will come back, stronger, smarter and sexier than ever."

I chuckled. "I sure do love your confidence."

"Tell me you'll wait for me," he said. His thumb repeatedly ran over the exposed skin of my shoulder, reminding me of what it felt like to be so intimately touched by him.

Pouting, I played the heartbroken lover and sniffled back imaginary tears. "I'm going to miss you so much. It's not going to be the same here without you."

He nodded and as he came in close to kiss me again, I could have sworn I saw a tear lining his eye.

I smiled through the passionate kiss, fighting to not giggle as my heart filled with glee. He was leaving. He'd be gone. Punished and put in his place.

It was even better than I could have hoped for. Expelled not only from the university, but from the frat house that he loved so much, the frat house that he'd put his heart and soul into making it what it now was.

"I'll let you say goodbye to the guys," I said, pulling away from the kiss. "They're going to miss you, too."

He shot an angry side glance at Bishop. Bringing his gaze back to me, he pressed a cocky grin and leaned his forehead against mine. "I'd rather spend my last moments with you."

"I do hate long and tortured goodbyes," I whispered, fighting with all I had to hide my elation, my pure joy.

Backing away, he winked, gave me a final pat on the shoulder and turned to Bishop.

"You know what this means," Rector told Bishop.

Taking a step back, I watched the two young men. The lifelong comradery held by a thread. The tension was palpable.

"I wanted to hear it from you," Bishop said. Though still clearly angry with Rector, he was able to put his anger aside and tend to what needed to be done.

“You’re in charge while I’m gone,” Rector said. His tone was that of a boss giving orders to an underling, not a friend telling a friend what to do. “You’ve been second in command long enough to know how to run the fraternity.”

“And I’ve seen how you nearly ran the fraternity into the ground,” Bishop said with more bite to every word. “I assure you, I won’t let that happen under my watch.”

Rector grimaced as he clenched his fists a few times before finally shaking out his hands and relaxing his face again. “If you want to insist on seeing things that way, it’s your prerogative, but you know that...”

“I don’t want to hear it, Rector,” Bishop said. “What’s done is done. Go. Rest. Connect with your father. Go do whatever it is that you do outside of this campus.” He glared at the man who’d long been his friend. “Maybe you can even take this time to mature a bit.”

This time it was Rector’s jaw that tensed and clenched as he looked around. “Deacon didn’t come?”

“Can you blame him?”

Rector shrugged.

“Give him time.” Bishop angrily raked his fingers through his blond hair and looked away for a moment before bringing his gaze back to Rector. He let out a heavy and tired sigh. “He’ll come around. I guess if we give this whole thing enough time, we’ll all calm down and come around.”

A black Cadillac Escalade with dark tinted windows came up to the front of the frat house.

“Looks like your ride is here,” Bishop shot out with a touch of bitterness. “Sure is nice to have a rich daddy to take care of things when you screw up, isn’t it?”

Rector grabbed the smallest of his large suitcases. “Look who’s talking. Your dad could buy this place in the blink of an eye. Hell, he could buy every single mansion here on Old Millionaire Row. So don’t talk to me about a rich father taking care of things.”

Bishop stepped aside. “Yeah, but I’ve never given my father a reason to come pull me out of the trouble I’d gotten myself into.”

As the chauffeur got out and came around the vehicle, Rector gestured to the stack of luggage still sitting on the porch. The chauffeur dutifully brought each piece of oversized luggage to the back of the vehicle and loaded them up. He then opened the door for Rector.

“Just make sure you take good care of the Saints,” Rector called out to Bishop as he prepared to get into the car. “You’re president of the Saints now. Don’t let me down.”

“I won’t,” Bishop said.

The chauffeur held the back door to the Escalade open as Rector looked up at us, reluctant to leave.

“See you guys soon,” Rector finally said.

The chauffeur closed the door and calmly walked around to the driver’s side.

Standing side by side, Bishop and I watched the chauffeur get into the driver’s seat and drive off.

“I can’t believe it,” Bishop whispered as the black vehicle disappeared around the corner.

I turned to look at him, surprised by the pain in his eyes. “I thought you were mad at him,” I said.

“I am,” he said. “But I’m still unhappy about seeing him go.” Forcing the sensitive subject away, he looked at me and smiled. “Anyway, the important thing now is that you are officially a Saint.”

“I am?”

He nodded and smiled. There was something so boyish and yet so sexy in the way he simply looked at me.

“Oh, Brian,” I whispered as I leaned in to kiss him. “Do you know how happy that makes me?”

Pulling me into a tight embrace, he kissed me, his tender lips so soft and sensual. For a long moment, I lost myself in

the kiss and in the desire to have more. His mouth was hot and his hands on my skin even hotter.

Through the passionate kiss, I cracked my eyes open just enough to spot Deacon standing in the doorway to the frat house.

How long had he been standing there? Had he seen Rector leave? Did he care?

Our eyes met. The deep blue of his eyes bore through me, questioning... maybe even accusing.

He was beyond angry. He was pissed.

Chapter 1

Rhode “Rector”



I looked out the window of the Escalade, my eyes on Brook as a deep sense of loss took over me. In addition to the pain of losing her, I watched the fraternity that I’d helped build fade into the distance... and fall into the hands of my childhood friend.

Damn. How had things gone so wrong?

Shake it off, I told myself with a shudder.

I brought my attention to the road ahead. We left the university campus, left the city and soon we were on a long and winding road that led to the prestige of my father’s lakefront home. Lined with tall mature trees that offered a thick canopy over the road, the landscape was that of dreams. Beyond the trees were the rolling hills that led to majestic homes.

Immaculate grounds. That was the order of the day. Not a single home in the area allowed a blade of grass to grow too long. Not a weed intruded on the perfection of the lawns. Trees were routinely pruned and kept tidy. Rose bushes were healthy, their blooms treasured.

The winding road brought us to a narrow paved private road. Only a quarter of a mile further was there a gate.

Gustave, my father’s chauffeur, dutifully entered the four-digit code that slid back the gate.

“Dad said he was going to have a more modern device put in,” I said to Gustave. “He said you’d only have to pass close enough to a detector, and it would pick up on a transponder in the car.”

Chuckling, Gustave nodded as he drove past the gate. “Indeed, young Rhode. Your father has many times mentioned such a device.”

“Then what is he waiting for?” I said, annoyed by the inconvenience of having to stop at the gate, but not quite understanding why. “It’s not like he can’t afford it.”

Still chuckling, Gustave gazed up at me through the rearview mirror. “I do believe that your father has other priorities, young Rhode.”

“Yeah, right,” I muttered as we drove past the precision cut lawn dotted with thoughtfully placed trees and bushes.

The closer we got to the house, the edgier I felt. My father. The confrontation with my father.

I wasn’t ready.

My phone rang and I almost jumped out of my skin.

Calm down, will you, I silently berated myself.

“Yeah,” I said, taking the call from Deacon. “You couldn’t be bothered to come out to say goodbye, but you call me the minute I’m about to arrive at my father’s door?”

“The lake house?” Deacon said with a wry chuckle.

“Yeah,” I said with a grunt. “The lake house. What’s up?”

“Listen, Rhode,” Deacon said, his tone too serious and far too mature for his age. “We need to talk.”

“Right. Is that why you didn’t come out to say goodbye? Because you need to talk to me?”

“We’ve been played.”

“What the hell are you talking about?” I said, my irritation growing.

“Jesus, Rhode. You’re a smart guy. You’ve never let anyone pull one over on you. Why are you letting it happen now?”

“Again, Deacon. What the hell are you talking about?”

“Look at everything that’s been going on,” he said. “Something just doesn’t add up. Don’t you see it?”

I let out a long and tired huff. “Damn it, Deacon. Are you still clinging to your suspicions about Brook?”

He let out a quiet huff of his own. “You have to admit that she...”

“I’ll admit that I feel very strongly about her,” I cut in. “And you know that. You know exactly how I feel about her.”

“Well, I certainly know how your dick feels about her.”

“Are you going to deny that your dick feels the same?”

“Leave my dick out of it, Rhode. It has its reasons for behaving the way it does and wanting what it wants, but that doesn’t mean that I have to act on it. Come on. Admit it. There’s something about her.”

Gustave drove up to the main entrance of my father’s lakefront house and stopped. I gestured to him to wait as I finished my call.

“There *is* something about her,” I said. “Something very special. You, on the other hand... You’re paranoid. You’re jaded. You’re cynical. And it’s all turning you into a boring old man, Deacon. Chill, will you? Just chill.”

“She’s special, all right, but not the way you think. There’s something... I don’t know... something off. Something is definitely off about the way she’s been ever since she arrived. From the very first day... there’s something strange. It doesn’t fit.”

“Okay, Deacon. I’ll tell you what. Give me some evidence... some hard evidence that she’s not on the up and up, and then we’ll talk. But don’t give me this crap about having some vague feeling that she’s up to something.”

“I can’t believe how hardheaded you’re being, Rhode. This isn’t like you. You’re letting that girl’s beauty and booty blind you. Don’t you realize how this affects your father’s business, not to mention mine. And what about Bishop? He has his family business to think about as well. Rhode, this is so much bigger than you, me and Bishop. So much bigger.”

“I’m well aware of that, Deacon,” I said. “Look at me. I’m paying the price, aren’t I? Damn. They expelled me. I still can’t believe it. Me. Rhode Rector. I’m no longer president of the Saints. Do you know what that does to me?”

“I do know, Rhode, and that’s what makes your refusal to look into this all the more befuddling.”

“Deacon...”

“Think about it for just a minute, Rhode,” he cut in. “Damn it, just humor me a second. Think about the money. Follow the money... the money trail. Who do you think could benefit from all this shit?”

“Benefit?”

“Yeah. With you out of the way, who is going to benefit from your absence?”

“Bishop?” I said as I stepped out of the car, suddenly feeling trapped in the large vehicle.

“What do you think?”

“Well... so far, yeah, I guess he’ll benefit.”

“Exactly, Rhode. Think about it. How long have we suspected that we have a mole in the Saints’ house?”

“No,” I said bluntly as I paced the length of the car. “It can’t be. Bishop would never do that.”

“Really? Why wouldn’t he?”

I stopped pacing and looked at the paving stones beneath my feet. “Okay. I still have serious doubts, but... keep an eye on him.”

“I am. And I have... ever since Brook arrived. I mean, he’s really tight with her. They’re always cuddling together... a lot more than they should.”

Grinding my teeth and fighting a sneer, I looked up at the glorious weeping willow, its dangling tendrils dancing in the ever-present lakefront breeze. My gaze latched onto a blue jay that flew from branch to branch.

I looked at the colorful bird, trying to lose myself in the beauty of nature that my father’s house invited. I needed to find beauty and goodness in something because the words that Deacon had spoken disturbed me too much.

The thought of Brook with Bishop hurt.

“I’m telling you, Rhode,” Deacon went on. “They’re always all over each other.”

“No kidding,” I muttered, biting my bottom lip.

“And another thing... you know that the other houses have moved past the Saints... and why? Thanks to Bishop. Think about it. He lost that game for us. He’s the one who is responsible for us losing. And then at the party? Come on. He set us up.”

I nodded as it all sunk in. I leaned back against the car as it all became so clear. “Damn,” I whispered. “You’re right. Everything does point to Bishop.”

“I’m glad to finally see you come around, Rhode. You had me worried there.”

“Bishop,” I said, still reeling from the revelation. “Why didn’t I see it before?”

“Don’t be too hard on yourself,” Deacon said. “It took me a while to put it all together, too. But now... now that I’ve seen it... I can’t unsee it.”

“I know what you mean.”

“So, now,” Deacon said. “Now that you know, what are you going to do?”

“My being out of the House of Saints makes things complicated. I’m limited in what I can do from here. But I’ll tell you this, I will not let that traitor take over the Saints. Never.”

“Good.”

“Don’t worry, Deacon. I’ll be back on campus soon enough... and when I get back. Damn. There’s going to be hell to pay. Bishop is not going to know what hit him.”

Chapter 2

Brook



I t'd been a long afternoon. Rector's sudden departure had left everyone with too many questions; questions that we didn't really want to answer.

After roaming the frat house rather aimlessly for an hour, I wandered into the kitchen hoping to find something to eat.

"Oh," Deacon said as he came in right behind me. "I didn't know you were here."

"Are you avoiding me?" I said, caught off guard by his standoffish demeanor. I opened the box of doughnuts that was on the counter and pulled a honey glazed one out.

"No," he said with a shrug. "I guess I'm just not really in the mood to talk to anyone."

Bishop walked in. "Oh," he said, in a manner very similar to that of Deacon. "You guys are here."

"Actually," I said as I bit into my doughnut and turned to face them both. "I think it's time we stopped hiding and we faced the situation head on."

"Rector is gone," Bishop said. "There's nothing much that we can do about that now."

"People are talking," Deacon said. "Some of them saw him leave and they don't know why."

"It's none of their business," Bishop said.

"What do you think, Brook?" Deacon shot at me.

I looked at him. "I think that we need to make an official announcement before the rumor mill takes over. We'll tell them that Rector had to leave due to irregularities in the last football game and that Bishop is going to temporarily take over."

“Irregularities?” Deacon said. His arrogantly cocked brow told me that he didn’t approve of my take on the situation.

“I don’t think there’s really any reason to bring the party... the girls... and... you know... into the mix. All they need to know is that he is gone for a while and things will be very well taken care of by Bishop.” Beaming I turned to Bishop. “Right?”

A little taken aback by my sudden endorsement of him, he grinned and finally nodded. “Yes. Absolutely. I was a little nervous at first when Rector made the announcement, but... Yeah. I’m ready. I’m more than ready.”

“I’m glad to hear it,” I said, putting my hand to his shoulder. “Now. Who is going to go tell everyone to come and join us in the living room? I think we need to have everyone there to hear the news.”

“Not to mention our new pledges,” Bishop said, shooting me a congratulatory gaze.

Deacon turned on his heel and walked away. “Be ready in thirty minutes,” he called back. “In the living room.”

“Hey!” Bishop shouted.

Deacon stopped and turned to him. “What now?”

“Rector made me president, not you,” Bishop said.

After shooting a condemning glare to the ceiling, Deacon offered Bishop a sardonic grin as he bowed with feigned reverence. “And what say ye, oh eminent leader?”

Bishop turned a pale shade of crimson. “Let’s meet back in half an hour... in the living room,” he said sheepishly.

“What a fabulous idea,” Deacon shot back before storming out of the kitchen.

Bishop turned his attention to me. “Well, now that we’ve settled that, don’t forget that we also have your new status here to celebrate.”

“Oh,” I said with a grin. “Don’t worry. I haven’t forgotten.”

He looked me up and down. “Of course, I always think you look great, no matter what...”

I looked down at my jeans and well-worn grey sweatshirt.

“Maybe you’d like to freshen up before we meet with everyone.”

“Good idea,” I said. Getting to my tippy toes, I reached up to plant a nice wet kiss on his lips. “Meet you in the living room.”

I headed up to my room where I stormed through my closet looking for something appropriate. Did I want to be the serious student? Or did I want to go the sporty route?

Sexy. That’s always worked out well for you.

Right, I thought as I lay my hand on a bright, lime green latex halter top that looked positively delicious with my tight black leather pants.

I quickly threw off my jeans and sweatshirt then squeezed into my leather pants, and finally clasped on the halter top.

For a moment I hesitated between slipping my feet into black stilettos for the full-on sex machine, or go with sneakers for a more laid back feel.

The stilettos won.

Looking at my reflection I was satisfied with the fun, sexy yet sophisticated vibe that I was giving. As a final touch, I pulled the elastic band out of my hair, letting the long locks fall loosely down my back.

“No,” I said as I pulled my hair back up into a messy bun. “Too femme fatale.” I grinned at my reflection. Besides, I thought... *why hide my bare back under all that hair?*

I opened the door to head out but stepped back into my room for one last thing. I grabbed my black blazer off the back of my desk chair and shrugged it on.

As I headed downstairs, I heard the many tangled voices of the guys already in the living room.

“And there she is,” Deacon said with a forced smile as I arrived. He gestured for me to sit in the chair near where he stood in front of the fireplace.

Bishop, looking uncharacteristically nervous and on edge, stood beside him, clasping and unclasping his hands.

“What is this all about?” one of the guys called out.

“Yeah. What’s going on? Where the hell is Rector?”

“Calm down, Trenton. That is precisely why we’ve called you to this emergency meeting,” Deacon said.

“Yes,” Bishop quickly injected. “This emergency meeting is so that we can tell you the latest news on the House of Saints.”

“Well, get on with it already,” a big guy from the back shouted.

“Shut up, Brewster,” Deacon shot back.

Bishop looked out at the guys seated throughout the living room. “First order of the day... Rector has had to take a leave of absence and has left me in charge.”

“What?” Trenton shouted. “The fucker didn’t take a leave of absence.”

“Yeah,” Brewster said. “Our fabulous leader was expelled.”

“If you want to put it that way,” Bishop said. “Either way, the important thing to consider here is that he left me in charge.”

“You?” Trenton said. “Why you?”

“In case some of you might have forgotten,” Bishop said, “I’ve been second in command for quite a while now. It’s only fitting that I should take over in Rector’s absence.”

Crossing his arms over his chest, Trenton leaned back. “So long as you don’t go making any radical changes around here.”

“Don’t worry,” Bishop said. “I have no intention of doing anything of the sort.”

“What do you intend on doing?” a smaller blond boy from the front asked.

“Well, Greg. Thank you for asking.” Bishop looked out at everyone. “My first task as president of the House of Saints is to introduce you to our newest Senior Saint.” He gestured towards me and everyone in the room gasped.

I stood and went to Bishop’s side.

“Everyone,” he said. “I know that you’ve already met Brook and I also know that you all love and appreciate her. With that said, I’d like you all to join me in congratulating her on so quickly becoming a Senior Saint.”

Beaming with surprise, I brought my hands over my mouth and looked at him with wide eyes.

A faint murmuring of congratulations flickered throughout the room while many exchanged questioning glances.

“Well,” Trenton let out after a few moments. “She sure is easy to look at.”

A wave of nodding heads filled the room.

“All right,” Bishop said with a chuckle. “Yes. Yes. We can all say that Brook is very easy on the eyes, but I also want you to know that it had no bearing on our decision. Brook is a smart, hard-working student here and she fully deserves the title of Senior Saint.”

Everyone grumbled their acceptance of his statement.

“You would like to address the pledges?” Bishop asked me.

I nodded and faced the room of men. I smiled at them all. It wasn’t just a smile. I was positively beaming, thrilled and so proud. It was what I had set out to do, and things had worked out even better than I’d anticipated.

“I want you all to know just how much this means to me,” I said. “As a little girl, I always felt like I didn’t fit in. I was

never part of the in crowd... and now look at me. You've all made me feel so welcomed, so appreciated. And I have to tell you how I appreciate that."

They applauded gently.

"Not only have you embraced me as the first woman to be a part of your fraternity, but to now make a Senior Saint... Ah. You have no idea how touched I am... how honored."

More quiet applause.

"Well," I said, "thank you all so very much. I'm thrilled."

I stepped back, leaving the fireplace to Bishop.

"So," he said in closing. "With that settled, I will once again reassure you that I have no intention of making any major changes to the House of Saints, so... please... everyone... Let's enjoy ourselves, all while respecting what the House of Saints represents."

Greg was the first to come up to me. "Miss Brook," he said, shy but determined to speak to me. He held his hand out to me. "I wanted to be the first to congratulate you on making Senior Saint so fast."

I took his hand which he shook quite vigorously all while discreetly looking down into the cleavage of my halter top.

"And Sir Bishop," Greg went on as he turned to his new president. "What an honor to welcome you into your new role as our distinguished leader."

Bishop chuckled as he shook the young man's hand. "No need to be so formal, Greg. But thank you. I do appreciate your vote of confidence."

Trenton came up to us. "Yeah, congrats man. President... I sure do hope you can pull it off." He then turned to me. "You're way too pretty to be a Senior Saint... more like senior vamp." He winked at me and walked away.

One by one, the other pledges all came by to shake my hand and congratulate me.

“Well,” Bishop said as everyone went their separate ways. “I’m glad that’s done.”

“Me, too,” I said, shooting a questioning glare at Deacon.

“You certainly dressed for the occasion,” Deacon said, his harsh tone betrayed by his roving eyes that plunged into my halter top.

“I wanted to look nice, Deacon,” I said, feigning offense.

“You look great,” Bishop quickly interceded.

“She looks like...”

“Stop it, Deacon,” Bishop said as he walked off. “I don’t know what’s gotten into you two, but I’m tired of the bickering.”

Deacon quickly went after him as Bishop headed up the stairs. “Bickering? All I’m trying to do is keep this house in order.”

I followed behind them. “But, Deacon. Bishop is right. You’ve been on my back all day.”

Bishop reached his room. With his hand on the doorknob, he stopped to look at both of us. “Can I at least ask you to keep the peace when the other pledges are around. I hate the thought of you going at it in front of everyone.”

He opened the door and went inside, but Deacon and I quickly followed him.

“I wouldn’t be making such a fuss if we didn’t have this mess to fix.”

“You’re saying that as if it were my fault,” I said. “Rector is the one who caused the Saints to lose that football game.”

“What did you just say?” Deacon said, incredulous.

“You heard me,” I said. “By fighting with you, he caused the whole team to get messed up and lose.”

“Wrong,” Deacon said.

“Am I?” I set my fists on my hips and looked directly at him. “Maybe you need a little refresher, Deacon. Or maybe

you were just too close to the action to see what really happened. But I was there watching you guys and I saw it all. Rector went out of his way to start a fight with you right there on the field.”

“Look, I’ll admit that I was angry at Rector,” Deacon said, suddenly unsure where he stood. “But... damn... I certainly didn’t expect him to lash out and try to punch me right there in front of everyone.”

Bishop nodded. “It is a bit out of the ordinary. I mean, Rector... he’s got a cool head. He doesn’t typically lose his temper like that. And, besides, he knew how much that game meant... to him and to all of us.”

“Look, I get it,” I said, trying a more soothing and calming tone. “Rector was a bit strung out what with finding the last hidden Hunter... and seeing how your team was getting in trouble, Deacon.”

Pressing his lips into an angry line, he glared at Bishop. “Right. Funny how that all went wrong, isn’t it? Hey, Bishop?”

“Wait a minute,” Bishop said, taking a step back. “Are you saying that I had something to do with that fiasco?”

“Well?” Deacon shot back.

“Well... what?” Bishop said, growing red in the face. “I had nothing to do with it. Nothing. I can’t even believe that you would think that.”

“You’re guilty and you know it,” Deacon said. “Maybe you didn’t set out to make us look bad, but... damn... you didn’t even speak up for my guys. I mean... hell... they’re our guys and they’ve been suspended.”

“Deacon, they were suspended for blaming Brook.”

I looked up innocently at them from under my brow. “That’s right,” I said softly... innocently.

Deacon shook his head.

“You’re looking at the victim and trying to blame her for what happened,” Bishop said. “If anything, you should know

better than that.”

“I didn’t do anything to deserve what they did to me,” I said with a sad pout.

“Grow up,” Deacon shot at us. “Both of you. Grow up. They fought to protect Brook. Not the other way around. Stop gaslighting what happened.”

“You’re being harsher than necessary, Deacon.”

“Am I?” he said. “With Rector gone, I’m going to have to take on the harsh role of law enforcement if we’re to keep this house in order. This isn’t the time to play the victim. This isn’t the time to whine and cry about how unfair things can be.”

“But...” I said.

“No,” he quickly cut in. “We have to be strong. We have to be stronger than ever.”

Bishop nodded. “I guess you’re right.”

“You’re damned right, I’m right.” Deacon looked pointedly at me. “And you. You’re a Senior Saint now. This isn’t kindergarten. This isn’t pre-school. This is the real deal. Are you ready for it?”

I had no choice but to nod.

“Because, woman or not, you have to be able to hold your own in this house.”

Nodding again, I chewed on the inside of my cheek as his words sunk in. Then, with fierce pride and confidence, I straightened up and looked pointedly back at him. “I won’t let you down,” I said. “I can hold my own. You bet I can... and then some.”

“Good,” he said. “I’m glad we got that out of the way.”

He turned to head for the door.

“Where are you going?” Bishop said. “We have so much more that we have to take care of.”

“We?” Deacon said as he looked back at Bishop with a cocked brow. “You’re president now, Bishop. You’re the one who is in charge of taking care of it all.”

“But you’re second in command,” Bishop argued.

Deacon shrugged as he offered his friend a wry grin. “I didn’t hear Rector say anything about making me second in command.”

“It goes without saying,” Bishop said.

Chuckling with dark amusement, Deacon opened the door. “I don’t think so.”

“Then as president, I will ask you again. Where are you going?”

“If you must know, I have a test that I need to prepare for. After all, we are here to get an education, remember?”

“Yeah,” Bishop muttered. “Fine. Go.”

Deacon walked out and closed the door with firm finality.

I looked at Bishop who seemed completely lost. “What do we do now?” I said as I gently set my hand on his forearm.

Chapter 3

Brook



“Don’t worry about Deacon,” Bishop said, putting his hand on my shoulder to give me a small squeeze. “We go way back. Same with Rector. Deacon always comes around, but he needs to be the practical one. The one who reminds us of our duties, our obligations, and who we are. It’s the pastor son in him, I guess. Let me handle him. And you... just keep being yourself.” Bishop smiled. “You know, he really doesn’t hate you as much as he let on. In fact, he’s pretty hot for you. You know that, don’t you? Rector, me, and Deacon... when you said you came to pledge at our fraternity to look for a lover, well...that got us three competing amongst each other to be that special lover, despite trying to be professional leaders of the Saints. So, at least know that Deacon isn’t different from Rector and me. He just shows it in a different way.”

“Thanks,” I said as I squeezed Bishop’s arm. “I appreciate you standing up for me and explaining how Deacon can be hot and cold.”

He shrugged and flashed me a crooked smile. “I think that Deacon is being unfair this time, but let’s try to get him to loosen up. Once he’s over the stress of these past few weeks, he’ll be the Deacon I know and love.”

I turned away from him and went to the window.

It was a beautiful day out; sunny, a light breeze and plenty of bird activity. Under different circumstances, it would have been the perfect day for a stroll, a nice walk around the campus, a picnic on the beach.

But as it stood, I had other things to do.

“What’s going on with Deacon?” I whispered, bringing the pain of betrayal to my words. Despite some hot and heavy times Deacon and I shared, he would turn again and distrust

me. Why? “The way he looks at me... like I have no business being here.” I turned to face Bishop. “What did I do to make him so suspicious of me?”

“Like I said, don’t worry about Deacon,” Bishop said. He came to me, grasped my shoulders and brought me close to him. “He’s spent too much time surrounded by dudes. The way I see it, he’s not used to having a woman in the house.”

“Yeah,” I said. “But that still doesn’t explain just how rude and cold he is. I mean, the other guys... the pledges, they’re not used to having a woman in the house either, but they’re all pleasant and polite.”

Bishop shrugged. “Yeah, but Deacon isn’t used to being around someone who is so hot and beautiful. I guess you distract him more than he can handle.”

“That might be so,” I said with an uncomfortable shrug. “But he’s making it impossible to live here.” I looked up at him with my big doe eyes. “I think it was wrong for me to accept being Senior Saint.” I looked down, sniffing back my chagrin. “I think I should step down... maybe even leave the fraternity altogether.”

“Leave?” Bishop said. He cupped my chin and brought my gaze back to meet his. “No. Never. That wouldn’t solve anything. Deacon has a problem and it’s up to him to deal with it.”

“You really think I should stay?”

“I think you must stay. Brook, you’ve earned your place here, and you’ve heard the title of Senior Saint.” He grasped both my hands in his and squeezed. “You worked harder than every other pledge. You outshined them all. They might have a hard time swallowing that defeat... you being a woman and all... but that’s their problem, not yours.”

I pulled my hands from his hold and turned my back to him. “It’s not fair that I be treated this way just for being a woman.”

I emphasized my words by shrugging off my blazer, exposing my bare back to Bishop. He audibly gasped, inhaled

sharply and swallowed loudly.

“I can understand how Deacon could be distracted by you,” Bishop whispered. “How can he not? I mean, I’m having a hard time concentrating. You have a way of...”

His words faded away as his lips settled onto the heated skin of my shoulder.

“A way of... what?” I said in a heated and throaty tone.

“You’re just so hot, Brook,” he said, the aching plain in his voice.

I glanced over my shoulder at him. “Do you really think I’m hot?”

“You are damn hot,” he whispered as he lay a series of kisses across my shoulder. “How could you doubt it. Look at you.”

“Deacon seems to think that I’m dressed inappropriately.”

“What does Deacon know about fashion?” he said. “Besides, that doesn’t really change anything. You could wear a potato sack and you would still be hot.”

Giggling, I turned to face him. “You’re sweet.”

“And you are so freakin’ hot that I am dying over here. Look at me,” he said as he glanced down at his crotch. “Look at the effect you have on me. How am I supposed to remain professional when you look at me like that.”

Bringing my hand between us, I gently brushed the back of my hand against his crotch.

He pulled a tight breath in between his teeth. “Oh, damn.”

“I’m sorry,” I said innocently. “I didn’t mean to...” Once again, I brushed the back of my hand against his crotch. “Oops. There I go again.”

“And again and again,” Bishop groaned as he turned my palm to his crotch and pressed my hand tighter to him.

Grinning, I forcefully stroked his erection, feeling his dick hardening more and more through his pants.

“Ooh,” Bishop let out.

“You like that?” I said, locking into his gaze as I continued to stroke him. I licked my lips and pulled down the zipper of his pants. “And how about this?” I reached in and clamped my fingers around his impressive dick.

“If you don’t stop right now, I’m going to lose control,” he grunted all while leaning heavily into me.

“Don’t underestimate yourself, Bishop,” I whispered, leaning in close to his ear. “You’re in complete control. After all, you’re the president here. You’re in control of everything; this house, the pledges... and most of all, me.”

He pulled back to look at me though heavily hooded eyes, a silly grin on his lips. “That’s not what worries me.”

“What worries you, dear Bishop?”

“Me. Controlling me.”

I leaned in to nibble on his bottom lip. “Then why fight it?” I whispered.

“I want you,” he groaned.

Still stroking his dick, I unbuttoned his pants and let them fall to his ankles. “You’re in control,” I whispered. “You’re in control.”

Stumbling somewhat, he kicked his shoes off then stepped out of his pants. “You’re heavenly,” he said as he raked his fingers through my hair, pulling me in for a deep and heated kiss.

As one hand loosened my bun, the other hand settled between my shoulder blades, pressing me to him. “You are just so heavenly,” he said again.

Sighing my pleasure, I unbuttoned the top of my halter and let it fall before I arched my back, offering my breasts up to him. He quickly took the invitation, plunging his face between my breasts, turning to lick one eager nipple then turning to lick the other one.

I was on fire. If he didn't move quickly, I would soon lose control.

As if reading my thoughts, he picked me up, wrapping my legs around his waist. With small but fast steps, he brought me to his bed and lay me down.

"I am so fucking hungry for you," he grunted as he unfastened my leather pants then slowly peeled them off. "Oh fuck, Brook," he grunted. "No panties? You are such a wild woman." When he reached my ankles, he removed my stilettos, finished peeling off my pants then put my stilettos back on. "I do love these torture devices that you call shoes."

I chuckled deep in my throat as he came back up to me, kissing my heated skin all the way... up my thighs, skimming lightly over my clitoris and continuing up to my breasts. He made his way to my lips but quickly returned down to the molten heat between my legs.

His lips were magical as they settled over my clitoris and his tongue... The moment he snaked his tongue out to slowly and deliciously pass it over my heated mound, I was burning hot.

"Oh, yes!" I shouted into the room, my voice coming back to me as it echoed. "Oh, God, yes!"

Though fully enveloped in the workings of his mouth, I remained vaguely aware of the possibility that my voice carried farther than expected.

Could Deacon in the room next door hear me? Could the other pledges hear me?

Did I care?

Digging my nails into Bishop's scalp, I pulled him into my crotch wanting more and more of the heat his mouth brought me.

Listen to this, Deacon, I thought as I moaned my pleasure louder and louder. *Listen to what you're missing out on. Listen to what you're hardheaded stubbornness is depriving you of.*

My orgasm was right there, ready to break, ready to explode. I was on the edge. Just one more lick and I was there. Just one more ounce of pressure.

“Oh!” I let out with complete abandon. “Oh! Yes! Yes!”

The door to Bishop’s bedroom flew open and Deacon stood there.

I ignored him and let the waves of my orgasm wash over me all while shifting over slightly on the bed; just enough to give him a better view of my heated pussy.

Through my lashes, I saw him, his eyes angry, his brow creased with frustration, but his cock clearly contradicting his anger.

He licked his lips, no doubt trying to lick away the hunger that burned in his loins.

You want it, don't you?

I smiled through my ebbing orgasm, already heated up and ready for more should Deacon decide to join us.

Look at me, Deacon. Look at how hot and wet and waiting I am.

I opened my eyes to look at him, while I licked my fingers deliciously, moved them down to rub and pinch my nipples while Bishop continued to lick and eat my swollen clit.

How do you like that? Still want to fight it?

He groaned, a sound that didn’t stop Bishop at all, but that fully engulfed me. I willed him to join us, willed him to get into the game.

“Oh, damn,” Bishop grunted as he left my creaming pussy and rode up to kiss my breasts and continue up to my lips. “Damn. I can’t hold it any longer. I have to fuck you. I have to. I have to.”

“Yes,” I whispered, my hooded eyes still focused on Deacon. “I want you to fuck me. Take me.”

He’d closed the door and stood a few feet from the bed. He’s unfastened his pants and now held his stiff shaft in his

hand.

You've tasted me before, Deacon. Is that what you're thinking of now as you stroke yourself? That time. My pussy. Your mouth. Your tongue.

Tutor, my eye. You didn't just want to tutor me. That was just an excuse to be alone with me. Admit it. You wanted me. And you still want me.

Come eat me, Deacon. Come.

As Bishop wiggled out of his boxer briefs, I raised my head just enough to look straight at Deacon. My gaze dared him; dared him to jump in.

Bishop nestled between my legs, ready to plunge his dick deep inside me. He had just barely dipped the tip of his dick into my creamy pussy when Deacon pushed him aside.

Finally, I thought with relief. Come and get me.

“Hey!” Bishop lamented. “What the hell are you doing in my room?”

“Stopping you from being an idiot,” Deacon shouted.

Somewhere in the fog of arousal, he'd put his aching cock away.

Holding it in is only going to harm you, I wanted to say. He was in desperate need of letting it all out.

“You have no business in here,” Bishop argued.

“You should have thought of that before you let Lolita here cry out her orgasm to the entire house. Damn, Bishop. Where's your head? Seriously?”

“You're just mad about the bet,” Bishop said.

“Fuck the bet,” Deacon shot back. “I don't care about that. I don't care whether she's a virgin or not.”

“That's right,” Bishop said. “And that means that she's free to have sex with whomever she chooses. So what's the problem?”

“That’s right,” I said as I got to my knees and looked at both of them. “I joined the Saints fraternity so that I could look for a lover... a lover who would completely fill my needs.”

Deacon cast his hungry eyes to the floor while Bishop held my gaze, eager to do whatever I needed him to do.

With utmost innocence, I bit my index finger while looked at them. “Maybe,” I said as I let my hand fall to my breast. “Just maybe...”

I waited for Deacon to look up at me. After a moment of silence, his curiosity took over and he raised his eyes to me.

“I can be very generous at times,” I said as my hand glided over my belly and down between my legs. “Taking a lover was my initial intent when I first arrived here at the House of Saints, but I have no objections to taking on two beautifully expert lovers.”

Deacon licked his lips then pressed an angry grimace.

“After all,” I went on as I brought my cream covered finger to my mouth. “I can’t very well do all of this by myself now, can I.”

“Fuck,” Bishop muttered as he took a step towards the bed.

“Don’t,” Deacon spat, grabbing Bishop’s arm and pulling him back. “Don’t touch her.”

“Are you nuts?” Bishop said. “Look at her. For crying out loud, Deacon, look at her. She’s begging to be taken care of. What does it say about us if we just leave her on her own.”

“Don’t be a prick,” Deacon said.

“Guys. Guys!” I said. I got off the bed. Holding the panels of my halter top up and out, I came up to them. My breasts were within reach. All they had to do was reach out and touch me.

“What are you up to, Brook?” Deacon said. While he played it cool and aloof, the hard-on in his pants betrayed him. He was so hard, so big, so in need of touching me.

“Look,” I said with finality. “I’m tired of waiting for a lover. I arrived here hungry and eager. I was certain that this would be the perfect place to find just what I needed. I’m tired of being a virgin, guys. I’m really tired.”

Bishop took a step forward, but once again, Deacon stopped him by slapping the back of his hand against Bishop’s belly.

“To tell you the truth,” I went on. “As eager as I am to lose my virginity, I do want it to be special. You know. I don’t just want a quick fuck and then I never see the guy again. I want to feel... you know... like I matter. But all of this brings me back to you two. If anyone can make me feel special, I think it’s you, Bishop.”

He beamed and pulled his shoulders back with pride. “You are special, Brook. It wouldn’t take much to treat you as such. You’ll always be special in my eyes.”

I brought my hand to his smooth cheek. “I don’t doubt it, Bishop. I think that you’re the type of man who really knows how to treat a girl. You really know what she needs.”

His smile broadened. “With a girl like you, it’s not hard, Brook. There’s something about you that brings out the best... in any man.”

Deacon grunted.

“You, too, Deacon,” I said. “Despite your lack of interest, I believe that you could make this event very special for me.”

Grinding his teeth, he looked at me, clearly confused by his emotions.

I stepped closer to him. “You can make me feel special, can’t you, Deacon.”

He swallowed hard and looked around the room before bringing his troubled eyes back to me. “You’re playing a very dangerous game, Brook.”

Stepping closer to him, I showed him just how dangerous I could be by pressing my bare breasts into his chest.

“And I know you’d like to play. I know you can make me feel special, Deacon. You can make me feel very special, Deacon, especially when you’re so hugely gifted.”

Chapter 4

Deacon



She was working me up. I hated to admit it, but she was getting to me. I looked at her, her big and beautiful eyes beckoning me while her full, luscious lips begged to be kissed.

“Come on, Deacon,” Brook said as she took my hand in hers and pressed it to her breast.

A thrilled breath hissed through my lips causing her to smile with satisfaction.

It was hard to believe that she was the girl that I so desperately wanted when I first saw her. She was everything I’d ever dreamed of; smart, beautiful and hard-working. Finding out that she was also a virgin only added to her appeal.

I chuckled as I looked down at her bare breasts, longing to squeeze the firm and inviting orbs. Yeah. She was the kind of girl that I could fuck all night long and still feel comfortable introducing her to my family.

They would love her. I have no doubt about that. Even dear old Dad would welcome her into the family without batting an eye. As pastor and successful businessman, he had a keen sense of people and wasn’t quick to trust them.

But Brook would have him eating out of her hand in no time. A brilliant smile. An innocent gaze from her big, beautiful eyes. It wouldn’t take much.

The minute I had kicked open Bishop’s bedroom door, my dick was as hard as a nail. Hell, I was hard even before that. Just hearing her moans and groans through the wall was enough to get me hard.

Before anyone else came down the hall, I had hurried to enter Bishop’s room and close the door quietly behind me.

The sight of her... oh, damn. The sight of her was more than any sane man could take. I could hardly take my eyes off her long, luscious legs, parted and welcoming Bishop's eager mouth to her precious mound.

"Stop," I muttered helplessly as I watched them.

But they heard nothing as Bishop brought Brook to her orgasm.

The more she cried out her pleasure, the harder my cock became. Soon, I could barely stand the pain of wanting her.

My breathing followed hers as her orgasm swept over her and it was all I could do to keep any semblance of control.

My hand ran over my dick with a mind of its own, ignoring my plea to remain calm.

Brook's glorious cry filled my ears, and the urge to go to her became overwhelming.

Bishop backed away from her pussy and prepared to go in... steal her virginity.

Do something, a little voice at the back of my head called out. *Do something before it's too late.*

"Stop," I croaked out feebly, unable to find my voice.

Bishop's cock was right there, gently nudging its way into the heated moisture of Brook's feminine lips.

"Stop," I said more forcefully.

But my voice couldn't reach them. They were too deep in the fog of their arousal to notice anything outside of each other's touch.

Tapping into a reserve of strength I didn't even know I had, I walked up to the bed and pushed Bishop aside.

"What the hell are you doing in my room?" Bishop said.

It was a frustrating conversation to have. Bishop clearly wanted her, and for all her beauty and the innocence in her eyes, Brook wanted him... and me.

Who was I to refuse her?

Why should I?

She was exquisite in so many ways... and standing there, with only the fragmented fabric of her halter top dancing around her torso... she was positively enticing.

“What’s it going to be, Deacon?” Brook said, still pressing my hand to her breast. “Are you going to make me feel special, or will you leave that task to a more worthy man?”

“You want to feel special?” I said as I kicked off my shoes.

She grinned, pleased with her victory. “I do, Deacon. I want to feel special under your touch. I want to feel special as you kiss me. I want to remember this day for the rest of my life... the day you... and Bishop... took what is so special to me.”

Taking my hand away from her breast, she held it firmly while taking a hold of Bishop’s hand in the other.

“Come, boys,” she whispered. “Come and share in this very special occasion.”

I unfastened my pants and kicked my way out of them. My dick, so hungry for her, stood at attention, ready for the inevitable.

Tugging on our hands, she led Bishop and I to the bed, taking charge of the event.

No, I thought. *If this is to be special and memorable, I will take charge.*

With my free hand, I reached around her back and removed what remained of her halter top. Fully nude with not a stitch of clothing to mar her beauty, she laid back on bed and positioned herself in the center.

“Be gentle,” she whispered.

I kissed my way up her leg, delighting in the taste of her skin. As I reached her pussy, Bishop took care to tend to her breasts, perking up one nipple then the other and back to the first.

“Is this special enough for you?” I whispered as she reached her third climax.

As I moved up to dive into her fabulous tits, Bishop took my spot between her legs.

I had never thought I’d find myself in such a situation, but now that I was there, I wanted to make the most of it.

“Boys,” Brook called out after another orgasm. “I’m all climaxed out. Lay back. It’s my turn to see how I can pleasure you two.”

It took all of one and a half seconds for Bishop and I to throw ourselves onto our back, eager to see what she had to offer.

Chapter 5

Brook



It was almost surreal. Being in bed with both Bishop and Deacon was like a dream, a dream I'd had long, long ago.

All that time in high school... drooling over them, thinking about them, and wanting them. And now... their lips on my pussy, on my nipples. It was even better than any dream I could have had.

They were so eager to pleasure me... and treat me like a queen.

"It's my turn to see how I can pleasure you two," I said, eager to put a few of my own moves to the test.

Despite being a virgin, I knew a lot about the sex moves that pleased men. After all, I had no intention of entering the sexual dance fully naïve.

As they settled back on the bed, I got up onto my knees and faced them. "Well, gentlemen," I said with a playful grin. "Let's see if I can start your engines."

I reached out to either side of me and grabbed their dicks. Simultaneously, Deacon and Bishop let out a raunchy grunt.

"You like that?"

More grunts of appreciation.

It was all so flirty, and fun and playful. And as the hours passed, pleasing them and them pleasing me, I lost track of time.

The room grew dark as the sun went down and Deacon finally took matters into his hands.

"I think it's finally time that we do this properly," he said.

With my pussy completely hot and wet, he dipped the tip of his cock between my lips, slowly and carefully nudging his way in.

I expected pain, lots of pain.

“Are you okay?” Deacon said as he maintained gentle pressure, pushing his cock in ever so gently.

I nodded. I was aroused enough to welcome him in, and I was curious about what it would feel like.

He nudged in further and I suddenly tensed up as a slight burning sensation registered in my brain.

“You okay?” Deacon said, holding steady with his cock partially embedded in my novice pussy.

Again, I nodded. “Keep going.”

He pushed his cock completely in and I let out a quiet wince of pain. But then suddenly, the pain ebbed away and a whole new sort of joyous sensation took over.

Surprised, I looked into Deacon’s eyes. Understanding my silent message, he smiled as he pulled his cock part of the way out and slowly rode back in.

“Oh, wow,” I muttered, gripping his ass and digging in my nails. “Oh, wow.”

He pumped harder, faster and harder still. He pounded into me, each motion bringing me higher and higher.

“Oh, yes!” he called out as he gave me three final thrusts before pulling out while pushing Bishop over to me like a tag team.

Bishop took over, plunging into me like a madman. While the pain wasn’t as acute as with Deacon, I was slightly sore by the time he finished with me.

“Do you think you can stand to take me again?” Deacon said after I’d had a full ten minutes to cool off after Bishop.

“I thought you’d never ask.”

After going for a few more rounds with each of them, I nestled in the crux of Bishop’s arm with Deacon’s dick deep, deep inside me.

Blissfully happy, I fell asleep. As much as I thought Deacon disliked me, he was a complete gentleman when it came to sex. He was gentle when I wanted him to be, easing my virgin pussy to Bishop's more passionate thrusts, but fast and hard when I needed it.

Bishop was as passionate and as giving as I imagined him to be.

Now, if only Rector was part of my harem, it would be perfect.

Chapter 6

Rector



S eated in an expensive leather chair in a plush office across the hall from my father's I looked at the open agenda on my desk.

Three days. It had been three days since I'd been kicked out of SAU.

"As you can see, things are not as rosy as they seem."

I look up at Daniel Horvath, my father's trusted accountant.

"How can we be drilling so much oil, selling so much oil and still have so little profits?" I said. I looked at the spreadsheet he handed me. "What am I not seeing?"

"It's not just your father's company, Rector," he said. "Most if not all oil companies are struggling."

"But gas prices have never been so high."

"That might be true," Mr. Horvath said. "But look at this column here." He pointed to the third column. "Taxes. Much of the revenue from each gallon sold goes to taxes."

"Oh, really? That much?"

Mr. Horvath nodded. "And then we have a whole new set of policies and laws that are making drilling more and more difficult. It's gotten to the point where it's prohibitively expensive. Some of the smaller drilling outfits are looking at closing up completely."

"What about us? Are we looking at the possibility of closing?"

He shook his head. "Bigger companies are doing a little better, but all of this crap is still digging into profits more and more."

I set the spreadsheet down and sat back in the cushy chair. “Give it to me straight, Mr. Horvath. Am I really looking at the possibility of inheriting a worthless company?”

“I certainly don’t enjoy making such pessimist predictions, but the company is in dire straits.”

I immediately thought back to a conversation I’d had with my father. There I was criticizing him for not putting enough money into this or that. ‘You can afford it,’ I’d told him.

All the while, I had to assume that the numbers laid out before me were of great concern to him. Indeed, it would explain the increased stress I’d noticed in him.

“Thank you for showing me this,” I said to Mr. Horvath.

“My pleasure,” he said as he gathered up his documents and left my office.

Biting the tip of my Mont Blanc pen, I twirled the leather chair around to face the large pane window. The day was heavy with dark clouds.

Rain would be good, I thought. We needed rain. The dry air was at times stifling.

“Are you there, Rector?”

With a start, I turned to see my father standing in the doorway.

“Oh, Dad. Hi.”

“Well, you were certainly off far away,” he said with a chuckle. “I called your name three times.”

I waved vaguely at the window. “Just contemplating the weather.”

He chuckled again. “You had your meeting with Daniel, didn’t you?”

“Yeah,” I said with a curious tilt of my head.

“Looking at the numbers would have anyone contemplating the weather,” he went on with a wry grin.

“Anything to take away the sting of the unappealing bottom line.”

“I think there are a few things that we might be able to do to cut down on costs,” I said. “I mean, we can’t really do much about taxes and changing laws, but... well, maybe.”

“If you have a plan that can save us money, I’m all ears.”

“Let me work out the details in my head, see if it’s all feasible or not and then I’ll get back to you.”

Crossing his arms over his chest, he leaned against the doorjamb and looked at me in a way he never had before.

“What?” I said, unsure of myself suddenly.

He shrugged.

“What are you looking at me like that for?”

“I’m just realizing how much you’ve grown up. How much you’ve matured. I know that sending you off to college was a good thing, but I honestly think that you’re going to learn more here than you ever would on some college campus. I’m glad that you were forced to take time away from SAU.”

“There’s nothing like life experience,” I said with a vague shrug.

“I’m proud of you, son.”

I was stunned by his words.

“Don’t look so surprised,” he said with a chuckle. “I’ve been dreaming of this day for a long, long time.”

“Really?”

“Yeah. Really. You’re still young and a little hot-headed sometimes, but I know you have a good head on your shoulders. You’re smart. You examine things. You don’t just take someone else’s word for it. You find out for yourself.”

I nodded, all while wondering where this wave of compliments would lead.

“I need a man like you in my operation, Rector.”

I stood to face him. “A man like me?”

He nodded. “I have plenty of yes-men around here. Men who are intimidated by me and who don’t dare speak the truth.”

“Well,” I said, hesitating as I debated whether to lay it all out for him or not. Smiling, I decided to let him have it. “I have seen you get pretty upset when bad news is delivered.”

He smiled. “Upset, yes. But have you ever seen me get violent? Fire an employee? No. I’m upset by the message, not at the messenger.”

I nodded in agreement. “I see what you mean. Thank you for having such confidence in me.”

He came into my office and sat across from me. “The more I think about it, the more I think you need to stop running that fraternity and find better things to do with your time.”

“But the guys need me,” I argued.

“And you need to be here,” he shot back. “It’s time Rector. You need to step up, be the man that I need you to be. It’s time to put aside the games that you play and be the mature adult that you really are.”

“Are you saying that I should drop out?”

“No,” he said, though he seemed to contemplate the possibility. “Get your degree. But maybe you can look at splitting your time between the campus and here. Like I said, leave the frat business to your friends.”

I clasped my hands together and set them atop the desk, staring at them as his words sunk in. “Things are that bad, huh?”

He nodded. “I don’t want to lay all my problems on you, Rector, but... yes. I need you here.”

We sat in silence for a moment. This was big. This was important. If the company failed, we would lose everything.

“Okay,” I finally said.

He looked up at me. “What does that mean?”

“I’ll put aside my studies for a while. There may be a few courses that I can take at a distance... you know... study at home and get to class once a week or something like that. I’ll check it out and see what I can do.”

He offered me a hesitant smile as he stood and headed for the door. “I’ve had to let go of many people, Rector. And it kills me. It kills me to have to tell an employee who’s been with me for years that I have to let them go. They have mortgages and families and responsibilities and...” He turned to me.

I’d never seen him so pained.

“I come off as the cruel millionaire who doesn’t care, but I do care. I have no choice.”

“How many people have you let go?”

He shook his head. “I don’t know. I think we’re closing in on a thousand people laid off. Most of them are out in the field, but there are a few high-salary employees in the office that I’ve had to let go as well.”

“Like Mr. Poe,” I said.

“Like Mr. Poe. But that’s a whole other story. As head of finance, he should have seen this coming. He should have warned me. He let the numbers get out of control and never said a word. Never advised me to change anything.” He looked up at me. “That’s why I need you.”

I stood and went around my desk to face him, man to man. “I’m here for you, Dad and I’ll do everything I can to get this company back on track.”

He gripped my shoulder and gave me a loving shake. “I knew I could count on you.”

As he turned and walked away, I thought of Bishop and Deacon. Were their families going through the same hardships? Were they about to lose their fortunes as well?

My phone dinged and I turned to see Deacon’s face on the screen indicating he’d sent me a text.

“Reading my mind, Deac?” I said as I picked up the phone and opened the text.

“What the fuck?” I let out.

I was slapped with a photo of Deacon fucking Brook from behind while Bishop lay under her, eating her from below.

“What the fucking fuck?”

The blood rushed to my face as I was suddenly sweating from the stifling heat. I closed the door to my office and leaned back against it.

“What the hells is this supposed to mean, Deacon?” I muttered into my office.

Brook was a virgin.

The bet. That damned bet to see who would fuck her first.

Well, that was clearly over now.

My gut twisted in a knot as jealousy took over. They got to her first. They both fucked her.

At the same time!

Shit!

I looked at the phone again feeling a deep sense of betrayal.

“Damn, Deacon. Why rub it in by sending me these photos?”

No. It wasn't like Deacon to do such a thing. What could have possibly gotten into him.

I flipped to the last photo and noticed the message beneath it.

Miss you, it read.

“Miss me? What the bloody fuck is this?”

Now I was certain that something was up. I had to go back to SAU to find out what was going on.

Chapter 7

Brook

Wearing a silver white gown with a high neckline but a completely bare back, I sauntered down to the living room where I knew Deacon and Bishop were discussing important fraternity matters.

It seemed to be their major occupation these days. They were always in private conversations, whispering and shutting up the moment someone approached them.

I knew they were concerned about the House of Saints... and smiled.

As I took the last step down the stairs and turned to the living room, I could see them; Deacon in the armchair and Bishop in the nearby sofa. Deep in conversation, their heads nearly bumping together, they didn't hear the clip clip of my silver sandals as I came up to them.

"Ahem," I let out, clearing my throat for attention.

They simultaneously looked up, their eyes registering annoyance at being disturbed, quickly replaced with joy and then hunger as they took in the sight of me.

"Brook," Bishop gushed, his cheeks already turning a flaming shade of red. "And where are you going all dressed up like that?"

"You like?" I said, turning to show them the daring back of the dress.

"Stunning," Bishop said. "Positively stunning."

Deacon looked at me with appreciation but said nothing.

"So," Bishop said. "What's the occasion?"

"The Winter Ball. Word on campus is that it's just over a week away, so I started going through my closet to see if I have anything appropriate." I twirled around for them. "So, what do you think?"

"Like I said, stunning." Bishop shot a side glance to Deacon.

"It's perfect for the ball," Deacon said, his tone flat. "Classy and just slutty enough."

“Good,” I said, satisfied. I sat down on the ottoman in front of them. “And what are you two up to? You look so serious.”

Bishop looked down to the floor while Deacon sank back into his chair with a heavy sigh.

“What is it?” I said, sensing that something serious was underfoot. “What’s going on?”

Neither seemed eager to answer me.

“Bishop? Tell me what’s going on.”

“It’s about the ball,” he said.

“What about it?”

“Rumor has it that there might not be one,” Deacon finally said.

“That’s not true,” I argued. “I’ve heard everyone talking about it.”

“And did you hear that Rector’s family has pulled out?” Deacon said. “They are one of the biggest patrons, if not *the* biggest of SAU. This Winter Ball is a really big deal in raising funds and donations to the school.”

“SAU was hoping to secure some huge funds,” Bishop added.

“Funds that they lost.” Deacon stood and walked a few paces away. “This sucks. This fucking sucks.” He slapped the back of the love seat and stormed off.

“Sorry about that,” Bishop said.

“Don’t apologize for him,” I said. “I understand that he’s upset.”

“It really does suck. This is such a big deal.”

“So I’ve heard. Fancy dinner... black tie... fund raising.”

Biting his bottom lip, Bishop looked at me.

“What’s going on in that devious little head of yours, dear Bishop.”

He grinned. "I think that I might just have an idea... something to raise morale for our fraternity."

"Oh?"

"And if we play our cards right, this might just get us into the dean's good graces."

"What will get us into the dean's good graces?" Deacon said as he came back to the living room with a cup of coffee in his hand.

Bishop looked up at him. "I think that we should offer to volunteer... volunteer the entire fraternity to organize and completely take charge of this year's Winter Alumni Ball."

Deacon sat down with an indignant huff. "Are you nuts? The dean will never go for that. We're on probation, remember?"

"Do you have a better idea?" Bishop shot at him with a cocked brow.

Deacon shrugged.

"We have nothing to lose," I said. "It's worth a try."

We all looked at one another.

Finally, Deacon nodded. "Fine. Let's go."

After changing into jeans and a pretty pink blouse, I joined the guys out on the front porch, and we headed to the administrative building.

"Let me do the talking," Deacon said as we entered the building.

"It's my idea," Bishop argued. "I should do the talking."

I stepped out in front and turned to face them. "How about I talk. I actually believe the dean will be more receptive to this idea coming from a woman."

Deacon and Bishop looked at one another, shrugged, then back at me.

"Okay," they both said.

We reached the dean's office. I knocked and opened the door before he could respond. Startled, he looked up from his desk.

"I did not invite you in," he said sternly.

"Dean Hofstetter," I said in my softest, most innocent tone. "I'm sorry for barging in on you like this, but I really must talk to you."

He smiled at me then quickly frowned at Deacon and Bishop.

"What about them? What do they want?"

"Please, sir," Bishop said. "If you'll just give us a moment to speak to you."

The dean looked at his watch, set the timer and looked up at us. "You have ninety seconds."

"We know that with Rhode Union being expelled and his family's significant donation to SAU being pulled, the Saints Fraternity House feel responsible for this deficit to SAU. We heard the Winter Ball might be cancelled. If so, we feel this will further pull valuable donations away from SAU," I said. "Because Rhode Union was our President and most of the donations to SAU came from the House of Saints, we would like to work to help bring in the funds for SAU, through hosting the Winter Ball. We'll put in the time and the money needed to get everything in order."

The words came out of my mouth so quickly, I wondered if he'd understood me.

"No," he said flatly.

"But, sir," I said. "We'll volunteer. We'll take care of everything, from the flowers to the napkins. We'll take care of the music, the food, the drinks and..."

"No," he said again as he got to his feet. "Your fraternity is on probation. I cannot let you get involved with the preparations for the ball. This is the most prestigious night of the year. The answer is no."

“If you’ll allow me, sir,” Bishop said. “Forcing us to volunteer to do this on our own time and on our own dime could appear to the outside world as a punishment in conjunction with our probation.”

Impressed with Bishop’s quick thinking, Deacon and I looked at him and smiled.

The dean sat back down and leaned back in his chair. “Punishment, heh?”

“Yes, sir. Atonement, as it were.”

“Of course,” I said. “You’ll tell everyone that this was your idea.”

“Right,” the dean said with a thoughtful nod. “I’ll admit that your timing couldn’t be better. All the other fraternities have signed up for other activities.”

“And I can assure you, sir,” I said, “that we are going to make this the best Winter Alumni Ball the campus has ever seen.”

“Top-notch,” Bishop said.

He looked up at us. “Fine. Get on it.”

“Great,” Bishop said.

Floating on a cloud, we walked out of the office. Once outside the door, we turned to one another and smiled.

“We did it,” Bishop said.

Chapter 8

Brook



As Deacon and Bishop went over the plans for the Winter Alumni Ball, I slipped out of the house and wandered around the campus.

While my meanderings might have looked random to any onlooker, I knew exactly where I was going. With everything that was going on at the House of Saints, I had to talk to the Hunters and tell them what was going on.

In the distance, I saw Dex Billingsley standing by the door to the gymnasium. Wearing a sportscoat, dark blue jeans and a forest green cashmere sweater, he looked like an Ivy Leaguer. Just behind him, on the other side of the door stood Oliver Grant and Garret Oldsman.

Strolling nonchalantly up to them, I smiled as if meeting up with them was purely coincidental.

“For a mole, you’ve been rather quiet lately,” Dex said.

“What can I tell you,” I said. “There hasn’t been much to say. But now...”

He licked his lips as he pushed the door open, and we entered the gymnasium.

“Hello, little lady,” Oliver said as he gave me an appraising glance.

“Hi, Brook,” Garret said. “How’s everything with the Saints?”

“They’re getting ready for the Winter Ball,” I said. “We’ve been put in charge of everything.”

“Everything?” Dex said with a dark grin.

I smiled knowingly at him. “Absolutely everything.”

“How the hell did you pull that off?”

“We convinced the dean to put us in charge as punishment.”

He shook his head, his grin widening. “Wow. Everything. A lot of things can go wrong when preparing such a big event.”

“Plenty can go wrong,” I said. “That’s why I wanted to let you guys know about it. If you guys want to destroy the Saints, this is your chance. Turn this black-tie event into a fiasco and the Saints will be the laughing stock of SAU.”

Oliver and Garret chuckled.

“You’ve got that right,” Dex said. “I sure am glad that you’re on our side, Brook.”

Oliver slipped his arm around my waist and pulled me to him. “I can tell you that I sure appreciate having you at my side.”

“Take it easy, playboy.”

“Ah, come on, Brook. Show a guy a little love.”

“Don’t you think I have my hands full as it is?” I said. “Or should I say I have my pussy full. Fucking these guys, literally and figuratively, is quickly turning into a full-time job.”

“Are they any good at least?” Dex said. “At the literal fucking part.”

“Let’s limit our conversations to the figurative portion of the fucking them over part... for now.”

“You really hate these guys, don’t you?” Garret said.

“Hate is such an ugly word,” I said. I pried Oliver’s hand off my waist and turned to leave. “Well, I’ve done my part. Now the *ball* is in your court, my dear Hunters.”

“We’ll take it from here.”

I leaned into the large handle of the door and pushed it open.

“Sure is a shame,” Oliver said. “We could have so much fun together.”

As I took a step out the door, I glanced back at them and smiled. “No need, my good man. Bishop and Deacon are doing a decent job keeping me... let’s just say... sated.”

“Ha!” Garret called out. “So you do want to talk about it. You do want to talk about fucking them.”

I giggled and shrugged. “Just wanted to let you know that it’s not all bad out there.”

All three of them ran their hands over their crotch.

“Have a nice afternoon, boys.”

Chapter 9

Bishop



“How are things coming along, Bishop?” Brook said as she came up behind me as I grabbed a few bottles of water out of the refrigerator.

Wearing my football practice sweats, I turned to her.

She instantly frowned. “Where are you going?”

“Practice,” I said simply. “Football practice.”

With a look of pure disgust on her face, she put her hands on her hips and glared at me. “What do you mean, ‘practice’? I thought we were going into town to meet with the caterer.”

I looked sheepishly at her and shrugged. “What can I tell you. With everything going wrong with the team... you know... losing and all, coach wants us to double our practice time.”

“Bishop,” she cried. “You can’t do that to me. We had a deal.” Frustrated she turned away. Seeing Deacon come down the stairs she went to him. “You. You come to the caterer with me.”

Then she noticed that he was also dressed for practice. “You, too?” she lamented.

“What did I do now?” Deacon said.

“You guys are abandoning me,” she said.

I put my hand to her shoulder, hoping to calm her. “Look, call the caterer and re-schedule. I’ll go with you later.”

“When?” she quickly shot back.

I looked at Deacon.

Shit.

“When, Bishop?” she said. “When are you going to be able to come with me? And there’s not only the caterer.

Tomorrow morning we're going to the florist. And what about the music? We have three acts that we need to listen to, not to mention make a song list for the night."

"The coach scheduled a bunch of team exercises," Deacon said.

"And then there are a bunch of meetings with the whole team."

"This sucks, guys," Brook said. "You're leaving everything to me."

"Look," I said as I came around the counter and headed for the front door. "The caterer has done this before. Meeting him is just a formality. As for the flowers... nobody is really going to notice what kind of flowers we put out. Get anything. And the music? I know you have good taste in music. You know what people like. Something soft and velvety during dinner, something a little more lively during dessert and then party music for the night."

"Here," Deacon said as he grabbed the business cards that were on the table near the door. "These are the contacts that you need. Everything is here. Food. Music. Flowers. Everything."

She ripped the cards out of Deacon's hand. "Fine. Leave everything to me. You guys will have a Winter Alumni Ball like you've never seen before. This will be a night to remember."

"That's my girl," Bishop said. "I knew we could leave this to you."

As I opened the door and we headed out, I glanced back at Brook and blew her a kiss.

She blew one back, a strange smile on her lips.

Chapter 10

Brook



After my talk with the caterer, I returned to SAU and met up with Dex, this time in a quiet corner of the library.

“What do you have for us, Brook?” he said.

“I spoke to the caterer this morning,” I said. “They’ve done this before and will prepare the same menu they served three years ago; steak tartar, braised bison, tossed green salad and pureed potatoes and...”

“Okay,” he said, clearly unsatisfied with my information. “I don’t really care about the menu.”

“Thing is...” I said, “the caterer is having issues with finding waitstaff. They only have one team of six and they’re already hired out to another event.”

“Where does that leave the Saints?”

I grinned. “That, my dear Dexter, leaves the Saints’ pledges with the task of waiting on all the tables the night of the ball. Not only that, but they will also have to clear the tables and help out with the dishes.”

“Did the guys plot out an agenda?”

I nodded. “Cocktails as everyone arrives. Hors-d’oeuvres as we chat and get reacquainted. Dinner... seven courses, with elegant dining music as accompaniment. Scattered throughout will be a word from the dean, a word from the head administrator and a word from some professor... a Mr. Chang, I believe.”

“Sounds good.”

“After that, it’s dancing until the sun comes up.”

“Perfect.”

“Due to many other functions the caterer is dealing with, they’ve asked to use the facilities here on campus. Apparently

they've done it before, so it shouldn't be a problem."

Dex smiled. "You'd almost think that the caterer was in cahoots with us. This is all so perfect."

"In case you intend on screwing with the food, I've told the caterer that the back service door to the kitchen will be unlocked the morning of the ball."

"Good to know."

"Well, then," I said. "I'll leave you with that. Good luck."

"No luck necessary," he said with a sardonic chuckle.

I left him and headed back to the Saints frat house. Deacon had promised to set aside twenty minutes to tutor me for my math exam.

The minute I entered the frat house, Deacon came to the top step and looked down at me.

"I'm waiting."

Grinning, I ran up the stairs and followed him into his room. Since that day Bishop, Deacon and I had sex together in Bishop's room, Deacon had loosen up a bit with me. He was almost back to being the close friend he was with Bishop, too.

It was as if some tension had been lifted between all of us, and now the guys and I were more open with their desire for me and vice versa.

"What do you want to tutor me on first?" I said with a cunning grin. "How to suck your dick like a pro or how to put a bunch of silly numbers in the right order?"

"Seeing how we're a little short on time," he said as he slowly pulled the zipper of his pants down. "Let's see if we can't make you a dick sucking pro."

Chapter 11

Brook



Bishop and Deacon's extra football practices was a godsent. They were mostly hands-off with the Ball, which gave me and the Hunters easy access to wreck our havoc.

It also helped me cement my new role as a Senior Saint with the new pledges at the fraternity. With only a couple of days away to the Winter Ball, all hands were on deck.

While Bishop and Deacon had to double down on football practice, the rest of the Saints fraternity pledges helped out. Fred, who was my partner when Rector was President, unfortunately had to drop out of the fraternity due to his father's medical practice moving out of town.

Trenton, Greg, and a few others were so new and not yet completely initiated into the Saints Fraternity that they were like blank slates when it came to knowing any of the Saints protocol.

I barely knew them as a new pledge turned into a Senior Saint.

However, I was still a Senior Saint, and the only one who was fully working on the Winter Ball.

"Hey Trenton," I said, "did you get all the RSVPs confirmed?"

Trenton and Greg were seated at the dining table in the Saints House, going through a pile of cards.

"Getting there. We are still waiting for the Millers, the Trans, and Handels."

I looked down my list. "Good, we have most of the families we'd want to invite, attending. But the Millers, the Trans, and Handels are definitely ones we need to be there.

They are the up-and-coming movers and shakers in the industry.”

“Are there any last-minute things we still need to do?” Greg asked.

I looked through the list of to-dos and said, “Glad you asked. Here are a few things we must finalize. Other than that, we all need to be at the event. Greg, Trenton – you will oversee the rest of our pledges, to work as waitstaff. Make sure you have uniforms.”

“Sure thing,” Trenton and Greg said in unison.

Chapter 12

Brook



“Today’s the big day,” Bishop said as we all got ready to head out to the ballroom.

“Had I known that I’d be on the staff instead of a guest, I wouldn’t have put down all that money down for a beautiful gown.”

“Don’t worry, Brook,” Bishop said. “You’ll have plenty of occasions to slip into that gorgeous gown. Tonight, we’re short-staffed. Everyone in the Saints need to pitch in as waitstaff.”

Instead of my gown, I wore straight black pants with a crisp white button-down shirt tucked in at the waist and a simple but elegant satin black vest over it.

We arrived at the ballroom and headed around to the back to enter the kitchen.

“Good. Good. Good,” Gaston, the caterer, said as he took a look at us. “The guests are about to arrive, and we need to have chilled champagne waiting for them.”

He pointed to the dozens of bottles, all on ice.

“Any of you know how to open a bottle of champagne without poking your eye out?” Gaston said.

“I do,” Bishop said. Although he was dressed as a guest and not as a staff member, he was ready to pitch in.

“Don’t open too many at a time,” Gaston instructed. “We don’t want to lose all those gorgeous bubbles.”

“Right,” Bishop said.

“The three of you,” Gaston said, pointing to three of the pledges. “The hors-oeuvres are there. Put them prettily on a tray and head out there right behind the champagne.”

They nodded and went to work.

“And you,” Gaston said, looking at me and two other pledges. “Get the first course ready.” He pointed to one section of the kitchen. “The second course.” He pointed to another section. “And the main course.”

“Okay,” I said.

Gaston took off his chef’s jacket and shrugged on a nice-looking blazer.

“Wait a minute,” Bishop said. “Where are you going?”

“I have another event to go to.”

“But...”

“Everything is there and ready to be served,” Gaston said as he trotted off to the back door and out.

“Great,” Bishop said.

“What’s the problem?” I said. “Everything is done. All we have to do is the service.”

As we were notified of the guests that were arriving, Bishop opened bottles of champagne, and we went out with trays laden with flutes of bubbly.

The guests, a who’s who of wealthy elites, strolled throughout the ballroom, chatting about money, yachts, summer mansions in Nice and winter chalets in Switzerland.

They took their flutes of champagne without glancing at the server. We were invisible. We didn’t exist other than to serve them.

While I had expected a degree of haughtiness, I was surprised by the degrading sense it left me with.

After meandering through these elites for half an hour, they were finally seated, and the first course was served.

In the distance, I saw Bishop and Deacon. They had both left the kitchen and had joined *their kind*.

“How are things going out there?” Trenton asked as I came back into the kitchen. He’d taken the role of orchestrating the service of each course.

“Hard to tell,” I said. “They’re all so cool and aloof. Nothing impresses these people.”

I picked up a large tray laden with bowls of creamy soup and set out to the guests. After setting down three bowls, all while smiling at the patrons, I realized there was no point smiling at all. No one bothered to look up at me.

Right. Invisible, remember?

While a team of three went around clearing the empty bowls of soup, I picked up another tray and prepared to bring it out.

“After this comes the bison,” Trenton said.

“Gotcha,” I said as I walked out for the same routine.

Ignored. Ignored. Oh? A pinch on the ass by an old bugger. Then ignored again.

“And finally the main course,” I said as I returned to the kitchen. “This is insane.”

“That’s the service trade for you.”

“Where’s this bison?”

He pointed to the plates. Thin slices of bison were laid out in a rich and delicious smelling sauce. With the help of another pledge, the main dish was served to all.

Setting down the last plate, I noticed the dean trying to catch my eye. He stood and came to me.

“Brook,” he said. “This is Mrs. Tran, Mr. Manning and Mr. Preston.”

“Nice to meet you all,” I said, wondering why I was being introduced to these people.

“They’re on the committee,” the dean explained.

“Oh.”

“The meal so far is very good,” Mrs. Tran said.

“We’re very impressed with the work your team has done,” Mr. Manning added.

“If you don’t mind,” the dean said. “We’d like to go back and congratulate the entire team.”

“Sure. I’m sure they’d be very happy to hear it.”

I led them to the kitchen.

“Where is everyone?” the dean said.

I looked around the vast kitchen. “Trenton,” I called out. “Come on, guys. Where are you?”

“Who are all those people out there in the parking lot?” Mrs. Tran said.

“Oh,” I said with a pleasant smile. “That must be the patisserie’s delivery truck. We had some very special pastries made in honor of our distinguished guests.”

Mr. Manning, his face red with anger, stormed out the door. “They shouldn’t leave the kitchen unattended,” he shouted.

I smiled sheepishly at Mrs. Tran and Mr. Preston. “They’re just there by the door,” I said, trying to justify the guys’ absence from the kitchen. “It’s not like someone could just come in here.”

“This certainly looks like a very busy kitchen,” Mrs. Tran said as she looked around.

“And very aromatic,” Mrs. Preston added.

“Did you kids cook all this?” Mrs. Tran said.

“We had a bit of help,” I said, deliberately being vague.

“That aroma,” Mr. Preston said as he walked around. “So enticing.” Clearly led by his nose, he looked into the pot of the sauce that’d been served with the bison. “Oh, my God!”

He stepped back from the pot, grabbing his chest in horror.

“What is it?” Mrs. Tran said as she rushed to look in the pot. “Ah!” she screamed.

The dean and Mr. Manning returned, alarmed by the screams.

“What’s going on in here?” the dean said.

The pledges followed close behind them, also alarmed.

“A rat!” Mr. Preston shouted. “There’s a dead rat in the sauce that was served to all the patrons.”

Stomping his way to the large pot, the dean glared at me then looked into the pot of sauce. Red-faced, he looked at the committee and chuckled dryly. “Kids,” he said as he directed them toward the ballroom. “Always joking. I’m sure that we were not served from that pot.”

“But,” Mr. Preston said. “I know that smell, that sauce. It *is* what we were served.”

His jaw tight and his nostrils flaring, the dean ushered them out. Just as he headed out, he shot us a quick and murderous glance.

Chapter 13

Bishop



“**W**hat is going on?” Trenton said as we all filed into the frat house.

I glared at him. “I don’t want to talk out here. We’ll get to the house.”

“This is really going to hurt the Saints,” Brook said.

“I’m sure there’s an explanation for all this,” I said, although I couldn’t for the life of me understand what had happened.

Once in the house, I led everyone to the living room. Deacon and Brook took their places as Senior Saints in front of the fireplace, and I joined them once everyone was seated.

“What the fuck?” Trenton said, “we had everything going so well. What happened?”

His words were echoed by all the other pledges.

“Look,” I said, holding my hands out in an attempt to calm them. “This was just a mistake... and accident.”

“An accident?” Trenton said. “How the hell does a rat accidentally get into a pot of sauce?”

“The dean is going to have our asses for this,” Deacon said through his teeth.

I glared at him. “Don’t you think I know that?”

“He’s going to shut us down,” Trenton said. “He’s going to shut the whole thing down. No more fraternity. No more Saints.”

“Don’t be ridiculous,” I said. “Tomorrow, I’ll go talk to him. He’ll have calmed down and he’ll understand that this... this is just...”

Hell. I had no way of explaining, excusing or justifying what had happened.

“Look,” I said. “No matter what happens, no matter what the dean says, I will take the blame. I will take complete responsibility for what happened. As President of the House of Saints, I won’t let him touch this fraternity.”

My words had the desired effect. They all calmed down.

However, the next morning, I was nervous and unsure as I headed to my meeting with the dean.

“Good morning, Bishop,” he said as I walked in.

“It’s been a tense morning,” I said.

He sat back in his chair and eyed me. “I don’t know what’s going on in that house of yours, but I don’t like it.”

“I know, sir. I assure you that the mishap last night was an accident.”

“I hope you’re right,” he said. “But somehow I doubt it.”

“You really think that one of my pledges would do such a thing.”

“I think that girl in your midst is having a crazy effect on your boys. You know how it is. A pretty girl walks in, and all the boys go gaga. I’ve seen boys do some pretty silly things for a girl.”

“I think Brook has the effect of lifting us up, sir,” I said. “Everyone wants to impress her, not look silly in front of her. No. Brook is good for us. She raises the bar. She makes us better men.”

“Be that as it may, I cannot let that rat in a pot go unpunished.”

I steeled myself for what was to come.

“You have one hour to leave the premises.”

“What?” I said, stunned by his cold harshness.

He stood and indicated that I leave his office. “You heard me. You’re out, Bishop. You’re expelled.”

I fought to catch my breath, to recover from the blow.
“Sir...”

“I’ll spare the house... for now.” He opened the door to his office and held it open, gesturing that I leave. “The Committee was horrified by what happened last night, not to mention how I had to step in to stop them from shutting down the campus. Of course, they opted to shut down your fraternity. Because my first intention was to shut it all down, Bishop.”

Our eyes locked.

“Fine,” I finally said. “I’ll take the fall.”

I left him and headed out.

“What did he say?” Brook said. Waiting for me outside the dean’s office, she looked at me with concern.

“He won’t shut down the fraternity,” I said, my jaw tight with tension.

“Oh,” she said, clearly surprised. “Well, that’s good news.”

“Yeah,” I muttered, looking down at the ground beneath my feet as we walked out of the administrative building.

“Bishop?” she said. “That’s good news. You saved the House of Saints. Why so glum?”

I stopped walking and turned to face her. “I saved the house, but I have to leave it.”

Frowning, she looked at me. “What do you mean?”

“He expelled me.”

Aghast, she took a step back and brought her delicate hand to her mouth. “Oh, Bishop. No.”

I nodded. The tension cramped my shoulders and my legs were stiff.

We resumed walking, heading back to the house that I had helped build. The house that I now had to leave behind.

Reaching the front door of the house, I stopped and looked at Brook. "I'm going to announce it to everyone right away."

She nodded.

"Then I'm going to pack up and leave."

"I can't believe it," she said. "How can he do that? He can't make you leave just like that. You need time."

"No time. I am to leave the campus immediately. If I don't leave of my own accord within the hour, he'll have me forcibly escorted out. And I can tell you, I don't want that."

On entering the house, Brook gathered all the pledges and directed them to the living room.

"What's the verdict?" Trenton said. "Are we out on the street?"

"I'll be brief," I said. "The house is safe."

Cheerful cries filled the room.

"Way to go, Bishop," Trenton said. "Way to go."

"But I've been asked to leave the campus."

The cheers subsided and disbelief settled in.

I turned to Deacon. "I guess that leaves you in charge."

"If things continue like this, Brook is going to be in charge of this house," Trenton said.

I chuckled wryly and stepped down.

"Sorry to see you go," another pledge said as he patted me on the shoulder and left.

The pledges dispersed leaving me alone with Deacon and Brook.

"This is rough," Deacon said. "First Rector and now you."

"Yeah," I said. "You better watch your back. You might be next."

He grunted, glared briefly at Brook then turned to walk away. "This really sucks," he called over his shoulder.

“You’re being so strong,” Brook said as she set her hand on my forearm. “So stoic. How do you really feel?”

I shrugged. “Shitty. This whole thing is so shitty. A rat in a pot of sauce. I’ve been trying to tell myself that it was an accident, or some sort of twisted joke. Maybe we were the only ones who were supposed to see the rat, not the dean and certainly not his committee.”

“But...?” Brook said.

“But I don’t think it was an accident or a joke.”

“What do you think it was?”

“Sabotage. There’s no other explanation for it.”

“That’s a pretty harsh accusation,” Brook said. “Who would do such a thing? One of the pledges? It doesn’t make sense. Why would they tear their own house down?”

I cupped her face and kissed her, needing to have something good in my day. But for all the softness and sweetness of her lips, I remained stressed and frustrated.

“I gotta go,” I said.

“Bishop,” she said, grabbing my hand as I walked away. “I’ll see what I can do to clear your name.”

I smiled at her. “You’re a sweetheart and I appreciate it. But I don’t want you getting mixed up in this.”

“I hate to see you in pain like this.”

I kissed her. “You’re a saint, you know. A real saint. No wonder I feel the way I do about you. You’re the only person in the world that I can trust... and that I love.”

She smiled. “Tell me what I can do to help you.”

“Just keep your eyes open,” I said. “Someone in this house is trying to destroy the Saints.”

Chapter 14

Deacon



It was almost midnight, and the House of Saints was quiet and still. No doubt some of the pledges were in their room quietly studying for one test or another, but no one was wandering the halls or getting a snack in the kitchen or watching the late show in the living room.

I glanced at Brook lying beside me in her bed. Beautiful with her tousled hair fanned out on the pillow, she was the image of pure innocence.

After Bishop's unexpected departure, we'd had an impromptu tutoring session that had ended up going on for hours. Hot, heavy, sexy, crude and at times downright vulgar... just the way she liked it.

"Where did you learn to fuck like such a god," she'd said as her gaze danced across my chest. "You know just how to drive me crazy and make me want you more and more."

Her words were enough to get me hard again, get me wanting her again. My body ached for her, even though I knew I shouldn't. Even though I knew how wrong she was for me... I just had to have her again and again.

"With Rector and Bishop gone," she'd said after one particularly raucous fuck. "Should I be worried about you deserting me, too?"

I'd smiled lovingly at her. "Don't worry about me. I won't be leaving the House of Saints any time soon."

Looking at her now, so peaceful and angelic as she lay there, I wondered just how far she would push this ruse. The innocent, sweet, and loving saint?

I slipped out of bed, grabbed my clothes and left her bedroom, heading out into the hall to get dressed.

With my shoes in my hand, I tiptoed down the stairs and out the front door. Only then did I put my shoes on.

The campus was completely deserted. The cool night air and moonless night didn't invite many outdoors.

Walking briskly, I headed to my destination. I reached the door and listened. All was quiet inside and only a dim light in the entrance was on.

The building was large and appealing, with tall white columns reminiscent of another era. Potted plants lined the porch adding a certain hominess.

Not bothering to knock, I opened the door and headed inside. From the next room, the sound of liquid being poured into a glass reached my ears.

I followed the sound and stood in the doorway of a dark paneled room furnished with dark leather armchairs. The fragrant scent of good cigars assailed my nostrils.

"Deacon," Dex said as he looked up at me. "Come in. Come in. I was beginning to wonder when you'd show up."

"Come," Oliver said, indicating the leather, throne-like seat in the corner of the candlelit room.

"We have a place reserved for our special guests," Garret added.

"The House of Hunters welcomes you, Deacon," Dex said. Holding up a decanter of amber liquid, he added, "Cognac?"

I nodded as I sat down. "Please."

Oliver offered me a cigar. "The best that money can buy."

I took one, clipped the tip, lit it then puffed on the aromatic tobacco.

"I trust that Brook doesn't know that you're here," Dex said as he handed me my cognac.

"No one knows that I'm here."

Dex took a seat in the armchair to my right, a cunning grin on his lips. “You must be rather proud of yourself.”

I shrugged and sipped my cognac.

Oliver giggled as he puffed on his cigar.

“Well, you certainly impressed me,” Garret said. “To tell you the truth, I didn’t think you had it in you.”

I offered him a wry grin and raised my glass to him. “Never be too quick to underestimate a man, Garret. It never serves one well.”

He nodded. “Duly noted.”

“I have to admit that I’m also guilty of underestimating you, Deacon,” Dex said. “Never would I have thought that my pastor’s child would succeed as you have. I didn’t think that you could pull off a stunt like this.”

“What is it that surprises you all so?” I said. “That I succeeded in getting both Rector and Bishop expelled from SAU, or that no one has any idea that I was behind it all?”

They all snickered, and Dex reached out to tap his glass against mine.

“Like I said, never underestimate a man,” I repeated.

“This is what you really wanted, isn’t it?” Dex said. “Getting those two bozos off campus is what you wanted from the start, right... sir?”

My lips involuntarily curled into a sneer as I slapped him with an icy glare. “Of course it is.”

Oliver giggled again and beat the floor excitedly with the toes of his shoes. “And you didn’t even get your hands dirty.” He giggled more. “What a stroke of genius.”

“What about the girl?” Dex said.

“You mean Brook?”

He nodded.

“What about her?” I said with a cold shrug. “She’s a decent fuck. Pretty to look at. She keeps the pledges on their

toes.”

“But what are you going to do with her?” Dex said. “Now that Rector and Bishop are gone...”

“She stays at the house,” I said bluntly. “She’ll stay at the House of Saints until I no longer have any use for her.”

Oliver snickered. “You have plans for her, don’t you?” He clasped and unclasped his hands. “Shit. She’s so sexy. If we had her in our house, I wouldn’t want her to leave either.” He leaned in closer and looked directly at me. “Hey. Why don’t you loan her to us... you know... so we can have a little fun, too.”

“Shut up, Oliver,” Dex said.

“I have plans for her, Oliver,” I said. “And they do not include you.”

“Shit,” he said as he sank back in his chair.

“What about our little secret alliance with her?” Dex said. “What about her role as a mole?”

I chuckled, a devilish sound that I barely recognized. “Her role is as a mole... yeah. That’s a good one, isn’t it?”

“It has made for an interesting semester so far.”

“Keep things as they are with Brook,” I said. “She has no idea what’s really going on and that’s just how I like my women... in the dark and ignorant.” I puffed on my cigar and smiled. “There really is something amusing in all this. There’s something profoundly satisfying in watching her play her silly little games. She thinks she is so smart. Thinks she is so cunning, thinking she’s in charge... that she has the upper hand.”

“If she only knew, right, Deacon?” Oliver said with an excited clap of his hands. “If she only knew that she was working for you all this time.”

“And she won’t find out that she’s working for me now, will she?” I said, shooting them all a menacing glare.

Dex averted my gaze, Oliver quieted down and Garret looked at the floor.

“Damn right,” I hissed. “You boys all know what will happen to your precious family businesses if word of our little... union... gets out.”

“No worries, there, sir,” Dex said, mustering up all his respect and reverence for the situation. “We’re the only ones who know about this. Our little secret won’t leave this room.”

“Good,” I said as I dropped my lit cigar into the remaining cognac in my glass. After a momentary flare up, the cigar hissed and died. “Brook has been a relatively small part of this equation so far... but now... Now the big games will finally begin.”

Dex stood. “I see.”

“Now, we’ll really see who can outsmart who.”



Brook, Rector, Bishop, and Deacon’s story will continue in Book 3 of The Saints of San Angelo University Series.



Deacon (Book 3)

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A Note from Kailin:



Hey there! Thank you for reading Bishop.

I hope you enjoyed Bishop. This is the start of the Saints of San Angelo University Series. A lot more is going to happen next in book 3! Be prepared for more twists and turns.

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